

Northern Planning Committee

Agenda

Date: Wednesday, 30th June, 2021
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: The Assembly Room - Town Hall, Macclesfield SK10 1EA

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and in the report.

It should be noted that Part 1 items of Cheshire East Council decision-making meetings are live audio recorded and the recordings are uploaded to the Council's website.

PLEASE NOTE-The meeting is open to the public but due to social distancing restrictions public attendance is limited and priority will be given to those people wishing to speak at the meeting with the remaining availability being allocated on a first to arrive basis. Masks will need to be worn by anyone entering or leaving the venue but not whilst seated.

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. **Apologies for Absence**

To receive any apologies for absence.

1. **Declarations of Interest/Pre Determination**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests and for Members to declare if they have a pre-determination in respect of any item on the agenda.

1. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (Pages 3 - 8)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2021 as a correct record.

1. **Public Speaking**

A total period of 5 minutes is allocated for each of the planning applications for the

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E-Mail: sarah.baxter@cheshireeast.gov.uk with any apologies or request for further information
Speakingatplanning@cheshireeast.gov.uk to arrange to speak at the meeting

following:

- Ward Councillors who are not members of the Planning Committee
- The relevant Town/Parish Council

A period of 3 minutes is allocated for each of the planning applications for the following individuals/groups:

- Members who are not members of the planning committee and are not the Ward Member
- Objectors
- Supporters
- Applicants

1. **20/1620M Canalside Farm, Wood Lane East, Adlington, SK10 4PH, Change of use of land to a petting farm, including a residential lodge, cafe and car parking for Karina Boland (Pages 9 - 22)**

To consider the above application.

1. **19/0334M, Booth Bank Farm, Reddy Lane, Millington, Cheshire,, WA14 3RG, Development of a new residential wing with ancillary office and children's activity space; alterations, extensions and repairs to Booth Bank Farmhouse, access and landscaping at Booth Bank Farm, Millington, for the Trustees of Children's Adventure Farm Trust (Pages 23 - 50)**

To consider the above application.

1. **19/0402M, Booth Bank Farm, Reddy Lane, Millington, Cheshire, WA14 3RE, Listed building consent for Alterations, extensions and external repairs to Booth Bank Farmhouse, to include removal of existing UPVC porch and conservatory, and construction of extended contemporary new extension, for the Trustees of Children's Adventure Farm Trust (Pages 51 - 64)**

To consider the above application.

1. **20/2445M, Land to the North West of Marthall Lane, Knutsford, Retrospective application for agricultural livestock and produce stores, for Mr & Mrs. Brighouse (Pages 65 - 74)**

To consider the above application.

Membership: Councillors L Braithwaite (Vice-Chair), J Clowes, T Dean, S Edgar, JP Findlow, A Harewood, S Holland, D Jefferay, J Nicholas (Chair), I Macfarlane, N Mannion, K Parkinson, L Smetham and J Smith

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Northern Planning Committee**
held on Wednesday, 2nd June, 2021 at The Assembly Room - Town Hall,
Macclesfield SK10 1EA

PRESENT

Councillor J Nicholas (Chair)
Councillor L Braithwaite (Vice-Chair)

Councillors C Browne (Substitute), T Dean, JP Findlow, A Harewood,
S Holland, I Macfarlane, N Mannion, K Parkinson, L Smetham and J Smith

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr N Jones (Principal Development Officer), Mr R Law (Planning Team
Leader) and Mrs M Withington (Acting Team Manager-Property Team)

8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Jefferay.

9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/PRE DETERMINATION

In the interest of openness in respect of applications 20/3627M and 20/3628M, Councillor L Braithwaite declared that she was the Ward Councillor for the area but had not pre-determined the applications. In addition she had met with Mr Breewood who was speaking on the application in her capacity as a Ward Councillor where there had been several incidents of anti-social behaviour near to the application site. Planning matters had not been discussed. Furthermore in the interests of openness, in her capacity as Ward Councillor she emailed Mr. Jalali, the applicant's agent, following advice from Building Control on 15 April to contact the owner with reference to making the building secure. She did not discuss the planning applications.

In the interest of openness in respect of applications 20/3627M and 20/3628M, Councillor N Mannion declared that his grandfather had been employed by Mr Breewood who was speaking on the application, however it was over 40 years ago.

In the interest of openness in respect of application 20/3162M, Councillor J Nicholas declared that he lived with Councillor A Stott who was speaking on the application and that he was also the Ward Councillor, however he had not pre-determined the application.

In the interest of openness in respect of application 20/3162M, Councillor L Smethem declared that she knew Town Councillor K Edwards who was speaking on the application.

It was noted that Members had received correspondence in respect of applications 20/3627M and 20/3628M.

10 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS VIRTUAL MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous virtual meeting be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

11 PUBLIC SPEAKING

RESOLVED

That the public speaking procedure be noted.

12 20/3627M-CHANGE OF USE AND EXTENSIONS TO VACANT MILL INTO 24 SELF-CONTAINED APARTMENTS WITH ASSOCIATED CAR PARKING, ALMA MILL, CROMPTON ROAD, MACCLESFIELD FOR MUJAHID AFZAL

Consideration was given to the above application.

(Councillor A Farrall, the Ward Councillor, Mr Breewood, an objector, David Ouattara, an objector and Andrew Jalali, the agent for the applicant attended the meeting and spoke in respect of the application).

RESOLVED

That the application be refused for the following reasons:-

1. The proposal is contrary to saved Policies BE15, BE17, BE18 and BE19 in the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan and Policies SD 2, SE 1 SE 7 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, causing harm to the objectives of those policies due to an adverse impact on the character, appearance and historic interest of the building and setting of the adjacent listed building by reason of its height, scale and form. The proposal is similarly contrary to national planning policy and guidance relating to listed buildings.
2. The proposed extensions would cause loss of light and an overbearing impact to the detriment of the amenities of the occupiers of nearby residential property, particularly numbers 39 Crompton Road and 1 Pownall Square. The approval of the development would therefore be contrary to saved Policies DC3

and DC38 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan and Policy SE 1 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy.

3. The development would be detrimental to the interests of highway safety through an increase in parking taking place in unsuitable locations on the highway or within the site, taking account of the nature of the proposed development, the location of the site and the predicted number of parked vehicles arising from the development contrary to saved Policy DC6 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan, Appendix C and Policy SD 1 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy.

In order to give proper effect to the Northern Committee's intent and without changing the substance of its decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Chair (or in their absence the Vice Chair) to correct any technical slip or omission in the resolution, before issue of the decision notice.

13 20/3628M-CHANGE OF USE AND EXTENSIONS TO VACANT MILL INTO 24 SELF-CONTAINED APARTMENTS WITH ASSOCIATED CAR PARKING, ALMA MILL, CROMPTON ROAD, MACCLESFIELD FOR MUJAHID AFZAL

Consideration was given to the above application.

(Ben Carr, the Architect for the applicant attended the meeting and spoke in respect of the application).

RESOLVED

That the application be refused for the following reason:-

1. The approval of Listed Building Consent would be contrary to saved Policies BE15, BE17, BE18 and BE19 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan and Policy SE7 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, causing harm to the objectives of those policies due to an adverse impact on the character, appearance and historic interest of the building and setting of the adjacent listed building. The proposal is similarly contrary to national planning policy guidance relating to listed buildings.

In order to give proper effect to the Northern Committee's intent and without changing the substance of its decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Chair (or in their absence the Vice Chair) to correct any technical slip or omission in the resolution, before issue of the decision notice.

14 20/3162M-PROPOSED ERECTION OF THREE DWELLINGS TOGETHER WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS AND CAR PARKING, CAR

PARK TO THE CROWN, INGERSLEY VALE, BOLLINGTON FOR GUSTAV BONNIER HOLDINGS LTD

Consideration was given to the above application.

(Councillor A Stott, the Ward Councillor, Town Councillor K Edwards, representing Bollington Town Council and Poppy Hilton, the agent for the applicant attended the meeting and spoke in respect of the application).

RESOLVED

That for the reasons set out in the report and in the verbal update to the Committee, the application be approved subject to the following conditions:-

1. Commencement of development (3 years)
2. Development in accordance with approved plans
3. Submission of samples of building materials
4. Landscaping - submission of details
5. Landscaping (implementation)
6. Landscaping to include details of boundary treatment
7. Nesting bird survey to be submitted
8. Provision of features to enhance the biodiversity value
9. Hours of operation condition including details of piling works
10. Construction method statement
11. Foul and surface water shall be drained on separate systems.
12. Surface water drainage details to be submitted
13. Travel information pack to be submitted
14. Electric vehicle infrastructure to be provided
15. Steps to be taken in event of unidentified contamination
16. Car parking spaces to be provided and retained at all times thereafter
17. Details of proposed finished floor levels and land levels to be submitted
18. Cycle storage to be provided
19. Coal mining scheme of works/investigations pre-commencement condition
20. Coal mining safety report prior to occupation
21. Accordance with Arboricultural Information

In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Chair (or in his absence the Vice Chair) of Northern Planning Committee to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 11.27 am

Councillor J Nicholas (Chair)

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Application No: 20/1620M

Location: Canalside Farm, Wood Lane East, Adlington, SK10 4PH

Proposal: Change of use of land to a petting farm, including a residential lodge, cafe and car parking.

Applicant: Karina Boland

Expiry Date: 24-Feb-2021

SUMMARY

It is considered that insufficient information has been submitted to assess the full impact of the change of use upon the Green Belt. However, the proposals for the car park and the café are inappropriate forms of development in the Green Belt that reduce openness and encroach into the countryside. Substantial weight is afforded to any harm to the Green Belt in accordance with paragraph 144 of the NPPF. In addition, the car park is considered to result in less than substantial harm to the Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area.

The absence of sufficient information also does not allow the full impact of the proposed development upon designated heritage assets and local character, and trees to be assessed. In addition, no information has been provided by the applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, as required by paragraph 189 of the NPPF.

Collectively these matters carry substantial weight against the proposal.

Balanced against this harm is the applicant's proposal that the site will be used to support educational and therapeutic needs, host school visits and explore potential for an apprenticeship for animal husbandry. Whilst these matters may provide some social public benefit to such groups, no evidence of any arrangements or agreements with educational, medical or social bodies has been provided to substantiate these aims. Therefore, they attract very limited weight in the overall balance.

Accordingly it is considered that the identified harm to the Green Belt, the harm to the conservation area and the lack of information is not outweighed by these other considerations / public benefits. Accordingly the proposal is contrary to policies PG 3 of the CELPS and GC1 of the MBLP relating to the Green Belt, policies SE 1, SD 2, SE 5 and SE 7 relating to the character of the local area / conservation area, as well as associated paragraphs of the NPPF.

The application is therefore recommended for refusal

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

REASON FOR REPORT

The application is to be presented at Northern Planning Committee at the request of Cllr Michael Beanland for the following reasons:

- “1. Detrimental impact on residential amenity*
- 2. Detrimental impact on highway safety*
- 3. Detrimental impact on the Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area*
- 4. Detrimental to the setting of the listed canal bridge*
- 5. Proposal is not in accordance with Saved Policy GC1 Macclesfield Borough Local Plan*
- 6. Proposal is not in accordance with Policies PG3, PG6 and SE7 of the Cheshire East Local Plan”*

APPLICANTS SUBMISSION

The applicant has submitted:
Plans

A planning policy statement

A supporting statement from the applicants

A supporting letter from a vet

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The site lies within the Green Belt approximately 100m to the south east of the junction of Wood Lane South, Wood Lane West and Wood Lane East. It is a linear site between the Middlewood Way and the Macclesfield Canal. There is an existing stone bridge over the Canal to the east of the site, which is a listed structure.

The site has an existing access onto Wood Lane East close to the bridge over the Middlewood Way. This access is close to the entrance onto the Middlewood Way on the opposite side of the road and also the access to a building known as Lyme Breeze, used a wedding venue. Lyme View Marina lies to the north east of the site and the Miners Arms to the north west.

There is a row of residential dwellings running along Wood Lane South which back on to the Middlewood Way which is parallel to the western edge of the site.

There are some existing stable buildings on the site, a shipping container and a number of other structures appear to have been recently constructed including a stable building, animal shelters and fencing. The land has been divided up with the wooden fencing into differing pens containing various animals including rabbits, pigs, goats, donkeys, rare breed sheep, geese, alpacas and ponies. A stone track runs through the centre of the site.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The application seeks full planning permission to change the use of the land from agricultural land to use as a petting farm, with public access. They

propose to utilise the site to support educational and therapeutic needs, host school visits and they see potential for an apprenticeship for animal husbandry.

The proposal includes a timber building measuring 6m by 6m for use as a café associated with the petting farm. Also, a car parking area to accommodate 25 cars which would be adjacent to the existing access onto Wood Lane East.

The application originally included a residential timber chalet building however this has been removed from the application.

It is proposed to open the site daily between 10.00am - 6.00pm in the summer months and daily between 10.00am to 4.00pm in the winter.

