

Application Number:	2012/0125	Application Type:	Full
Proposal:	Erection of Commercial Unit for the Repair and Servicing of Caravans and Leisure Vehicles	Location:	Land Off Blackburn Road, Edenfield
Report of:	Planning Unit Manager	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Development Control Committee	Date:	17 April 2012
Applicant:	Mr R Nuttall	Determination Expiry Date:	7 May 2012
Agent:	Edmondson Design Services		

Contact Officer:	Richard Elliott	Telephone:	01706-238639
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REASON FOR REPORTING	Tick Box
Outside Officer Scheme of Delegation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member Call-In Name of Member: Reason for Call-In:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cllr Daryll Smith To enable Committee to discuss the economic/employment benefits of the application
3 or more objections received	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state):	

HUMAN RIGHTS

The relevant provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights have been taken into account in the preparation of this report, particularly the implications arising from the following rights:-

Article 8

The right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence.

Article 1 of Protocol 1

The right of peaceful enjoyment of possessions and protection of property.

1. RECOMMENDATION

That the application be refused for the reasons stated within Section 9 of the Report.

2. SITE

The application relates to an irregularly-shaped parcel of land located in the area of Countryside between the settlements of Edenfield and Irwell Vale that has been designated as Green Belt.

Of approximately 1.3 hectares in area, it is located to the west side of Blackburn Road (B6527) and Hardsough Lane. The latter road serves 6 properties and is a Public Footpath.

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The majority of the site is relatively flat and at a level lower than the main road from which it takes access, and it is largely screened from it by a high hedges/trees, recently supplemented by new planting to all boundaries that is still in its infancy.

The site is accessed from Blackburn Road via a two-gated entrance, one in front of the other, set back from the highway. The site is occupied by caravans positioned in rows with a caravan adjacent to the entrance used by an on-site security warden.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Planning Application 2011/0593, which was almost identical to the current scheme, was refused permission under delegated authority on 14/02/2012 for the following reason :

“The application relates to a site located within the Countryside between the settlements of Edenfield / Ewood Bridge / Irwell Vale that has been designated as Green Belt. Whilst the proposed building lies within the red-edged site of Planning Permission 2009/180 the proposed building extends beyond the area then permitted for the storage of caravans & leisure vehicles, into its peripheral landscaped area. Furthermore, the proposed building is neither small in size, nor ancillary to the permitted use, the submission indicating it is to be used for repair and servicing of caravans and leisure vehicles "on site and in the local area". Accordingly, the proposed building constitutes inappropriate development within the Countryside/Green Belt and it is considered that the applicant has not advanced the very special circumstances to outweigh this finding. Furthermore, by reason of the siting, size and design of the proposed building and the external parking and the comings & goings of traffic associated with it, the proposed development would be detrimental to the visual amenities and character of the Countryside/Green Belt. The scheme is considered to be contrary to PPS1/PPG2/PPS4/PPS7 and Policies DP1-9 / RDF2 / RDF4 / EM1 of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the NW of England and Policies AVP5 / 1 / 10 / 18 / 23 / 24 of the Council's Core Strategy DPD (2011).”

Other relevant planning history:

2009/040 Change of use of agricultural land to storage of 148 leisure vehicles (mainly caravans)

In accordance with Officer recommendation, Refused by Committee in March 2009 for the following reason:

“The proposed scheme would constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt which is unacceptable in principle, and the applicant has failed to demonstrate very special circumstances to outweigh this finding of inappropriateness.”

2009/180 Change of use of derelict land to storage of 148 leisure vehicles (mainly caravans)

Approved at DC Committee for the following reason :

“The application relates to a site located within an area of Countryside designated as Green Belt in the adopted Rossendale District Local Plan. The development proposed would constitute inappropriate development within Green Belt. However, subject to the conditions, the Council is satisfied that the very special circumstances exist to outweigh this and any other harm, regard having been given most particularly to the former uses/derelict appearance of the land and the benefits of the

proposal in terms of visual amenity, job creation and diversification of the rural economy.”