RELEVANT HISTORY

15/2956M Three timber-built stables and associated tack room and yard and external lighting - Not determined

POLICIES

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)

MP1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

PG1 Overall Development Strategy

PG2 Settlement Boundaries

PG3 Green Belt

PG7 Spatial distribution of development

SD1 Sustainable development in Cheshire East

SD2 Sustainable development principles

SE1 Design

SE3 Biodiversity and geodiversity

SE4 The Landscape

SE5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

SE7 The historic environment

SE12 Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability

SE13 Flood risk

Appendix C – Parking Standards

Macclesfield Borough Local Plan (MBLP)

DC3 Protection of the amenities of nearby residential properties

DC6 Safe and convenient access for vehicles, special needs groups and pedestrians

DC8 Landscaping

DC9 Tree protection

DC35 Materials and Finishes
DC36 Road layouts and circulation
DC37 Landscaping in housing developments
DC63 Contaminated Land
GC1 New buildings in the Green Belt
NE1 ASCV
NE11 Nature conservation interests

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Framework (NPPG)

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Head of Strategic Transport - No objection

Environmental Health - No objection subject to conditions relating to opening hours, electric vehicle infrastructure and contamination

Flood risk team - Comments awaited

Canals and River Trust - No objection

PROW – No objection

Adlington Parish Council - Object to the proposal and recommends refusal for the following reasons:

- the proposed development will cause harm to the openness of the Greenbelt and Conservation Area.
- Access to the Marina will be impeded by cars parked along the road as well as the increase in traffic in the vicinity.
- Concerns that the area of land was insufficient for the number of animals proposed to be kept on the site.
- The proposed number of animals to be kept on-site does not justify a residential property on the site.
- Insufficient information in the application, in particular how animal waste would be removed from the site and how a water supply would be provided, also that a newt survey and tree survey are not included with the application.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

64 objections have been received which raise the following concerns:

- Site is very close to the main thoroughfare for pedestrians, dog walkers, joggers, horse riders & cyclists to the Middlewood Way and the canal & businesses located at the marina

- The access is a narrow road without footpaths and is not wide enough for two vehicles to pass and creates congestion
- further congestion would arise causing traffic to 'back up' over the bridge and across the nearby 4-way junction with Woods Lane. And will cause 'bottle necks'.
- the only water supply for the animals & washroom facilities for the existing site is served via small pipes leading from a local residence some 100 yards
- It will impact upon local wildlife.
- The proposal is a means of achieving long term goal of a house
- The plot has grown over the last few months and makes a mockery of planning regulations.
- Allowing a residential lodge could provide a footprint to construct a more permanent residential home on green belt land.
- There are currently 3 planning applications before Council all within a close radius to the four lanes junction.
- There would be increased traffic volumes and noise disturbance, particularly at weekends and Bank Holidays.
- Details are unclear in the application
- Opening hours are 7 days a week virtually dusk to dawn therefore no respite here for local residents
- The field is now being referred to as a "farm"
- The nearby junction and the sharp bend on Wood Lane already regarded as a danger to pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and motorists. Creating a visitor attraction would result in more undue risks to the public. Parking is already a problem.
- Already suffering from noise issues from the animals
- Some of the proposed animals are alien to the existing climate and ground conditions pertaining to this site i.e. wet land
- There is no mention of how many breeds and individuals could be located on this site but there are already sheep, alpacas, chickens, donkeys and turkeys
- The position and shape of the site is far from ideal, with the only access situated on the bend of a narrow road with no footpath provision
- Is parking provisions proposed sufficient and where would any overflow go?
- In addition to visitor traffic, there will probably also be trade delivery vehicles bringing supplies and removing waste
- The site is an existing nuisance to neighbours along Wood Lane South with animal and generator noise from the site
- A well-designed and suitably sited petting zoo may be good for both animals and visitors but not here
- Queries about animal welfare no sign of food or water
- There is no licence or food standard rating

- The land is frequently flooded and unsuitable for animals
- External artificial lighting in a sensitive location
- Smell from the animals waste the food of the café for car fumes from bins, feed, wet straw etc
- Overlooking of our private property resulting in loss of privacy.
- Loss of existing views will adversely affect the residential amenities.
- Fear of crime.
- Previous nuisance of parties held in lockdown.
- No attempt made by applicant to connect with the local residents
- Devaluation of neighbouring properties
- Minimum needs of water services and power are not fully available
- No mention of management of waste-water run -off into the stream on the site which flows across to the houses on Wood Lane South.
- Possibility for double yellow lines and for it to be monitored needs to be part of the agreement if it is approved that happens.
- 200 boats at Marina
- How would emergency services access the site if there is congestion
- This site was a previous green field with no established infrastructure.
- Significant development has already been undertaken without planning approval being
- The land doesn't drain well as it is clay based so it will get water-logged.
- Contrary to local and national policy
- Will altering view from countryside to carpark.
- Loss of privacy resulting from overlooking from the visitors to this site,
- Impact from vehicle fumes and noise and headlights
- Limited information in planning application
- Conflicting information re opening hours 8. Additional traffic will be brought to the area through the quiet back lanes and no doubt would park on the already congested side roads around this area.
- Impact on ecology and woodland
- A nice idea but this is absolutely the wrong place.
- Already problems anti- social parking
- There is a connection between this land with Four Lane End Farm
- Detrimental impact and Macclesfield canal conservation area
- Detrimental to the setting of the listed canal bridge
- Site entrance is on a blind bend.
- Highway safety was a relevant factor in an Inspector's decision to refuse an appeal arising from 16/2615M, which related to a proposed vehicular access on nearby Wood Lane South (appeal decision dated 28 July 2017, paragraphs 13 to 20 and 24 to 25 – harm to highway safety
- There is a hardstanding track for over 100 metres into the heart of the site which appears to have no permission

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development / Green Belt

The NPPF states at para 143 that *“Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances”*.

Para 144 states *“When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations”*.

Para 145 states *“A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this include...
...b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*

Para 146. States *“Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.”* Included within this list of other forms of development are:

“b) engineering operations;”

And

“e) material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds);”

Policy PG3 of CELP reflects the NPPF and states *“Within the Green Belt, planning permission will not be granted for inappropriate development, except in very special circumstances, in accordance with national policy”*.

In principle, the change of use of the land to a petting farm could be considered not to be inappropriate development due to the proposal being for a form of outdoor recreation. However, as noted above material changes of use should preserve openness and not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. The buildings and structures that currently exist on the site do not have planning permission and are not included within the current application, and are not shown on the plans. The works appear to be ongoing therefore it is possible that further buildings and structures will appear on the land, which all need to be considered as part of the application. It is therefore considered that there is insufficient information to be able to assess the full impact of the change of use upon the Green Belt.

However, details of the proposed café building have been provided. This is considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt as it is not listed as one of the permitted exceptions in paragraph 145 of the NPPF,

policy PG 3 CELPS or policy GC1 of the MBLP. The café building would also result in some loss of openness and encroachment into the countryside, although given its modest scale this would be relatively limited. The applicant's agent has suggested that the café could be the subject of a condition which ties it to being ancillary to the petting farm only. However, it is considered that such a condition would not be enforceable due to the location of the petting farm close to the Middlewood Way, Macclesfield Canal and the marina. It would in all likelihood attract customers in the locality as a destination in its own right.

The car parking area is also considered to be inappropriate development due to it not preserving openness because of the increased area of hardstanding, the presence of parked cars and the associated intensification of use arising from it. It is a large area suitable for 25 cars and it is located close to the existing access and therefore clearly visible to the public. There will therefore be a visual and spatial loss of openness. The agent has offered to reduce the size of the car park, but this in turn could cause issues of highway safety, in an area which currently suffers from on street parking problems.

Very special circumstances

No very special circumstances have been submitted to overcome the inappropriateness of the development, and none are known to exist. Therefore, the application is contrary Green Belt policies as set out in paragraphs 145 and 146 of the NPPF, policy PG3 of CELPS and saved policy GC1 of MBLP.

Highways and parking

CELPS policy CO 1 deals with Sustainable Travel and Transport. It seeks to encourage a shift away from car travel to public transport, cycling and walking.

Saved MBLP policy DC6 relates to circulation and access. It sets out the circulation and access criteria for new development. This includes amongst other matters, the provision of adequate visibility splays, manoeuvring vehicles and emergency vehicles.

Access to the site is taken from an un-adopted private road (Wood Lane East), and therefore CEC Highways are not responsible for its maintenance. At its junction with the adopted highway (i.e. Wood Lane North, Wood Lane South and Wood Lane West), lateral visibility to the right (along Wood Lane North) for drivers of vehicles emerging from Wood Lane East is poor.

It is noted that, Wood Lane East provides access to Lyme View Marina and two farms, notwithstanding this, there have been no reported personal injury accidents recorded at the junction in the last five years (2015 – 2019).

This is likely due to the unusual layout of the junction, which gives right of way to traffic emerging from Wood Lane East, over traffic approaching from the right (from Wood Lane North). Bearing this in mind, it is not considered that

traffic generation associated with the proposal, which will largely take place outside of the morning and evening commuter peak periods, would have a material impact on the safe operation of the junction or wider highway network.

It is noted that the proposal includes a 25 space car park, which is likely to be sufficient to accommodate car parking demand under normal circumstances; however, given the distance between the site and the adopted highway network (approximately 100 metres) any overspill parking during periods of high demand would be likely to take place on the Would Lane East, which is a private road.

In terms of sustainable travel, the site is located in a semi-rural setting, which would likely attract trips by walkers and cyclists. It is also noted that there are bus stops located on Wood Lane West near to the junction referred to above, which may make travel to and from the site attractive for some visitors and staff. It is thus concluded that the site is reasonably well placed to encourage trips by walking, cycling and public transport.

There are no other material highway considerations associated with this proposal. The Head of Strategic Transport has no objection to the proposal.

It is therefore considered that the proposal would comply with saved policy DC6 of MBLP and policy CO1 of the CELPS.

Design / Heritage

This property lies within the Macclesfield Conservation Area and a Grade II listed canal bridge lies adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site.

Policies SE 1 and SD 2 of the CELPS seek to ensure that development is of a high standard of design which reflects local character and respects the form, layout, siting, scale, design, height and massing of the site, surrounding buildings and the street scene. CELP policy SD 2(1) (ii) states development should contribute positively to an area's character and identity, creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness in terms of height, scale, form and grouping, materials, external design and massing.

CELPS Policy SD 2 Sustainable Development Principles notes that all development will be expected to respect, and where possible enhance, the significance of heritage assets, including their wider settings.

Policy SE 7 notes that the Council will support development proposals that do not cause harm to, or which better reveal the significance of heritage assets and will seek to avoid or minimise conflict between the conservation of a heritage asset and any aspect of a development proposal.

Only plans and elevations showing the car park and the café building have been submitted. The applicant has confirmed that no external lighting is proposed. The café is a timber structure, and relatively small scale, and as such is not considered to be unduly out of keeping with its rural setting.

Whilst the Conservation officer has not raised any concerns regarding the proposal in terms of its impact upon the setting of the listed bridge or the conservation area, the car park will be situated on hardstanding, which will have an urbanising affect on this rural area, particularly when vehicles are parked upon it. The car park is located close to the entrance and will be clearly visible from Wood Lane East. The car park is not considered to reflect the local character of this rural conservation area, and results in less than substantial harm to this designated heritage asset. Paragraph 196 of the NPPF states that where a proposal results in less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. This is discussed further below.

No information has been provided relating to the other structures on the site that are clearly key aspects of the proposed use, and again insufficient information has been submitted to be able to assess the full impact upon designated heritage assets and local character. It is also noted that no information has been provided to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, as required by paragraph 189 of the NPPF.

Amenity

Saved policy DC 3 requires that new development should not significantly injure the amenities of adjoining or nearby residential property or sensitive land uses due to loss of privacy, overbearing effect, loss of sunlight or daylight, or other forms of disturbance and nuisance.

Saved policy DC38 sets out guideline separation distances for new residential development, including minimum distances between windows, to ensure adequate space, light and privacy.

There are dwelling houses on Wood Lane South which back onto the Middlewood Way. This linear cycle and walkway is situated between the application site and the dwellings. There is some landscaping interspersed along the northern boundary of the site which provides degree of screening.

The use of the land for animals is something to be expected in the countryside and along with a degree of noise or smell associated with such animals. However, the proposed car parking would introduce different source of noise in a location where there has previously been none.

The Middlewood Way lies between the application site and the adjacent properties, which in itself, will create a degree of disturbance. The nearest dwelling closest to the northern end of the car park would be over 30m away site. With most others being approximately 60m away. There are trees along the western boundary of the site and domestic landscaping within many of the houses on Wood Lane South. Given the proposed opening hours and the existing landscaping it is considered that any impact resulting from the car park would be acceptable as there is unlikely to be any loss of privacy and

any resultant noise would be limited by the hours of opening. Other noises associated with animals is to be expected in such countryside location.

It is considered that the proposal would comply with saved policies DC3 and DC38 of MBLP.

Trees

CELPS policy SE 5 relates to Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland. It seeks to protect trees, hedgerows and woodlands, that provide a significant contribution to the amenity, biodiversity, landscape character of historic character of the surrounding area. Saved MBLP policy DC9 seeks to protect trees and woodlands, worthy of formal protection, from development unless certain circumstances apply.

There are trees and hedgerows along the boundary with the Middlewood Way, and on the banking leading down to the path, which do make a positive contribution to the character and visual amenity of the area. The proposed car park comes very close to these trees, but no details have been provided to show the impact of the proposal upon them. Comments are awaited from the arboricultural officer, however it is anticipated that insufficient information has been provided to be able to assess the full impact of the proposal upon these trees.

Flood Risk

No risk of flooding is anticipated on the site, as it lies above the Middlewood way on its western boundary and other than the car parking area the land would remain open grazing land. Should the application be approved car park surfacing could be conditioned to be porous. Comments are awaited from LLFA.

Ecology

CELPS policy SE 3 deals with biodiversity and geodiversity. It seeks to protect areas of high biodiversity and geodiversity. It also requires all development to aim to positively contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity.

There are no ecological implications resulting from the development. It is therefore considered to comply with policy SE 3 of CELPS subject to conditions relation to the protection of breeding birds and the incorporation of features suitable for use by breeding birds in the new development.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

It is considered that insufficient information has been submitted to assess the full impact of the change of use upon the Green Belt. However, the proposals for the car park and the café are inappropriate forms of development in the Green Belt that reduce openness and encroach into the countryside. Substantial weight is afforded to any harm to the Green Belt in accordance with paragraph 144 of the NPPF. In addition, the car park is considered to

result in less than substantial harm to the Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area.

The absence of sufficient information also does not allow the full impact of the proposed development upon designated heritage assets and local character, and trees to be assessed. In addition, no information has been provided by the applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, as required by paragraph 189 of the NPPF.

Collectively these matters carry substantial weight against the proposal.

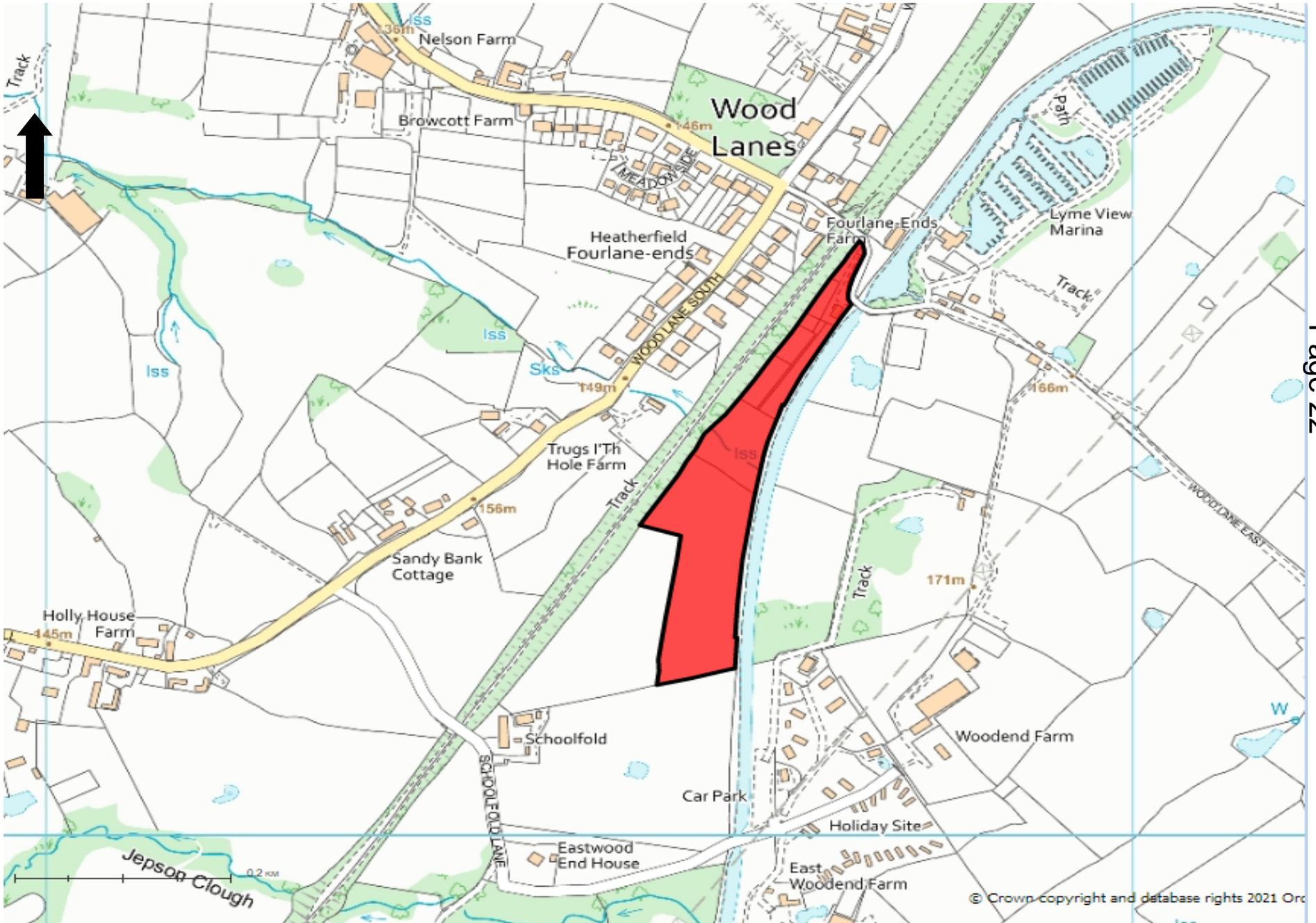
Balanced against this harm is the applicant's proposal that the site will be used to support educational and therapeutic needs, host school visits and explore potential for an apprenticeship for animal husbandry. Whilst these matters may provide some social public benefit to such groups, no evidence of any arrangements or agreements with educational, medical or social bodies has been provided to substantiate these aims. Therefore, they attract very limited weight in the overall balance.

Accordingly it is considered that the identified harm to the Green Belt, the harm to the conservation area and the lack of information is not outweighed by these other considerations / public benefits. Accordingly the proposal is contrary to policies PG 3 of the CELPS and GC1 of the MBLP relating to the Green Belt, policies SE 1, SD 2, SE 5 and SE 7 relating to the character of the local area / conservation area, as well as associated paragraphs of the NPPF. The application is therefore recommended for refusal for the following reasons:

- 1. Insufficient information has been submitted in order to determine whether the proposed change of use is inappropriate in principle, however, the proposed café and car park are inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and very special circumstances have not been demonstrated. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies PG 3 of the CELPS, GC1 of the MBLP and the Green Belt chapter of the NPPF.**
- 2. Insufficient information has been submitted to allow the full impact of the proposal upon designated heritage assets, local character and trees and hedgerows to be assessed. However, the proposed car park is not considered to reflect the local character of this rural conservation area, and results in less than substantial harm to this designated heritage asset. The identified public benefits do not outweigh this harm. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies SE 1, SD 2, SE 5 and SE 7 of the CELPS.**

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

N



Application No: 19/0334M

Location: BOOTH BANK FARM, REDDY LANE, MILLINGTON, CHESHIRE, WA14 3RG

Proposal: Development of a new residential wing with ancillary office and children's activity space; alterations, extensions and repairs to Booth Bank Farmhouse, access and landscaping at Booth Bank Farm, Millington.

Applicant: Trustees of, Children's Adventure Farm Trust

Expiry Date: 02-Jul-2021

SUMMARY

The application site is the Children's Adventure Farm Trust, an outdoor activity centre based around the Grade-II listed Booth Bank Farmhouse.

The application seeks planning permission for extensions and alterations to the main farmhouse, alterations to the stables building, construction of a new accommodation block, and various other changes to landscaping and parking arrangements.

The application is considered to represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt, would result in harm to openness and encroachment harm, and would result in less than substantial harm to the listed building and its setting.

Nevertheless, the proposal would address a number of operational issues that the Trust currently face, including matters relating to accessibility, inclusivity, accommodation for disabled children and vehicle/pedestrian conflict.

It has also been demonstrated that alternative locations have been considered and justifiably discounted.

On balance, the health, well-being and inclusivity benefits of the proposal are considered to clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and the other identified harm. The application is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to conditions

REASON FOR REFERRAL

This application is being considered by the Northern Planning Committee owing to the public interest of the application and the identified harm to a Grade-II listed building.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

The application site is the Children's Adventure Farm Trust (CAFT), located at Booth Bank Farm, at the junction of Booth Bank Lane, Reddy Lane and Millington Lane. The M56 motorway is to the north of the site. The site is located in the Green Belt.

The site comprises the former Booth Bank farmhouse (Grade II listed), with a converted 'U' shaped stable block to the immediate rear, with open spaces, animal paddocks, and a large sports hall further to the rear. The site also includes various smaller structures, parking areas, and a woodland activity area to the north-east of the site, abutting the motorway.

There is a significant change in levels across the site. The land around the farmhouse complex rises up from the site frontage. The site is situated to the east of Agden Brook, with the south and western portions of the site within flood zones 2 and 3.

While none of the land within the application site is safeguarded for HS2, land to the south and west of the site is safeguarded for this purpose.

The site has residential neighbours to the north and south-east but is otherwise generally surrounded by open fields.

The Children's Adventure Farm Trust

The Children's Adventure Farm Trust is a charity which provides outdoor, farm-based activities for children in the North West, who are disadvantaged, disabled, or both. It is entirely funded by charitable donations. The Charity has been at the current site since 1992.

The Trust operates from the grade II listed farmhouse and the 19th century converted stable block. To the north of the main buildings, there are facilities, including a sports hall, animal enclosures, playground and duck pond.

The Trust provides a variety of programmes for terminally ill, disabled and disadvantaged children across the North West. CAFT caters for children with needs ranging from complex and severe physical and learning disabilities, sensory impairments and terminal illnesses, through to children who act as carers for a family member, those dealing with bereavement and children who have been victims of abuse.

Children may visit for the day or several days, as groups or with schools.

Existing operations

The existing farmhouse provides guest bedroom space for children and their carers, dining facilities for guests and staff, and kitchen and administrative office space.

The converted stable block provides bedrooms, an art room, a sensory room, fundraising office and meeting room. The first floor is accessible by stairs and a lift, but neither is large enough to accommodate modern wheelchairs.

The farmhouse and stable block enclose a courtyard, used in all weathers for outdoor play and organised activities.

Facilities at other areas of the site (including the sports centre and animal paddocks) are located to the rear of these buildings, beyond a steep bank, creating difficulties for disabled children and their carers accessing other areas of the site.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought for a range of works around the site. The scheme has been amended during the lifetime of the application. The proposed works and amendments are detailed below:

Farmhouse:

- Alterations and repairs to the farmhouse
- Removal of existing conservatory and other later extensions
- New wraparound side and rear extension/conservatory, this would be a flat-roofed glazed structure, with a green roof.
- Internal rearrangements at ground floor level. The kitchen and dining areas would be re-located into the new extension, along with an accessible WC.

New residential wing:

- Construction of a new accommodation wing in a new two-storey building immediately to the south of the farmhouse.
- The wing would provide a reception, sensory room and art room at ground floor level and accessible bedroom accommodation at first floor level
- The building would be partly set into the slope of the land. It would include a lift to provide wheelchair access across the different levels of the site

Alterations to the converted barns:

- Minor alterations to fenestration
- Internal re-arranging to provide enlarged office and store areas.
- Alterations to the residential accommodation provided and additional bedroom space at first floor level

Other works:

- Alteration of the vehicle accesses into the site and around it. A new turning circle (porous resin-bound gravel) would be formed to the front and side of the farmhouse, and to the front of the new building, with direct access into the complex from this area.

- New pedestrian and wheelchair circulation around the building and site.
- Associated landscaping works.
- Relocation of BBQ structure

Following feedback from the heritage officer during determination, revised plans were submitted with the following changes:

- Reduction of accommodation at the proposed new wing, reducing its size by 57m² floorspace, with the building set 4m further into the hillside to reduce its visible mass.
- Provision of additional bed spaces in the converted barns and corresponding reduction in officer space; changes to the proposed internal layout and external changes to the barns
- Additional removal of a lean-to extension from the farmhouse
- Reduction of the farmhouse extension and set back from the front elevation

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

19/0402M – pending consideration

Listed building consent for Alterations, extensions and external repairs to Booth Bank Farmhouse, to include removal of existing UPVC porch and conservatory, and construction of extended contemporary new extension.

19/4912M – approved – 19 December 2019

Retrospective application for security lighting fixed to existing sports hall, siting of low-level solar lighting and security lighting to footway

10/1012M – approved – 13 March 2012

Erection of proposed machinery store

10/0889M – approved – 26 May 2010

Retrospective planning approval for: parking area - 669 sqm; tarmac area - 666sqm; aviary - 16.38 sqm; climbing frame - 90.25 sqm; fence - 191m length - 2.5m height

09/0277P – approved – 16 February 2011

Variation of condition 6 on application 82087P (retrospective)

09/0273P – approved – 16 February 2011

Variation of condition 3 attached to permission 99/2343P (retrospective)

04/2979P – approved – 25 January 2005

Formation of private pathway for wheelchair access

04/1958P – withdrawn - 17August 2004

Re-surfacing of central section of existing driveway with tarmac

03/1355P – approved – 24 July 2003

Formation of a countryside access trail in place of former go kart track

00/0559P – permitted development – 18 April 2000

Retention of change of use of first floor recreational area to ancillary offices

99/2343P – approved – 5 January 2000
Proposed playground/adventure trail

99/1600P – refused – 6 October 1999
Installation of playground equipment

99/0386P – refused – 26 May 1999
Children's adventure playground

83245P – approved - 31 January 1996
Formation of car park to serve Booth Bank Farm

82503P – refused – 11 October 1995
Retention and surfacing of car park to serve Booth Bank Farm

82807P – approved – 16 August 1995
Sports hall/play barn and ancillary facilities (amended orientation from that approved by 5/77034P of 20 July 1994)

77034P – approved – 20 July 1994
Sports Hall/play barn and ancillary facilities

62912P - approved - 30 May 1990
Change of use from farm buildings to residential accommodation and workshops including extension

62868P – approved – 30 May 1990
Alterations and extensions to building

62867P – approved – 30 May 1990
Outbuildings change of use from farm use to residential/workshop use including extension to provide extra workshop accommodation all materials to match existing

62866P – approved – 30 May 1990
Change of use from residential to institutional residential

POLICIES

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)

MP 1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
PG 3 Green Belt
PG 6 Open Countryside
SD 1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East
SD 2 Sustainable Development Principles
SC 3 Health and Well-Being
SE 1 Design

SE 2 Efficient Use of Land
SE 3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
SE 4 The Landscape
SE 5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland
SE 7 The Historic Environment
SE 12 Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability
SE 13 Flood Risk and Water Management
CO 1 Sustainable Travel and Transport
Appendix C – Parking Standards

The Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy was formally adopted on 27th July 2017. There are however policies within the legacy local plans that still apply and have not yet been replaced. These policies are set out below.

Macclesfield Borough Local Plan

NE3 Landscape Conservation
NE11 Nature Conservation
NE12 SSSIs, SBIs and Nature Reserves
NE14 Nature Conservation Sites
NE15 Habitat Enhancement
GC1 New Build
GC10 Extensions to Residential Institutions
DC2 Extensions and alterations to existing buildings
DC3 Design – Amenity
DC6 Design – Circulation and Access
DC8 Landscaping
DC9 Design – Tree Protection
DC10 Landscaping and Tree Protection
DC13 and DC14 Noise
DC15 Provision of facilities
DC17 Water Resources – flooding etc.
DC18 Water Resources – SUDS
DC19 Water Resources – groundwater
DC35 Residential - Materials & Finishes
DC37 Residential - Landscaping
DC38 Residential - Space, Light and Privacy
BE2 Preservation of Historic Fabric
BE15 Listed Buildings
BE18 Design Criteria for Listed Buildings
RT7 Cycleways, Bridleways and Footpaths

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Cheshire East Design Guide

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

National Planning Practice Guidance

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Countryside and Rights of Way (PROW Unit) – No objection

Environment Agency - No reply

Environmental Health - Noise mitigation measures set out in Intrusive Noise Survey submitted with the application should be implemented in full prior to first occupation. Informatives on construction hours and contaminated land obligations.

Flood Risk – No objection subject to drainage conditions

Millington Parish Council – No comments received at time of writing. Comments on accompanying LBC application state:

The Parish Council feel that the roof of the new building is not in keeping with the existing listed farmhouse or other properties in the Parish, some of which are also listed. Also this is greenbelt land and very close to other residents who obviously came to live in the area to enjoy the views and peace and quiet of the countryside, we don't feel this has been given consideration when these plans were submitted due to the siting and size of the new building.

Highways – No objection

HS2 Ltd – No objection - No part of the red line site boundary is within land safeguarded for Phase 2b of HS2. The applicant should be made aware that part of red line boundary shown on their location plan, is land identified in the working draft Environmental Statement. The land identified is potentially required temporarily during the construction phase to accommodate a construction traffic route. the applicant may want to consider phasing some landscaping works at the boundary to avoid any potential abortive works.

United Utilities - General comments relating to water and drainage.