2011/226 Variation of Conditions from Planning Permission 2009/0180 to Allow Revised Planting Scheme and Additional Gates to the Entrance (Retrospective)
Approved at DC Committee

4. THE PROPOSAL

Now the site for the storage of caravans/leisure vehicles has been firmly established permission is sought for the construction of a building to be sited in the south western corner of the site to be used for the servicing/repair of caravans and leisure vehicles. The information in support of the application has been amended/added to. The applicant now states that those caravans and leisure vehicles not normally kept at the site which their owners wish to service/ repair at the proposed facility will first have to have been booked-in. Consequently, no caravans/vehicles associated with this facility will be left out on the highway or outside the entrance gates.

The building would measure 12m x 12m with a ridge height of 5m. It would be constructed of 2m high natural stone walls with metal cladding above and to the roof. The building would have 3 roller shutter doors and internally would allow for 3 caravans to be worked on at one time.

The building would be orientated so as to face in a north westerly direction within the site. As a result it will be necessary to move a section of the fencing to the south corner back by approximately 7m heading into the banking beyond. Additional planting is proposed to the rear of the building, details of which have not been provided.

A cross section on the height of the building relative to the levels of Hardsough Lane and the land to the south has been submitted. In accordance with that drawing the ridge height of the building would be lower than Hardsough Lane.

Recognising that the scheme would constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt the applicant considers that the scheme does present very special circumstances to outweigh the finding of inappropriateness. The applicant considers that the development would greatly benefit the area and would create up to 3 jobs when fully established, whilst allowing owners of caravans to have repairs and maintenance undertaken locally. Currently it is stated that the closest repair centres are Blackburn, Glossop and Huddersfield. The scheme would therefore reduce vehicle trips when the need arises for annual repairs.

As part of the submission the applicant has included 5 letters of support from caravan owners residing in Rossendale. The letters refer to:

- Convenience of a local repair facility
- Ability to get caravans checked before every trip
- Increased employment opportunities

5. POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

Section 1 Building a Strong Competitive Economy

Section 3 Supporting a Prosperous and Rural Economy

Section 4 Supporting Sustainable Transport

- Section 7 Requiring Good Design
- Section 8 Promoting Healthy Communities
- Section 9 Protecting Green Belt Land
- Section 11 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Development Plan

Regional Spatial Strategy for the North-West of England (2008)

- Policy DP 1 -9 Spatial Principles
- Policy RDF 1 Spatial Priorities
- Policy RDF 2 Rural Areas
- Policy RDF 4 Green Belts
- Policy W 1 Strengthening the Regional Economy
- Policy W 3 Supply of Employment Land
- Policy RT 1 Integrated Transport Networks
- Policy RT 2 Managing Travel Demand
- Policy EM 1 Environmental Assets

RBC Core Strategy DPD (November 2011)

- AVP5 Strategy for South West Rossendale
- Policy 1 General Development Locations and Principles
- Policy 8 Transport
- Policy 9 Accessibility
- Policy 10 Provision for Employment
- Policy 23 Promoting High Quality Designed Spaces
- Policy 24 Planning Application Requirements

6. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

RBC (Environmental Health)

No objection

LCC (Highways)

No objection

7. REPRESENTATIONS

To accord with the General Development Procedure Order two site notices were posted on 22/3/12 and 9 neighbours were notified by letter on 13/03/12. A press notice was published on Friday 20/1/12.

Two objections were received in relation to the previously refused application, making the following points:

- It is stated that the original planning application was granted for the storage of caravans. This new application takes this a step further in turning the area into a commercial caravan repair area in addition to storage. This was not envisaged when the original application was granted. The provision of a commercial business situated in this area is not in keeping with the area of green countryside which surrounds this site. Nor is the proposed building in keeping with the area.
- The proposed building will be directly opposite the properties on Hardsough Lane and will be a blot on the landscape and visible to the occupants of the cottages. The objector enclosed a map showing a preferred location within the site but further to the west.

8. ASSESSMENT

The main considerations of the application are: 1) Principle; 2) Green Belt/Countryside Impact; 3) Neighbour Amenity; & 4) Highway Safety.

Principle

The National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) states that local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development. However, it also states that “This National Planning Policy Framework does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved, and proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.”

The Council’s Core Strategy states that development in the Green Belt will be determined against national and local planning guidance.