REPRESENTATIONS

Representations received from 29 addresses. 16 objecting to the proposal, 10 in support and three making general observations. The main points are summarised below:

Objections

Green Belt:

- Development is unnecessary, as the existing buildings and infrastructure, including the sports hall always appear empty
- The proposal is contrary to Green Belt policy. It would result in loss of green land and would be of an inappropriate scale.
- It would have a harmful impact on the rural nature of the area and would result in urbanisation.
- Other smaller schemes in the green belt have been refused

- The proposed facilities (such as fundraising) could be provided in a town location– it is not a farm
- The objectives could be met through less expansive works.
- Development excessive and inappropriate in the Green Belt
- Any need for additional accommodation could be relocated and designed in a manner, which has far less impact on the openness of the Green Belt
- Very special circumstances do not exist
- If approved, other developers may want to build on green belt

Highways safety:

- The surrounding roads are single track, lack parking places and were not built for current levels of traffic
- Recent highway works in the area have turned the roads into a rat-run
- Increased traffic movements would put highways safety at risk
- Poor access to the site and poor visibility

Heritage:

- Inappropriate design, which fails to take account of historic nature of existing buildings
- The development would result in substantial harm to the listed building. the public benefits would be outweighed by the harm of the development
- Heritage is unique
- Design approach would not meet the expectations of paragraph 127. Prominent location of the wing and extension would change the historic pattern and form of the farmhouse.
- Materials not in keeping with 17th century farmhouse

Residential amenity

- Additional traffic and visitors would cause noise and disturbance

Other matters:

- Damage to grass verges, hedges and rural lanes
- Continued building would destroy the essence of the holiday, which is open air, clean unpolluted countryside, green space
- Development would not benefit anyone.
- The character of the rural setting would be destroyed, as the new buildings would dominate.
- Applicants have outgrown the site and should find other accommodation more suitable to their needs
- No justification for further extensions- how long before they return wanting further extensions
- CAFT is a commercial operation, supported by professional fundraisers and should be treated like any other commercial operation

Comments in Support:

- CAFT provides opportunities for children to be in open space, with animals and supported by caring and hardworking team.
- Respite for families
- Development needed to make the farm more accessible and inclusive for all.
- Existing difficulties for wheelchair users to navigate the site, due to layout.
- Development would fit in with the present surroundings
- Proposal will make a huge difference to children who benefit from time at CAFT
- CAFT offers platform for children and young people facing very challenging situations to meet others in similar circumstances
- Development would ensure there is even more space truly accessible to children with disabilities.
- Existing sensory room difficult to access, as lift does not accommodate larger wheelchairs
- CAFT discussed the application in detail with neighbours
- In favour of providing access for visiting children so traffic is reduced
- No objections to delivery area
- Could the land on the opposite side of Millington Lane be used as a car park – reducing traffic on shared access lane
- Proposal would improve the facilities and efficiency of the site, whilst preserving the heritage of the farmhouse

General Observations:

- Design, location and roof materials are a concern
- The building should be relocated elsewhere on the site
- Query regarding whether the existing sports hall is being used to its optimum and whether this could be used to have less impact on the green belt and landscape
- Would like to see road widened before building works begin

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development – Green Belt

The application site lies within the Green Belt. National and local policies attach great importance to green belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The two essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

Green Belts serve the following five purposes:

- a) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

To achieve this, there are restrictions on the types of development which may be carried out. These are detailed within NPPF paragraphs 145 and 146 and reiterated within CELPS policy PG 3.

Development not falling within one of the listed exceptions is inappropriate. NPPF paragraph 143 confirms that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

NPPF paragraph 144 directs Local Planning Authorities to give substantial weight to any harm to the Green Belt. It confirms that 'very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

NPPF Paragraph 145 states that all new buildings other than those specifically listed as exceptions should be viewed as inappropriate development. The list of exceptions includes the following, which are relevant to this application:

'b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; 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 original building'.

d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces'

These exceptions are also listed within CELPS policy PG 3.

There is no figure in policy for what constitutes 'not materially larger'.

Saved MBLP policy GC12 allows for extensions and alterations of up to 30% increase in floor space, provided the scale and appearance of the house is not significantly altered.

Paragraph 146 sets out the other forms of development, which are not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. This list includes engineering operations.

There is no statutory definition of openness. However, it is accepted that openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects. The visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume. Openness may also include other factors including the duration of development and the degree of activity likely to be generated.

The development would comprise:

Extensions and alterations to the farmhouse

The proposed works include extensions and alterations to the existing farmhouse. This includes the removal of existing later additions.

The proposed extensions would be single storey and taking into account the demolition works, would not be disproportionate in relation to the original building.

The works to the farmhouse would be not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Alterations to the barns

The works to the barn include minor external alterations and internal re-organising. There would be no increase in the size of the barns. The proposed alterations would have no greater impact on the Green Belt. This aspect of the proposal would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Replacement BBQ area

The proposal includes the relocation of the existing covered barbecue structure to make way for the new building. The relocation of this structure can be considered as a replacement building. As it would be the same size and would be in the same use, it would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

New wing

The proposed new building would provide two floors of accommodation. At ground floor level, there would be a reception area, sensory room and art room, as well as toilet facilities and store areas. At first floor level, there would be further bedrooms and a corridor allowing level access onto the playing field beyond.

While part of CAFT's work enables children to take part in outdoor sport and recreation, the facilities within the proposed building would not be purely for these purposes. The sensory room and art studio would be facilities for indoor recreation. The upstairs accommodation would provide bedrooms for visiting children. As such, while the proposed building would facilitate children visiting the site to take part in outdoor sports and recreation, it would not be solely for this purpose and cannot fall within this exception.

As the new building would not fall within any of the exceptions set out within NPPF paragraphs 145 or 146 or CELPS policy PG 3, it would be inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

As this element is inappropriate development, it is also relevant to consider the impact on openness.

The proposed building would have a footprint of approximately 183sqm, with accommodation laid out over two levels. It would have an overall height of around 7.3m, when measured from the roadside.

The proposed building would introduce a large amount of built form onto an area of the site which is currently largely devoid of development. The introduction of this quantity of development would have an adverse impact on the spatial dimension of openness.

While the building would be set back from the road frontage, due to its two-storey height and length, it would be a prominent feature, which would be visible from public viewpoints, particularly on the approaches from Millington Lane to the south and Boothsbank Lane from the west.

Given its scale, height and prominence, in public views, the proposal would also result in visual harm to openness.

Hard landscaping and parking areas

Paragraph 146 confirms that engineering operations may not be inappropriate. However, this is subject to the proviso that the development would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt.

The proposal includes a new parking and turning area accessed off Millington Lane. It also includes a new area for deliveries, footpaths and retaining walls.

As noted above, openness can have both spatial and visual dimensions. Given that the proposal would provide a new access and parking/turning areas, the spatial and visual impacts need to be considered. The degree of activity is also relevant.

The new access and turning circle would be installed on area which is currently a grassed lawn and hedgerow. The installation of a large area of hardstanding on what is currently an undeveloped area of grass would undoubtedly have an impact on the spatial dimension of openness.

In visual terms, the impact of the development would also be harmful. The large turning area would be in a prominent location at the entrance to the site. It would be an intrusive and urbanising feature within the landscape, which would detract from the open character of the site frontage.

The proposed building would also enable the expansion of the existing operation. As such, it is likely that there would be some increase in the levels of activity. That being said, the scale of the increase, is such that it is unlikely that any increase in activity would result in harm to openness.

Harm arising from inappropriate development in the Green Belt

The proposed new building and the proposed vehicular accesses and associated engineering works would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt. Substantial weight is given to this harm.

Harm to openness

The proposed new wing and areas of hard landscaping would also result in harm to openness, both in visual and spatial terms, as detailed in the sections above. The impact of additional activity on openness is likely to be limited.

Effects on the purposes of the Green Belt

NPPF paragraph 134 notes that the Green Belt serves five purposes. The impact of the proposed development against these purposes is considered.

a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;

The development would not cause harm to this objective, due to the distance between the application site and the nearest large built-up area.

b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;

The development would not cause harm to this purpose.

c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

The development would result in some harm to this objective. The new build element would introduce built form to an otherwise open and generally undeveloped area of the site. This would comprise encroachment into the countryside.

d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and

As the site is not within the immediate vicinity of any towns, it is not considered that the proposal would cause harm to this purpose.

e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

It is not considered that the proposal would result in harm to this objective. Owing to the nature of the development and the existing CAFT operation, it is considered unlikely that the same development could be delivered on derelict or urban land.

Green belt conclusions

While elements of the proposal are appropriate, as there are also inappropriate elements, the proposal in its totality would be inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Substantial weight is given to this harm, as well as to the harm to openness and the conflict with the Green Belt purpose of preventing encroachment.

In accordance with CELPS policy PG 3 and NPPF paragraphs 143 and 144, the proposal cannot be approved unless 'very special circumstances' exist. This will only be the case, where the potential harm to the Green Belt, by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Heritage

The main farmhouse is a Grade-II listed building, which dates from circa 1670, with later 19th century additions. There also appear to have been various extensions, dating from the second half of the 20th century, following its listing in 1959. These additions include a porch and UPVC conservatory, as well as alterations to fenestration. The porch and conservatory appear to be unlawful, as there is no record of them having received listed building consent.

Immediately to the north of the listed farmhouse is a 'U' shaped stable block. This building is present on the first edition ordnance survey map, dating from 1875. It appears to have been subsequently extended.

While the stable building is not listed in itself, it lies within the curtilage of the listed building and pre-dates 1948. It is also within the same ownership. Given these factors, it is considered to be a curtilage listed building.

Listed Buildings are designated heritage assets for the purposes of NPPF chapter 16 and CELPS policy SE 7. NPPF paragraph 184 confirms that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Paragraph 193 states that:

"When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Paragraph NPPF 194 notes that:

"Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification."

In accordance with NPPF paragraph 196, *"where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use."*

CELPS Policy SD 2 Sustainable Development Principles notes that all development will be expected to respect, and where possible enhance, the significance of heritage assets, including their wider settings.

Policy SE 7 notes that the Council will support development proposals that do not cause harm to, or which better reveal the significance of heritage assets and will seek to avoid or minimise conflict between the conservation of a heritage asset and any aspect of a development proposal. In the case of designated heritage assets, SE 7 notes that this will be done by:

- i. Requiring development proposals that cause harm to, or loss of, a designated heritage asset and its significance, including its setting, to provide a clear and*

convincing justification as to why that harm is considered acceptable. Where that case cannot be demonstrated, proposals will not be supported.

ii. Considering the level of harm in relation to the public benefits that may be gained by the proposal.

iii. The use of appropriate legal agreements or planning obligations to secure the benefits arising from a development proposal where the loss, in whole or in part, of a heritage asset is accepted.

Additionally, in accordance with the Section 16 and 66 of the 1990 Act, when making a decision on all listed building consent applications or any decision on a planning application for development that affects a listed building or its setting, a local planning authority must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Preservation in this context means not harming the interest in the building, as opposed to keeping it utterly unchanged.

The application is supported by a Heritage Statement which describes the significance of the heritage asset and assesses the impact of the proposals upon the significance.

The Conservation Officer assessed the proposals and raised concerns. Following on from these concerns, the scale of both the conservatory and new wing have been reduced. The new wing has also been pushed further back onto the site.

These amendments have not addressed the initial concerns raised by the Conservation Officer. Their latest comments are as follows:

Farmhouse extension

“The amendments relate only to the conservatory addition; no significant amendments have been proposed to the new block or wider hard landscaping. Whilst the conservatory has been reduced in size and pushed back from the front elevation, it still remains a large addition which will be prominent in wider views and in my opinion out of scale with this small farm building. The two parts of the scheme are in very close proximity and when read in conjunction will appear overly dominant and incongruous. In the absence of amendments to the hard landscaping and location, scale of the new block I am unfortunately unable to alter my position with regard to this application, and remain of the view that it will cause a high degree of less than substantial harm to the historic building and its wider setting.”

New wing, access and turning circle

“...whilst I have no objection to the design or materials proposed, I cannot agree that the new building respects the height and form of the farmhouse and will not be overbearing. The structure will in my view not read as a single storey addition, it is clearly a two-storey structure, the height although less than the house is greater than that to the stable block. Due to the scale and mass of the building, even in its amended location will result in a structure which would visually dominate the farmhouse. This is additionally compounded by the scale and proximity of the conservatory addition, which would be read in conjunction with the new wing.

The southern garden is to be re-landscaped in order for vehicles to be able access the new facilities, this will require the removal of the existing hedges and some trees and provision of new hard surfacing in brick. Two existing trees will be retained to the centre of the new area. In my view this substantially removes an existing landscaped open area which greatly contributes to the setting of the farmhouse, the removal of the hedges, lawns and opening up of the upper part of the site in conjunction with hard landscaping will radically alter the setting of the building. The green lawns and hedges which currently enhance the setting of the house will be lost beneath hard landscaping and buildings.

In terms of the Framework, the degree of harm, including direct effects and effects on setting, would still be less than substantial, this does not mean that the harm would be minor or unimportant. The Framework states that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and emphasises the desirability of sustaining and enhancing their significance, I do not feel this would be achieved by this scheme. The proposals would also fail to meet the objectives of SE1 and SE7 of the CELPS and BH5 of the saved policies of the Macclesfield Local Plan.”

The conclusions of the Council’s Conservation Officer in terms of the impact on the listed building and its setting are noted and agreed with. The development would be a prominent feature, highly visible in many of the public viewpoints from which the farmhouse is also experienced. The cumulative impact of the new wing and extension and areas of hardstanding would appear overly dominant and detract from the relatively modestly proportioned listed farmhouse. It is agreed that the development would result in a high level of ‘less than substantial harm’.

The harm needs to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriated securing its optimum viable use.

The public benefits are set out later in this report.

Design

NPPF Chapter 12 deals with achieving well-designed places. Paragraph 124 identifies good design as a key aspect of sustainable development.

Paragraph 126 states that “*planning policies and designs should ensure that, developments:*

- a) *will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) *Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) *are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) *establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) *create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users, and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life of community cohesion and resilience”*

Policies SE 1 and SD 2 of the CELPS seek to ensure that development is of a high standard of design which reflects local character and respects the form, layout, siting, scale, design, height and massing of the site, surrounding buildings and the street scene. CELP policy SD 2(1) (ii) states development should contribute positively to an area’s character and identity, creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness in terms of height, scale, form and grouping, materials, external design and massing.

The Council’s Design Officer has reviewed their proposal and has offered their support to the scheme. It is noted that the Conservation Officer did also not raise concerns with the contemporary design of the new wing, or the extensions proposed.

As a standalone piece of architecture, there would be no objection to the development. However, as set out within paragraph 127, high quality design also requires developments to be sympathetic to local character and history.

As set out in the Heritage section above, the Conservation Officer has raised concerns that the development would result in less than substantial harm to the listed building and its setting. Given these concerns, the proposal would not comply with all of the requirements of NPPF paragraph 127c) and CELPS policies SE 1 and SD 2.

Residential Amenity

Saved policy DC 3 requires that new development should not significantly injure the amenities of adjoining or nearby residential property or sensitive land uses due to loss of privacy, overbearing effect, loss of sunlight or daylight, or other forms of disturbance and nuisance.

Saved policy DC38 sets out guideline separation distances for new residential development, including minimum distances between windows, to ensure adequate space, light and privacy.

Some local residents have raised concerns regarding noise from the development and increased activity.

However, it is not considered that the proposed works would result in any material harm to the amenity of neighbouring occupants, including in any of the above considerations. The new build elements would be set sufficiently far from any nearby residences to avoid harm in terms of loss of light, visual intrusion or loss of privacy. It is not considered that the proposals would result in a harmful increase in noise or general disruption.

Highways

CELPS policy CO 1 deals with Sustainable Travel and Transport. It seeks to encourage a shift away from car travel to public transport, cycling and walking.

Saved MBLP policy DC6 relates to circulation and access. It sets out the circulation and access criteria for new development. This includes amongst other matters, the provision of adequate visibility splays, manoeuvring vehicles and emergency vehicles.

A number of concerns have been raised by local residents in relation to the impact of the development on highway safety. These concerns focus on:

- Many of the roads are single lane with no parking places
- Increased traffic following on from recent highways schemes
- Poor access to the site and visibility
- Damage to grass verges, hedges and rural lanes.

Local residents have expressed concerns that the expansion of CAFT would bring additional traffic to these narrow roads, putting the safety of other road users at risk.

It also should be noted that the site is not in a sustainable location, but the use is such that it has to be located within a rural area.

The scheme includes a transport statement, and this has been reviewed by the Council's Highways Officer. They have acknowledged that the proposal would result in a small uplift in traffic movements to and from the site, however, this is not considered to be an issue for highways safety. The off-road parking, turning and minibus access arrangements would be acceptable.

Overall, they have raised no objection subject to an informative on the requirement for a section 184 vehicle crossing agreement.

The concerns of local residents are noted. However, it is not considered that the proposal would adversely affect highways safety. There would be no conflict with saved MBLP policy DC6.

Public Rights of Way

The Public Rights of Way officer has advised that the proposal has the affect Public Footpath Millington No. 11, which follows the route of the driveway through the site, to the side of the sports hall, and enters fields to the east of the site. Whilst none of the proposed works would appear likely to result in a direct effect on the right of way, the PROW officer has provided advisory notes for the applicant regarding any potential changes to the right of way, and

regarding arrangements during the construction phase. These will be included as an informative.

Flood Risk

CELPS policy SE 13 deals with Flood Risk and Water Management. It requires all development to integrate measures for sustainable water management to reduce flood risk, avoid an adverse impact on water quality and quantity within the borough and provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity, health and recreation.

There is a watercourse which runs to the west of the site. A very small proportion of the western-most portion of the site lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3. However, the remainder of the site, including where the development is proposed would be in Flood Zone 1, which is at the lowest risk of fluvial flooding.

The Environment Agency has been consulted on the scheme but have not commented.

The Council's Flood Risk Officer has advised that the principle of the development is acceptable, but that approval should be subject to conditions requiring:

- Implementation in accordance with details of surface water storage/disposal in the Flood Risk Assessment submitted with the application.
- Submission and approval of a detailed surface water drainage design/strategy.

The Flood Risk Officer also advised that advisory notes on the surface water drainage hierarchy, and on the need for consent for any alterations to ordinary watercourses, should be added to any approval.

Subject to these conditions and advisories, the proposal would be acceptable in terms of management of surface water and effects on flood risk.

Nature Conservation

CELPS policy SE 3 deals with biodiversity and geodiversity. It seeks to protect areas of high biodiversity and geodiversity. It also requires all development to aim to positively contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity.

The application is supported by an 'Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Daytime Bat Survey, dated July 2018'. This has been reviewed by the Council's Nature Conservation Officer.

They have advised that, in the event of approval, conditions are required to protect breeding birds and provide ecological enhancements. They have also noted the developer's obligations with regards Rhododendron known to be on the site.

Subject to the above conditions, the proposal would comply with the requirements of CELPS policy SE 3.

Trees

CELPs policy SE 5 relates to Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland. It seeks to protect trees, hedgerows and woodlands, that provide a significant contribution to the amenity, biodiversity, landscape character of historic character of the surrounding area.

Saved MBLP policy DC9 seeks to protect trees and woodlands, worthy of formal protection, from development unless certain circumstances apply.

The application is supported by an Arboricultural Implications Assessment and an Arboricultural Method Statement which include a Tree Survey with accompanying schedule, and a Tree Protection Plan.

The forestry officer has advised as follows:

A total of 4 individual trees are identified for removal and these include 1 Cypress, 2 Holly and 1 Horse Chestnut with 3 groups G2 Apple, G3 Hawthorn and G4 Sycamore. All 4 trees and 3 groups have been categorised as C2.

The removals of the trees are deemed not to be of significant impact as they are chiefly situated to the interior of the site with public amenity limited. In addition the majority have been categorised as C2 due to structural instabilities.

The site enjoys good canopy cover with a healthy combination of tree and shrubs of a varied age range. To mitigate the loss of trees a landscape programme is proposed with planting of extra heavy standard trees, small trees /large shrubs native and ornamental species with new hedgerows planted with native species.

The forestry officer has raised no objection and advised that permission should be subject to conditions relating to tree retention, details of tree protection, and adherence to the submitted details of tree works.

Landscape

CELPs policy SE 4 relates to Landscape. Amongst other matters, all development should conserve the landscape character and quality and should where possible, enhance and effectively manage the historic, natural and man-made landscape features that contribute to local distinctiveness in both rural and urban landscapes.

The proposed scheme has been reviewed by the Council's Landscape Officer, who has advised the following:

In my opinion this scheme proposes topographically-aligned and acceptably-scaled buildings and incorporates sustainable practices such as re-use of excavated soils on site and permeable hard-surfacing. I also find the planting scheme appropriate and its establishment and maintenance has been addressed.

As such it is considered that the scheme would be acceptable in terms of landscape design and effects on the wider landscape. The landscape officer provided further advice on planting arrangements, 'for information only'.

Health, Wellbeing, and Inclusivity

NPPF chapter 8 focuses on promoting healthy and safe communities.

Paragraph 91 states that amongst other matters planning decisions should promote social interaction and be safe and accessible. This paragraph also states that planning decisions should:

- *“Enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling”*
- Amongst other matters, paragraph 92 states that in order to provide social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning decisions should:
- Plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.
- Take in account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community
- Ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services

At a local level, CELPS policies SD 1, SD2 and SC 3 are of particular relevance.

SD 1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East notes that development should wherever possible, *inter alia*:

- *Provide appropriate infrastructure to meet the needs of the local community including: education; health and social care; transport; communication technology; landscaping and open space; sport and leisure; community facilities; water; waste water; and energy;*
- *Provide access to local jobs, services and facilities, reflecting the community's needs;*
- *Support the health, safety, social and cultural well-being of the residents of Cheshire East;*
- *Contribute towards the achievement of equality and social inclusion through positive cooperation with the local community;*

Policy SD 2 sets out the LPA's sustainable development principles. At vi, it states that all development will be expected to be socially inclusive and, where suitable integrate into the local community.

Policy SC 3 deals with Health and well-being. The following are considered of particular relevance:

"3. Ensuring new developments provide opportunities for healthy living and improve health and well-being through the encouragement of walking and cycling, good housing design (including the minimisation of social isolation and creation of inclusive communities), access to services, sufficient open space and other green infrastructure, and sports facilities and opportunity for recreation and sound safety standards.

5. Protecting existing community infrastructure and ensuring the provision of a network of community facilities, providing essential public services together with private and voluntary sector facilities, to meet the needs of the local community."

The public benefits put forward by the applicant in support of their case primarily revolve around the health, well-being and inclusivity work of the Trust.

As detailed above, The Children's Adventure Farm Trust offers holidays free of charge to disadvantaged and disabled children in the North-west. It has been running from Booth Bank Farm since 1992.

The Trust enables children, who likely would not otherwise have the opportunity to do so, to have a holiday in the countryside. There is no doubt that the Trust as a community facility provides an invaluable service to some of the most vulnerable children and their families.

The Trust has identified a number of areas of the current operation, which need addressing. They state that the application has been submitted for this reason, rather than to grow or significantly expand the existing operation:

1. Safeguarding: *The present situation on site can be dangerous to children and carers. Delivery vehicles and drivers, enter the courtyard to unload goods into the stores and farmhouse where children are playing, creating an immediate risk to the children. In addition, the children need to reach the gym and other attractions up the slope to the east. Able bodied children and carers can use the stepped ramp (1 in 6) behind the farmhouse, but disabled children in wheelchairs have to be pushed up the road around the courtyard buildings by carers, bringing them into immediate conflict with CAFT vehicular traffic, and with the traffic to Booth Bank Cottage.*
2. Access into the site: *Because of the safeguarding issues outlined (...) above, there is the need to separate the children and the vehicles. The vehicle route to the west side of the outbuildings can remain, but the courtyard must be traffic free, with children moving around the site safely. Most particularly, the proposal is to create a new vehicle delivery area to the north side of the courtyard outbuilding by cutting into the hillside and also creating a new goods delivery door into the north elevation. This removes vehicles from the courtyard, whilst the children are removed from the road.*

3. Access around the site: *The farmhouse and the courtyard act as the 'hub' of the CAFT operation, but the gym, farm and animals, barbeque, adventure play facilities, etc are all sited up the slope at 4 metres or more above the lower level. There is therefore the need to create a safe and easily usable route to travel between the two.*
4. Additional accommodation: *The Planning Statement details the need for the facilities of the charity and how it could potentially benefit more children. CAFT, therefore, wish to make a modest increase to the accommodation for overnight stays (children are either day visitors, or overnight/over-weekend visitors) to be able to offer more help and be more efficient. In addition, the charity lives and exists purely by income from donations and additional staff are needed to help to increase these donations; extra admin space is therefore required.*

In April 2020, various addendums to the planning, heritage and design and access statements were submitted. These accompanied the submission of revised plans, which included a reduction in the areas given over to office space.

The planning statement addendum provides further details regarding the existing operational issues, and in particular the shortcomings with the accommodation.

It is stated that at present the trust struggles with a lack of flexibility and lack of disabled accommodation and inclusivity.

The farmhouse accommodates 16 children's bed spaces, which are unsuitable for disabled children. Carers are not able to provide 1:1 care in the farmhouse and bathroom facilities are shared. The second-floor bedrooms are only able to accommodate younger children due to low ceiling heights.

There are two ground floor apartments within the converted stables. These provide up to four children's beds and can accommodate wheelchair users. However, wheelchair users are not able to dine with the rest of the group within the farmhouse, as there is no wheelchair access.

Due to the site's steep topography, wheelchair users have to share the track off Reddy Lane with vehicles visiting the site and the neighbouring property. The courtyard which is the main focus point for activities, is also the area for drop offs and deliveries.

The new wing would provide sensory and art rooms at ground floor, along with the main reception area. at first floor it would provide full accessible accommodation for disabled children and their carers (two suites and four bed spaces). The revised scheme reduces the amount of admin space in the courtyard, replacing it with new accommodation at first floor level for four children plus one carer. The ground floor of the courtyard building would be able to accommodate up to five children, along with carers and siblings. The proposals would enhance the provisions for children with disabilities and create a more inclusive built environment.

The proposed areas of hardstanding would include a new vehicle access and drop off point, an area for deliveries and paths, allowing wheelchair users access to the playing fields and sports hall without having to use the vehicular track. These alterations would reduce the potential conflict between vulnerable users and vehicles.

It is clear that the proposals would address genuine operational issues at the Trust, and that the works would support more efficient, safer, more inclusive, and effective operations at the site, and would support the broader objectives of the charity. The proposals would allow for more visitors, and visitors with a greater range of needs, to benefit from the services that CAFT offer.

The proposal would clearly advance the aims of CELPS policies SD 1, SD 2 and SC 3, in regard to inclusivity, health and well-being. It has the potential to amount to a substantial public benefit and carry great weight in favour of the application. However, the level of weight is in part dependent on the feasibility of alternative schemes and whether the same benefits could be achieved in a less harmful manner.

Alternative Solutions

Following concerns raised by officers, the applicant has provided a more detailed options appraisal, which sets out the site constraints and also looks at alternative locations for similar facilities.

This document includes a site analysis and options appraisal for the new wing. The options considered within the appraisal are briefly detailed below:

Option 1 was for a new building to the north of the barn. This was ruled out in part due to a lack of space and the proximity of the electricity pylon.

Option 2 was for a building at the north of the site adjacent to the boundary with the M56. This was ruled out due to its remote location, lack of connectivity and access and noise from the motorway.

Option 3 was for a building on the playing field to the north of the play area. This was also discounted due to motorway noise and the loss of the sports field area.

Option 4 would be for a building immediately to the south of the sports hall. While this would be close to the sports hall, there was a concern in respect of the loss of the main open field which is used for events.

Option 5 is the current proposal put forwards for the new wing to be located to the south of the farmhouse.

Officers are satisfied based on the options and feasibility information put forwards, that alternatives have been considered. They are also satisfied that there are justifiable operational and inclusivity issues, which have led to the proposed wing being situated in the location proposed.

As above, it is also accepted that the proposed works would enable the Trust to provide enhanced facilities for disadvantaged and disabled children and their families. It is accepted that the nature of the use means that in all likelihood it needs to be located within a rural setting.

In the absence of viable alternatives to provide a similar level of enhanced provision, great weight is attributed to the health, well-being and inclusivity benefits of the proposal.

Other Matters

Securing the optimal future long-term use of the building

It is not considered that it has been demonstrated that the proposed works are necessary to secure the optimal future long-term use of the building. Reference has been made in the submission to the benefits of removing the existing extensions from the building, including the existing conservatory. However, it is considered that the net effect of the proposals would be harmful, even considering the removal of any existing elements.

There is nothing to indicate that the building would not continue to be used by the Trust in the event that planning permission is refused. As such, this is not considered to carry weight in favour of the proposal.

The opportunity exists to improve the ecological value through landscaping and planting which will mitigate against the loss of the small area of existing amenity grassland taken by the new proposed wing. Further recommendations are contained in the report relating to the construction phase and include further mitigation opportunities for example through native species planting and bird boxes.

As these recommendations only seek to mitigate harm which will result from the development, no positive weight can be attributed to such opportunities. Furthermore, CELPS policy SE 3 requires all developments to aim to positively contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity and should not negatively affect these interests. The provision of ecological enhancements is required to comply with this policy. It is a neutral factor in the assessment of this application.

Planning Balance - very special circumstances including heritage balance

The proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The NPPF establishes that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt, and development should not be approved except in very special circumstances. It would also have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt and result in encroachment conflicting with one of the Green Belt purposes. It would also result in a high level of less than substantial harm to the listed building.

Very special circumstances will not exist unless the harm to the Green Belt and any other harm are clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The other considerations, namely the provision of enhanced facilities for disabled children and the benefits to well-being and inclusivity, are significant and carry great weight.

Both CELPS policy SC 3 and NPPF paragraph 91 seek to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places. On-site constraints at the Trust currently restrict the facilities for children in wheelchairs, prevent full inclusivity and result in potential conflict between vulnerable site users and vehicles.