Section 7 of the NPPF indicates the great importance the Government attaches to Green Belts and, as with the previous Green Belt PPG, states that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

In accordance with the NPPF, a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- Buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation;
- non disproportionate extension, alteration of a building dwellings;
- replacement of a building;
- limited infilling in villages; and
- limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites which would not have a greater impact on openness.

The application does not conform with any of the above and therefore constitutes ‘inappropriate development’ in the Green Belt.

I have noted that the scheme may provide employment for up to three persons and that the scheme would reduce vehicle trips for owners of the caravans/leisure vehicles kept on the site. However, the applicant has a wish for the proposed workshop to be permitted for servicing/repair of caravans/leisure vehicles not stored at the site and it has not been demonstrated why such a use could not be catered for within existing buildings within Rossendale, I note for example the large garage at Pack Horse Farm on Market Street which is owned by the applicant. To my mind almost all economic development would create jobs, and whilst this is a positive feature of the scheme, it does not constitute a very special circumstance for the erection of a building that is within the Countryside/Green Belt and not limited to repair of caravans/leisure vehicles stored at the site.

The scheme is therefore considered unacceptable in principle.

Visual Amenity/Countryside Impact

The building would be considerable in terms of size and height and would have some prominence from Hardsough Lane and would require further encroachment into the Green Belt outside of the site boundary to allow for its siting.

The development would be significantly different in character than the current use for storage of vehicles and would result in a building of permanent construction in an area of Green Belt. Given its size, design and permanence, and with a maximum of three employees proposed to my mind it would be unlikely that the building would not be used if there are currently no caravans to service, and accordingly any vehicles would/could be serviced at the site. No parking facilities are proposed, however, which is a concern in respect of caravans from outside of the site and for any other vehicles. Accordingly there could be a significant number of vehicles stored outside of the existing bays, further detracting from the character of the area in addition to the comings and goings of vehicles associated with the building. Whilst the proposed booking system could in theory prevent this I find it hard to imagine that it would be so efficient that there would be a smooth transition between caravans being repaired/serviced so as not to cause waiting. I am aware that there is already landscaping around the site and this will be increased, however, irrespective of any landscaping, the building and additional vehicles within the site would further reduce the openness and harm the visual amenity of the Green Belt over and above that of the caravan storage area. The scheme is, therefore, considered unacceptable in terms of visual amenity/Countryside Impact.

Neighbour Amenity

The building would be located over 100 metres away from the nearest residents and the banking would act as a buffer. As a result of this and noise from traffic on Blackburn Road I do not consider that there would be a significant degree of noise that would be detrimental to neighbours as a result of the scheme. Accordingly it is considered acceptable in terms of neighbour amenity.

Highway Safety

The Highway Authority has not objected to the use of the building for the repair of caravans and I concur with this view. A booking system should help alleviate potential for issues at the junction with Blackburn Road and there is space within the site for turning of vehicles so that they can exit the site safely in a forward gear. The scheme is considered unacceptable in terms of highway safety.

9. RECOMMENDATION

That the application be Refused for the following reason :

The application relates to a site located within the Countryside between the settlements of Edenfield / Ewood Bridge / Irwell Vale that has been designated as Green Belt. Whilst the proposed building lies within the red-edged site of Planning Permission 2009/180 the proposed building extends beyond the area then permitted for the storage of caravans & leisure vehicles, into its peripheral landscaped area. Furthermore, the proposed building is neither small in size, nor ancillary to the permitted use, the submission indicating it is to be used for repair and servicing of caravans and leisure vehicles "on site and in the local area". Accordingly, the proposed building constitutes inappropriate development within the Countryside/Green Belt and it is considered that the applicant has not advanced the very special circumstances to outweigh this finding. Furthermore, by reason of the siting, size and design of the proposed building and the external parking and the comings & goings of traffic associated with it, the proposed development would be detrimental to the visual amenities and character of the Countryside/Green Belt. The scheme is considered to be contrary to the NPPF and Policies DP1-9 / RDF2 / RDF4 / EM1 of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the NW of England and Policies AVP5 / 1 / 10 / 18 / 23 / 24 of the Council's Core Strategy DPD (2011).