The Trust have reviewed alternative means of addressing the existing issues and have provided this information. Alternative locations have been reviewed and discounted by the Trust. Officers are satisfied that there are justifiable operational and inclusivity issues, which have led to the proposed wing being situated in the location proposed. Alternative locations would not provide the same benefits and would also result in harm to the Green Belt or other material harm.

The extension to the farmhouse and the new wing would result in less than substantial harm to the listed building and its setting. While not reaching the threshold for substantial harm, overall, the level of harm to the listed building and its setting would still be high.

In accordance with NPPF paragraph 196, the Local Planning Authority is obliged to weigh the less than substantial harm against the public benefits of the proposal, including where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

The development would allow the Trust to provide enhanced facilities for vulnerable children. The applicants have also demonstrated that alternative means of providing the requisite accommodation have been considered and discounted. The applicant has also proposed repairs to the listed building as part of the development. This carries modest weight in favour of the development, as a public benefit. To ensure that these repairs are carried out, this will be required by condition. While the level of harm to the designated heritage asset is high, there are also compelling public benefits, which outweigh this harm.

On balance, the public benefits attributed, resulting from the enhancement of the unique offer provided by the Trust, would clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and the other identified harm.

CONCLUSIONS

The proposed development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It would also result in harm to openness and result in encroachment, conflicting with one of the Green Belt purposes.

The proposed extension to the farmhouse, the new wing and the areas of hard landscaping would also result in less than substantial harm to the listed building and its setting.

The proposal would address a number of operational issues that the Trust currently face, including matters relating to accessibility, inclusivity, accommodation for disabled children and vehicle/pedestrian conflict.

It has also been demonstrated that alternative locations have been considered and justifiably discounted.

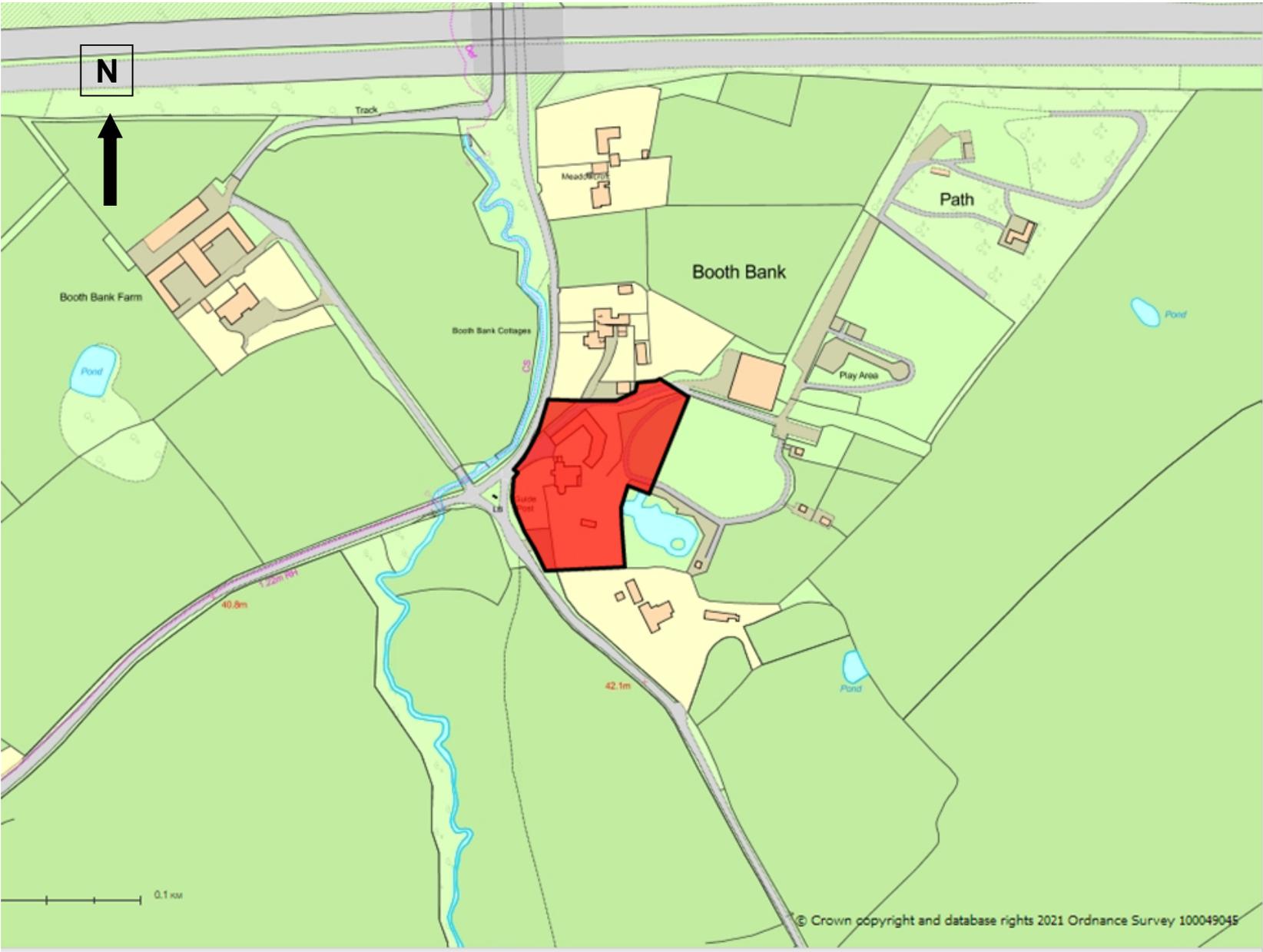
On balance, the health, well-being and inclusivity benefits of the proposal are considered to clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and the other identified harm. The application is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the application for planning permission be approved subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Commencement of development – three years**
- 2. Development in accordance with approved plans**
- 3. Details of finished levels (pre-commencement)**
- 4. Protection for nesting birds**
- 5. Ecological enhancements**
- 6. Development in accordance with Flood Risk Assessment**
- 7. Submission of drainage strategy and maintenance plan (pre-commencement)**
- 8. Samples of materials**
- 9. Large scale details – extension and new building**
- 10. Metal rainwater goods**
- 11. Schedule of repairs and implementation prior to first use (farmhouse)**
- 12. Submission of landscaping scheme**
- 13. Implementation of landscaping scheme**
- 14. Boundary treatments**
- 15. Retention of trees**
- 16. Tree Protection (pre-commencement)**
- 17. Development in accordance with Arboricultural Implications Assessment**
- 18. Implementation of mitigation in approved Acoustic Report**
- 19. Provision of parking and turning areas**

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



Application No: 19/0402M

Location: BOOTH BANK FARM, REDDY LANE, MILLINGTON, CHESHIRE, WA14 3RE

Proposal: Listed building consent for Alterations, extensions and external repairs to Booth Bank Farmhouse, to include removal of existing UPVC porch and conservatory, and construction of extended contemporary new extension.

Applicant: Trustees of, Children's Adventure Farm Trust

Expiry Date: 02-Jul-2021

SUMMARY

The application site is the Children's Adventure Farm Trust, an outdoor activity centre based around the Grade-II listed Booth Bank Farmhouse.

The application seeks listed building consent for extensions and alterations to the main farmhouse and alterations to the stables building. Other works proposed, including the new wing and landscaping works, require planning permission but do not require listed building consent.

The new extension would result in less than substantial harm to the designated heritage asset.

However, the proposed extension would address a number of operation issues that the Trust face, including providing wheelchair access to the farmhouse and dining room, which is not currently possible.

It has also been demonstrated that alternative locations have been considered and justifiably discounted.

On balance, the health, well-being and inclusivity benefits of the proposal amount to the public benefits required to outweigh the harm to the designated heritage asset.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to conditions

REASON FOR REFERRAL

This application is being considered by the Northern Planning Committee owing to the public interest of the application and the identified harm to a Grade-II listed building.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

The application site is the Children's Adventure Farm Trust (CAFT), located at Booth Bank Farm, at the junction of Booth Bank Lane, Reddy Lane and Millington Lane.

The site comprises the former Booth Bank farmhouse (Grade II listed), with a converted 'U' shaped barn to the immediate rear, with open spaces, animal paddocks, and a large sports hall further to the rear. The site also includes various smaller structures, parking areas, and a woodland activity area to the north-east of the site, abutting the motorway.

There is a significant change in levels across the site. The land around the farmhouse complex rises up from the site frontage.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This application relates to the works requiring listed building consent only. Other elements of the proposed works do not require listed building consent and have not been considered as part of this application (new wing and hard landscaping works)

The scheme has been amended during the lifetime of the application. The proposed works and amendments are detailed below:

Farmhouse:

- Alterations and repairs to the farmhouse
- Removal of existing conservatory and other later extensions
- New wraparound side and rear extension/conservatory, this would be a flat-roofed glazed structure, with a green roof.
- Internal rearrangements at ground floor level. The kitchen and dining areas would be re-located into the new extension, along with an accessible WC.

Alterations to the converted barns:

- Minor alterations to fenestration
- Internal re-arranging to provide enlarged office and store areas.
- Alterations to the residential accommodation provided and additional bedroom space at first floor level

Following feedback from the heritage officer during determination, revised plans were submitted with the following changes:

- Provision of additional bed spaces in the converted barns and corresponding reduction in officer space; changes to the proposed internal layout and external changes to the barns
- Additional removal of a lean-to extension from the farmhouse
- Reduction of the proposed farmhouse extension

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

19/0334M – pending consideration

Development of a new residential wing with ancillary office and children's activity space; alterations, extensions and repairs to Booth Bank Farmhouse, access and landscaping at Booth Bank Farm, Millington.

19/4912M – approved – 19 December 2019

Retrospective application for security lighting fixed to existing sports hall, siting of low-level solar lighting and security lighting to footway

10/1012M – approved – 13 March 2012

Erection of proposed machinery store

10/0889M – approved – 26 May 2010

Retrospective planning approval for: parking area - 669 sqm; tarmac area - 666sqm; aviary - 16.38 sqm; climbing frame - 90.25 sqm; fence - 191m length - 2.5m height

09/0277P – approved – 16 February 2011

Variation of condition 6 on application 82087P (retrospective)

09/0273P – approved – 16 February 2011

Variation of condition 3 attached to permission 99/2343P (retrospective)

04/2979P – approved – 25 January 2005

Formation of private pathway for wheelchair access

04/1958P – withdrawn - 17 August 2004

Re-surfacing of central section of existing driveway with tarmac

03/1355P – approved – 24 July 2003

Formation of a countryside access trail in place of former go kart track

00/0559P – permitted development – 18 April 2000

Retention of change of use of first floor recreational area to ancillary offices

99/2343P – approved – 5 January 2000

Proposed playground/adventure trail

99/1600P – refused – 6 October 1999

Installation of playground equipment

99/0386P – refused – 26 May 1999

Children's adventure playground

83245P – approved - 31 January 1996

Formation of car park to serve Booth Bank Farm

82503P – refused – 11 October 1995
Retention and surfacing of car park to serve Booth Bank Farm

82807P – approved – 16 August 1995
Sports hall/play barn and ancillary facilities (amended orientation from that approved by 5/77034P of 20 July 1994)

77034P – approved – 20 July 1994
Sports Hall/play barn and ancillary facilities

62912P - approved - 30 May 1990
Change of use from farm buildings to residential accommodation and workshops including extension

62868P – approved – 30 May 1990
Alterations and extensions to building

62867P – approved – 30 May 1990
Outbuildings change of use from farm use to residential/workshop use including extension to provide extra workshop accommodation all materials to match existing

62866P – approved – 30 May 1990
Change of use from residential to institutional residential

POLICIES

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)

SD 1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East
SD 2 Sustainable Development Principles
SC 3 Health and Well-Being
SE 1 Design
SE 7 The Historic Environment

It should be noted that the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy was formally adopted on 27th July 2017. There are however policies within the legacy local plans that still apply and have not yet been replaced. These policies are set out below.

Macclesfield Borough Local Plan

BE2 Preservation of Historic Fabric
BE15 Listed Buildings
BE18 Design Criteria for Listed Buildings

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Cheshire East Design Guide

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)
National Planning Practice Guidance

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Millington Parish Council

The Parish Council feel that the roof of the new building is not in keeping with the existing listed farmhouse or other properties in the Parish, some of which are also listed. Also this is greenbelt land and very close to other residents who obviously came to live in the area to enjoy the views and peace and quiet of the countryside, we don't feel this has been given consideration when these plans were submitted due to the siting and size of the new building.

REPRESENTATIONS

Representations received from 5 addresses, in support of the proposal. The main points are summarised below:

- Farm is an amazing place for students to develop in confidence, independence and social skills and have a lot of fun participating in activities with their peers.
- Due to complex needs, high staffing levels required as the farm is not fully secure, and wheelchair users block space in the dining areas and lounge,
- Equipment for medical and behavioural needs takes up a lot of room.
- More modern spaces and equipment would ensure a safer, better quality environment to suit the needs of the students.
- Improvements to the buildings would provide an enhanced experience.
- CAFT offers platform for children and young people facing very challenging situations to meet others in similar circumstances
- Development would ensure there is even more space truly accessible to children with disabilities.
- Proposal would improve the facilities and efficiency of the site, whilst preserving the heritage of the farmhouse
- CAFT discussed the application in detail with neighbours
- In favour of providing access for visiting children so traffic is reduced
- No objections to delivery area
- Could the land on the opposite side of Millington Lane be used as a car park – reducing traffic on shared access lane
- Development needed to make the farm more accessible and inclusive for all.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

The main farmhouse is a Grade-II listed building, which dates from circa 1670, with later 19th century additions. There also appear to have been various extensions, dating from the second half of the 20th century, following its listing in 1959. These additions include a porch and UPVC conservatory, as well as alterations to fenestration. The porch and conservatory appear to be unlawful, as there is no record of them having received listed building consent.

Immediately to the north of the listed farmhouse is a 'U' shaped barn, which appears to have originally been a stable complex. This building is present on the first edition ordnance survey map, dating from 1875. It appears to have been subsequently extended.

While the stable building is not listed in itself, it lies within the curtilage of the listed building and pre-dates 1948. It is also within the same ownership. Given these factors, it is considered to be a curtilage listed building.

Listed Buildings are designated heritage assets for the purposes of NPPF chapter 16 and CELPS policy SE 7. NPPF paragraph 184 confirms that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Paragraph 193 states that:

“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Paragraph NPPF 194 notes that:

“Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.”

In accordance with NPPF paragraph 196, *“where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.”*

CELPS Policy SD 2 Sustainable Development Principles notes that all development will be expected to respect, and where possible enhance, the significance of heritage assets, including their wider settings.

Policy SE 7 notes that the Council will support development proposals that do not cause harm to, or which better reveal the significance of heritage assets and will seek to avoid or minimise conflict between the conservation of a heritage asset and any aspect of a development proposal. In the case of designated heritage assets, SE 7 notes that this will be done by:

i. Requiring development proposals that cause harm to, or loss of, a designated heritage asset and its significance, including its setting, to provide a clear and convincing justification as to why that harm is considered acceptable. Where that case cannot be demonstrated, proposals will not be supported.

ii. Considering the level of harm in relation to the public benefits that may be gained by the proposal.

iii. The use of appropriate legal agreements or planning obligations to secure the benefits arising from a development proposal where the loss, in whole or in part, of a heritage asset is accepted.

Additionally, in accordance with the Section 16 and 66 of the 1990 Act, when making a decision on all listed building consent applications or any decision on a planning application for development that affects a listed building or its setting, a local planning authority must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Preservation in this context means not harming the interest in the building, as opposed to keeping it utterly unchanged.

The application is supported by a Heritage Statement which describes the significance of the heritage asset and assesses the impact of the proposals upon the significance.

The Conservation Officer assessed the proposals for the site and raised a number of concerns regarding the impact on the listed building. Following on from these concerns, amendments were made. Those relevant to this application include:

- Alterations to the fenestration on the barn.
- Reduction in scale of the proposed extension and moving it back further from the frontage of the building

These amendments have addressed the initial concerns relating to the barns. However, there are still outstanding concerns relating to the proposed farmhouse extension.

The Conservation Officer's latest comments in respect of the proposed extension are as follows

"The amendments relate only to the conservatory addition; no significant amendments have been proposed to the new block or wider hard landscaping. Whilst the conservatory has been reduced in size and pushed back from the front elevation, it still remains a large addition which will be prominent in wider views and in my opinion out of scale with this small farm building. The two parts of the scheme are in very close proximity and when read in conjunction will appear overly dominant and incongruous. In the absence of amendments to

the hard landscaping and location, scale of the new block I am unfortunately unable to alter my position with regard to this application, and remain of the view that it will cause a high degree of less than substantial harm to the historic building and its wider setting.”

The conclusions of the Council’s Conservation Officer in terms of the impact on the listed building and its setting are noted and agreed with. The proposed extension would still be a sizeable structure in relation to the relatively modest proportions of the host building.

The cumulative impact of the new wing and extension and areas of hardstanding would appear overly dominant and detract from the relatively modestly proportioned listed farmhouse. It is agreed that the development would result in a high level of ‘less than substantial harm’.

In accordance with NPPF paragraph 196, this harm needs to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriated securing its optimum viable use.

Public Benefits

Health, Wellbeing, and Inclusivity

NPPF chapter 8 focuses on promoting healthy and safe communities.

Paragraph 91 states that amongst other matters planning decisions should promote social interaction and be safe and accessible. This paragraph also states that planning decisions should:

“Enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling”

Amongst other matters, paragraph 92 states that in order to provide social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning decisions should:

- Plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.
- Take in account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community
- Ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services

At a local level, CELPS policies SD 1, SD2 and SC 3 are of particular relevance.

SD 1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East notes that development should wherever possible, *inter alia*:

- *Provide appropriate infrastructure to meet the needs of the local community including: education; health and social care; transport; communication technology; landscaping and open space; sport and leisure; community facilities; water; waste water; and energy;*
- *Provide access to local jobs, services and facilities, reflecting the community's needs;*
- *Support the health, safety, social and cultural well-being of the residents of Cheshire East;*
- *Contribute towards the achievement of equality and social inclusion through positive cooperation with the local community;*

Policy SD 2 sets out the LPA's sustainable development principles. At vi), it states that all development will be expected to be socially inclusive and, where suitable integrate into the local community.

Policy SC 3 deals with Health and well-being. The following are considered of particular relevance:

"3. Ensuring new developments provide opportunities for healthy living and improve health and well-being through the encouragement of walking and cycling, good housing design (including the minimisation of social isolation and creation of inclusive communities), access to services, sufficient open space and other green infrastructure, and sports facilities and opportunity for recreation and sound safety standards.

5. Protecting existing community infrastructure and ensuring the provision of a network of community facilities, providing essential public services together with private and voluntary sector facilities, to meet the needs of the local community."

The public benefits put forward by the applicant in support of their case primarily revolve around the work of the Trust, which as detailed above provides holidays free of charge to disadvantaged and disabled children in the North-west.

The Trust enables children, who likely would not otherwise have the opportunity to do so, to have a holiday in the countryside. There is no doubt that the Trust, as an established community facility, provides an invaluable service to some of the most vulnerable children and their families.

The Trust has identified a number of areas of the current operation, which need addressing. They state that the application has been submitted for this reason, rather than to grow or significantly expand the existing operation:

1. Safeguarding: *The present situation on site can be dangerous to children and carers. Delivery vehicles and drivers, enter the courtyard to unload goods into the stores and farmhouse where children are playing, creating an immediate risk to the children. In addition, the children need to reach the gym and other attractions up the slope to the east. Able bodied children and carers can use the stepped ramp (1 in 6) behind the*

farmhouse, but disabled children in wheelchairs have to be pushed up the road around the courtyard buildings by carers, bringing them into immediate conflict with CAFT vehicular traffic, and with the traffic to Booth Bank Cottage.

2. Access into the site: *Because of the safeguarding issues outlined (...) above, there is the need to separate the children and the vehicles. The vehicle route to the west side of the outbuildings can remain, but the courtyard must be traffic free, with children moving around the site safely. Most particularly, the proposal is to create a new vehicle delivery area to the north side of the courtyard outbuilding by cutting into the hillside and also creating a new goods delivery door into the north elevation. This removes vehicles from the courtyard, whilst the children are removed from the road.*
3. Access around the site: *The farmhouse and the courtyard act as the 'hub' of the CAFT operation, but the gym, farm and animals, barbeque, adventure play facilities, etc are all sited up the slope at 4 metres or more above the lower level. There is therefore the need to create a safe and easily usable route to travel between the two.*
4. Additional accommodation: *The Planning Statement details the need for the facilities of the charity and how it could potentially benefit more children. CAFT, therefore, wish to make a modest increase to the accommodation for overnight stays (children are either day visitors, or overnight/over-weekend visitors) to be able to offer more help and be more efficient. In addition, the charity lives and exists purely by income from donations and additional staff are needed to help to increase these donations; extra admin space is therefore required.*

In April 2020, various addendums to the planning, heritage and design and access statements were submitted. These accompanied the submission of revised plans, which included a reduction in the areas given over to office space.

The planning statement addendum provides further details regarding the existing operational issues, and in particular the shortcomings with the accommodation.

It is stated that at present the trust struggles with a lack of flexibility and lack of disabled accommodation and inclusivity.

The farmhouse accommodates 16 children's bed spaces, which are unsuitable for disabled children. Carers are not able to provide 1:1 care in the farmhouse and bathroom facilities are shared. The second-floor bedrooms are only able to accommodate younger children due to low ceiling heights. At present the farmhouse includes the dining facilities, but these cannot be accessed by wheelchair users. As such children, who use wheelchairs, have to dine separately to able bodied children.

The proposed extension would incorporate a larger kitchen and a dining area, which would be fully accessible for wheelchair users.

This extension to the farmhouse forms part of the wider scheme, which includes a new wing. It is clear that the proposals, of which the extension forms a part, would address genuine operational issues at the Trust. The proposals would allow for more visitors, and visitors with a greater range of needs, to benefit from the services that CAFT offer.

The proposal would clearly advance the aims of CELPS policies SD 1, SD 2 and SC 3, in regard to inclusivity, health and well-being. It is considered that this is a public benefit which carries weight in favour of the proposal.

Other Benefits

Securing the optimal future long-term use of the building

It is not considered that it has been demonstrated that the proposed works are necessary to secure the optimal future long-term use of the building. Reference has been made in the submission to the benefits of removing the existing extensions from the building, including the existing conservatory. However, it is considered that the net effect of the proposals would be harmful, even considering the removal of any existing elements.

There is nothing to indicate that the building would not continue to be used by the Trust in the event that planning permission is refused. As such, this is not considered to carry weight in favour of the proposal.

The opportunity exists to improve the ecological value through landscaping and planting which will mitigate against the loss of the small area of existing amenity grassland taken by the new proposed wing. Further recommendations are contained in the report relating to the construction phase and include further mitigation opportunities for example through native species planting and bird boxes.

As these recommendations only seek to mitigate harm which will result from the development, no positive weight can be attributed to such opportunities. Furthermore, CELPS policy SE 3 requires all developments to aim to positively contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity and should not negatively affect these interests. The provision of ecological enhancements is required to comply with this policy. It is therefore a neutral factor in the assessment of this application.

Planning Balance

The extension to the farmhouse, the new wing and the new areas of hard landscaping would result in less than substantial harm to the listed building and its setting. While not reaching the threshold for substantial harm, overall, the level of harm to the listed building and its setting would still be high.

In accordance with NPPF paragraph 196, the Local Planning Authority is obliged to weigh the less than substantial harm against the public benefits of the proposal, including where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

The development would allow the Trust to provide enhanced facilities for vulnerable children. The applicants have also demonstrated that alternative means of providing the requisite accommodation have been considered and discounted. The applicant has also proposed repairs to the listed building as part of the development. This carries modest weight in favour of the development, as a public benefit. To ensure that these repairs are carried out, this will

be required by condition. While the level of harm to the designated heritage asset is high, there are also compelling public benefits, which outweigh this harm.

CONCLUSIONS

The proposed extension to the farmhouse would result in less than substantial harm to the listed building.

The proposal would address a number of operational issues that the Trust currently face, including matters relating to accessibility, inclusivity, accommodation for disabled children and vehicle/pedestrian conflict.

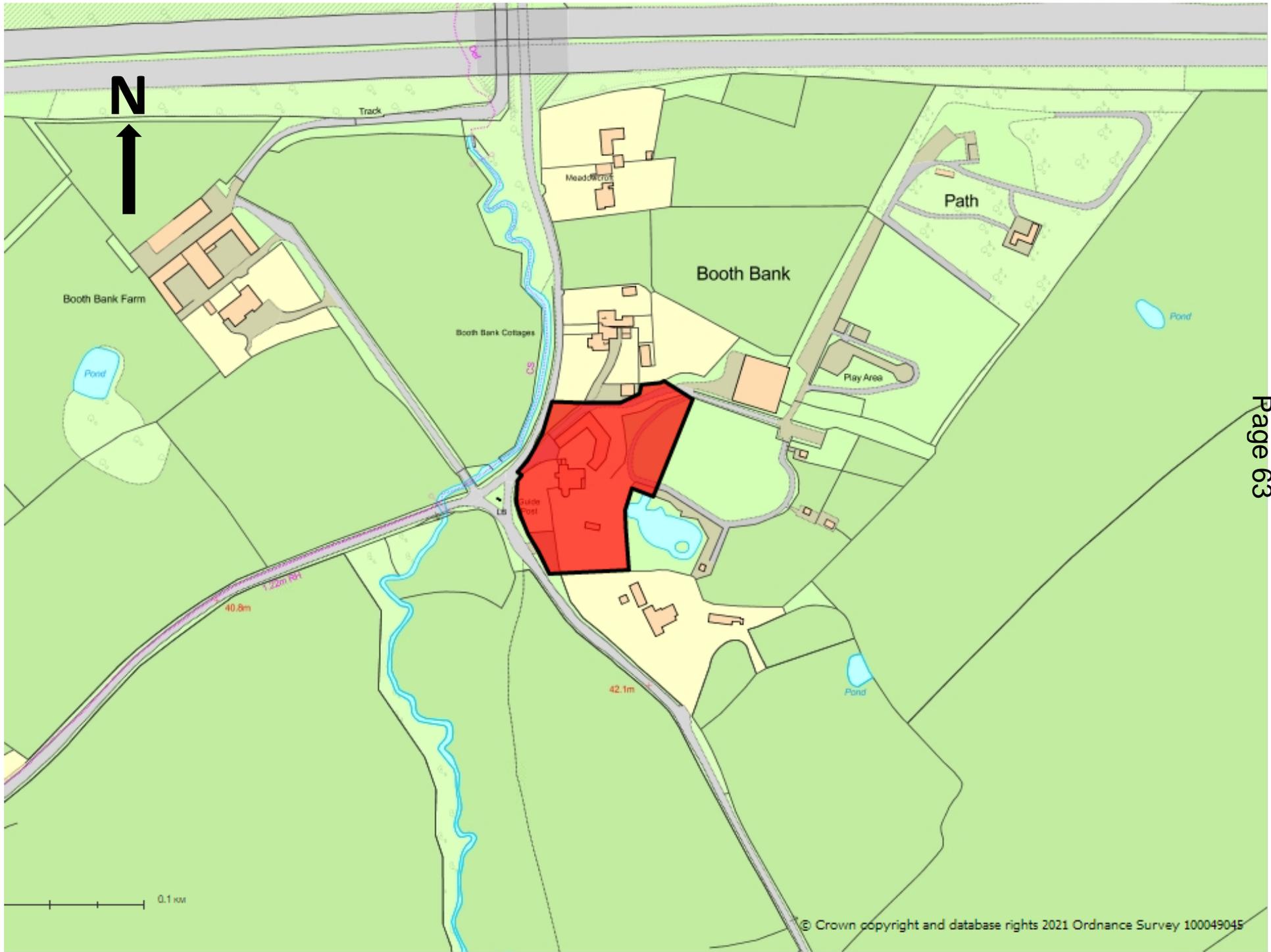
It is considered that the health, well-being and inclusivity benefits amount to the public benefits necessary to outweigh the harm to the designated heritage asset. The application is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the application for listed building consent be approved subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Commencement of development – three years**
- 2. Development in accordance with approved plans**
- 3. Samples of materials**
- 4. Large scale details – extension**
- 5. Metal rainwater goods**
- 6. Schedule of repairs and implementation prior to first use (farmhouse)**

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



Application No: 20/2445M
Location: LAND to the North West of MARTHALL LANE, KNUTSFORD
Proposal: Retrospective application for agricultural livestock and produce stores
Applicant: Mr & Mrs Brighthouse
Expiry Date: 30-Sep-2020

SUMMARY

It is considered that the proposal is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable and would accord with the development plan and the Framework.

The principle of the agricultural development is acceptable and no significant adverse impacts arising from this retrospective application have been identified.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to conditions

REASON FOR REPORT

The application was initially referred to Committee on the basis of the size of the site being over 2 hectares. The applicant has since clarified the site is less than 2 hectares. However, the application is still being referred to the Planning Committee by the Head of Planning given the local interest in the proposal.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site lies within the Green Belt land north of Marthall Lane with Mount Pleasant Farm, Warford Grange Farm and Pedley House Farm all well to the east respectively. Access is obtained via the existing farm road from the existing entrance on Marthall Lane. The length of the farm road is approximately 400 metres.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This is a retrospective application for agricultural livestock and produce stores. The agent has informed that the applicants assumed that the buildings would be Permitted Development and as such did not require planning permission.

There are two buildings on site that are used to provide sufficient accommodation for the sheep along with associated machinery, feed and bedding. There is an ancillary office space within one building and also a laboratory used for breeding and other staff welfare accommodation.

PLANNING HISTORY

17/3005M - Agricultural determination for an agricultural storage unit – Withdrawn
06.07.2017

POLICIES

Cheshire East Borough Local Plan

MP1 – Sustainable Development
PG3 – Green Belt
SD1 - Sustainable Development
SD2 - Sustainable Development Principles
SE3 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity
SE4 – The Landscape
SE5 – Trees Hedgerows and Woodland
EG2 - Rural Economy

Macclesfield Borough Local Plan Saved

DC3 – Amenity
DC6 – Circulation and Access
DC9 – Tree Protection
DC28 – Agricultural Buildings
GC1 – Green Belt
NE11 – Nature Conservation

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework)
National Planning Practice Guidance

The Ollerton with Marthall Neighbourhood Plan is at Regulation 7 stage where a Neighbourhood Area has been designated. There are no current policies to have regard to.

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Strategic Transport – No objections

Environmental Protection – No objections subject to informative

Flood Risk - No objections subject to informative

Ollerton and Marthall Parish Council - The application is located within the Green Belt where development is subject to stricter control and the policy focus is on preserving the openness of space, setting and rural character. Ollerton and Marthall is washed over by the Green Belt and careful consideration should be afforded to maintain the openness of space and avoid harm caused by inappropriate development.

The Parish Council are concerned that there is an increased number of agricultural sheds being erected within the area with the intention to later seek retrospective planning permission. This is happening as it is believed that the council will not take action once a building is complete. However the Parish Council is working with Cheshire East regarding this practise in order that genuine cases are not disadvantaged.

The Parish Council have strong reservations regarding this site and the surrounding area that originally formed Mount Pleasant Farm. All of the buildings within this area have already been converted to dwellings and the remaining barns which belong to Ryecroft Stud, are also about to be converted (app 20/3194M). Ryecroft Stud (Company No. 08628987) never actually traded and after only three years was closed. There are continued activities around this site which are not connected with farming but more to do with construction. The main concern is that the long term intentions of this site and buildings is not for agricultural use.

When studying the agricultural report it can be seen that there are overwhelming concerns regarding how successful it can be. Given the proposed number of sheep to be kept is unrealistic; this proposal is at the very least, overly ambitious with regard to the number of sheep that 70 acres could sustain. Furthermore 20 to 30 acres will need to be utilised for the production of haylage, which they intend to produce. This will leave a small amount of land for the livestock and we struggle to understand how they intend to achieve such high levels of animal welfare with the remaining land.

The PC cannot support this application because the information provided and our knowledge of the site and the applicant leads us to only one conclusion, that this is not a genuine case to release further Green Belt land in what is becoming an overly developed area. There are no special circumstances to justify a further building in this vicinity.

REPRESENTATIONS

3 letters of support have been received for the application as embracing and implementing new technology is the way forward to enable sustainability of this rural area. Health and Safety and Animal Welfare makes priority and the best possible standards are of the utmost importance. It blends into the surroundings with the appearance being agricultural, akin to others in the area and of a necessary size to support the acreage it needs to serve. It has also added to the biodiversity of the area as it has significantly increased planting of hedges and trees and created areas for the natural habitat to thrive. The rural community need sustainable development to survive. This agricultural application is of a nature and scale befitting the land, its surroundings, and to secure its financial viability and it is very important that this area has a continuing farming culture.

This is a summary and full details on CEC website.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Green Belt

The application site lies within the Green Belt, where both national and local policies restrict the types of development which may be carried out. Development not falling within one of the listed exceptions is, by definition, inappropriate and should not be granted except in very special circumstances. One of these exceptions set out within NPPF and CELPS policy PG 3 is for buildings for agriculture and forestry. It therefore needs to be established whether the buildings would be for the purposes of agriculture.

The supporting information explains that Brighthouse Farms Ltd farms approximately 70 acres of agricultural land in Marthall. It is understood that since the submission the applicants have further expanded the farming enterprise with the rental of an additional 70 acres of land in the area. The proposed development relates to the breeding of Poll Dorset sheep, which involves artificial insemination in order to improve the breed quality of the livestock via genetic evaluation using estimated breeding values. The business runs approximately 750 head of sheep.

Shed A is primarily used for the housing and handling of the sheep and the size is:-

Length – 48.8 m
Width – 24.4 m
Eaves – 5.5 m
Ridge – 8.9 m
Area – 1191 m²

Shed B is primarily used for the storage of produce and machinery as well as the facilities and laboratory and the size is:-

Length – 48.8 m
Width – 12.2 m
Eaves – 5.5 m
Ridge – 7.2 m
Area – 595 m²

The supporting information regarding this modern scientific farming facility that has been put forward by the applicant outlines the requirements for the buildings and justifies the size in terms of the agricultural operations taking place on the site and associated equipment and machinery. It also demonstrates that the buildings are required to ensure the long-term future and sustainability of the agricultural enterprise.

The buildings whilst sizeable structures are partially open fronted and clearly read as agricultural buildings. The hardstanding areas are also considerable in size but again have been justified with reference to the operations and manoeuvring taking place within the site together with the storage of haylage on a required hard surface.

On the evidence provided, it is considered that the buildings are required for the purposes of agriculture on the land. As such a consideration of its impact on openness is not necessary as that string of policy is not engaged.

The buildings are only considered acceptable as it has been demonstrated that there is a clear agricultural need. Officers sought clarification on the uses in building, that being the size of the office space and domestic facilities. It has thus been clarified that the office facility will also function as a meeting room as it is expected that meetings will be taking place to promote the breeding and to demonstrate to farmer groups the improvements that are being made and this is considered acceptable. The overall design and form would also preclude its suitability for many other uses. A condition is recommended restricting the use of the buildings to agricultural purposes only.

The development/farm employs a total of 5 staff

Farm Manager	1	
Flock Manager	1	
Farm workers		
(Animal and grassland)	2	(1 being Student Trainee).
Accounts and PAYE	1	

and is thus admirably compliant with policy EG2 that encourages *“the creation and expansion of sustainable farming and food production businesses and allow for the adaption of modern agricultural practises.”*

Design

Policies SE 1 and SD 2 of the CELPS seek to ensure that development is of a high standard of design which reflects local character and respects the form, layout, siting, scale, design, height and massing of the site, surrounding buildings and the street scene. CELP policy SD 2(1) (ii) states development should contribute positively to an area's character and identity, creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness in terms of height, scale, form and grouping, materials, external design and massing.

The design is that of cladding of a mix of juniper green box profile sheeting and juniper green vented wall cladding but traditional rural livestock sheds and are considered in character with the rural area thus complies with the above policies of the CELPS and the Green Belt location. The buildings blend well and are positioned sympathetically to the landscape.

Amenity

Saved policy DC 3 requires that new development should not significantly injure the amenities of adjoining or nearby residential property or sensitive land uses due to loss of privacy, overbearing effect, loss of sunlight or daylight, or other forms of disturbance and nuisance.

It is considered that it is an appropriately designed development is proposed and would not have a detrimental impact on the impact upon the living conditions of neighbouring residents due to the seclusion of the site and its significant distance from the nearest house. Therefore, it accords with policy DC3 of the MBLP.

Highways

Saved MBLP policy DC6 relates to circulation and access. It sets out the circulation and access criteria for new development. This includes amongst other matters, the provision of adequate visibility splays, manoeuvring vehicles and emergency vehicles.

The farm buildings are set well back from the public highway. The areas of hardstanding will provide adequate parking and turning areas within the site, even for larger vehicles. The Highways Officer is satisfied that there are no material highway implications associated with the proposal, which is accessed from an un-adopted private road. No significant highway safety issues are raised, and the proposal is considered to comply with policy DC6 of the MBLP.

Trees

CELPS policy SE 5 relates to Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland. It seeks to protect trees, hedgerows and woodlands, that provide a significant contribution to the amenity, biodiversity, landscape character of historic character of the surrounding area.

Saved MBLP policy DC9 seeks to protect trees and woodlands, worthy of formal protection, from development unless certain circumstances apply.

The Forestry Officer has confirmed that this retrospective application has been supported by a tree survey which demonstrates that the construction of the sheds has occurred outside the root protection areas of the mature trees on the site. The supporting information suggests that no tree or hedgerow removals have taken place during the construction of the building and that enhancements have been implemented in the form of new planting of native species as indicated on the submitted landscape layout.

There appear to be no significant arboriculture implications arising from this application and therefore no significant tree issues are raised in accordance with policy SE 5 of the CELPS and DC9 of the MBLP.

Landscape

CELPS policy SE 4 relates to Landscape. Amongst other matters, all development should conserve the landscape character and quality and should where possible, enhance and effectively manage the historic, natural and man-made landscape features that contribute to local distinctiveness in both rural and urban landscapes.

As noted above the proposal is an agricultural development of a form that is typical for such a use, and in an area where other similar agricultural enterprises exist. It is considered that the proposal raises no significant landscape concerns in this context. The Landscape Officer has made comments regarding the access road and soils. The access road is historic and as the development is acceptable in principle therefore the soil issue would not be a direct planning consideration. Landscaping conditions are suggested but on balance it is considered that the submitted landscape plan is sufficient given the natural cover that exists in the vicinity of the site.

Nature Conservation

CELPS policy SE 3 deals with biodiversity and geodiversity. It seeks to protect areas of high biodiversity and geodiversity. It also requires all development to aim to positively contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity.

The applicant has submitted photographic evidence of a breeding bird scheme in the form of features suitable for breeding swifts. The Nature Conservation Officer requests a condition requiring that the features should be permanently retained, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority to safeguard protected species and secure an enhancement for biodiversity in accordance with the NPPF and policy SE 3 of the CELPS. No further ecological issues are raised.

Public Right of Way

A public footpath crosses the site (the access road) to the east of the buildings. Comments from The PROW unit are awaited and will be reported as an update.

COMMENTS ON REPRESENTATIONS

The points of objection of the Parish Council that have been received have been noted and addressed by the main body of the report and no justification by way of VSC's is considered necessary. It is considered that this retrospective application does represent acceptable development enshrined by policy. It is noted that there is support from nearby residents.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION

As agricultural development within the Green Belt, the proposal is not an inappropriate form of development. The issues raised in representation have been duly considered however the proposals are considered to comply with National and Local Policy. It is considered to comply with policy PG3 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, saved policies GC1 and DC28 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan and the NPPF.

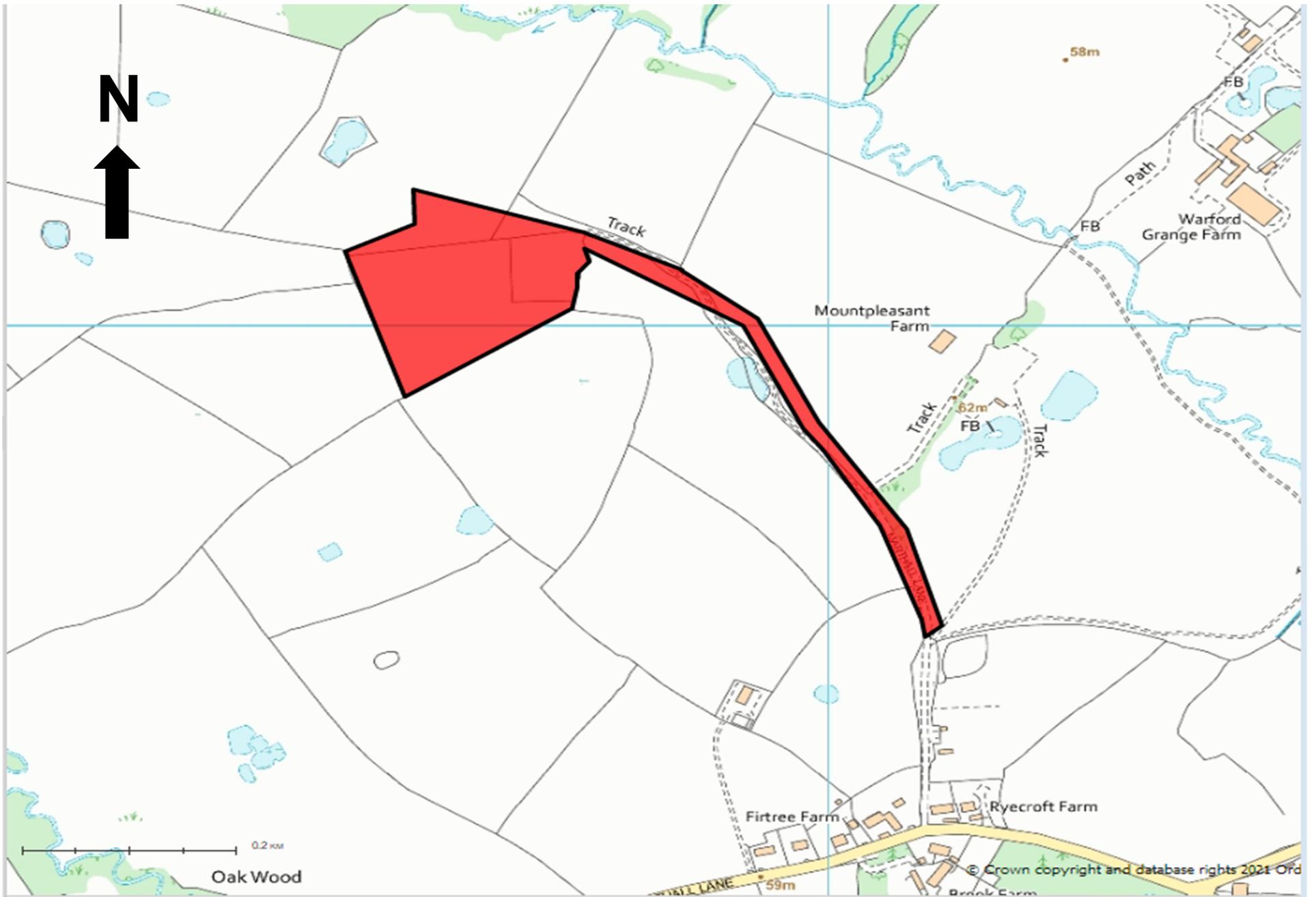
Policy MP1 of the CELPS states that *“Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.”*

Accordingly, the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

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

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to following conditions

1. A01AP - Development in accord with approved plans
2. A06EX - Materials as application
3. A11LS - Implementation of landscaping scheme submitted with application
4. To be used solely for the purposes of agriculture
5. Retention of breeding bird features



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