

Supporting Planning Statement

Site: Whitefield Golf Club, Higher Lane, Whitefield, M45 7EZ

Proposal: Erection of single storey storage building

Date: April 2023

Introduction and Background

Whitefield Golf Club is long established and welcomes participants to play golf from across society. The welcoming nature of the club and excellent facilities of the course and club house has seen membership levels increase. There is an increasing need to provide access to the course for members and visitors with reduced mobility. The Club aim to ensure sufficient golf buggies are available but require a suitable building to store the golf buggies. This planning application seeks a single storey building to store golf buggies.

Proposed Development

Planning permission is sought for a single storey building to store golf buggies. The plan form is rectangular in shape, and it measures 10.1 metres (length) by 4 metres (width). The walls are to be finished in white render with pitched roof above finished in dark grey modern tiles. All frames for doors and doors will be in grey coloured UPVC. The building would have a roller shutter access door in the front elevation that is recessed behind a projecting covered roof canopy feature and this will open out onto the pathway to allow easy access to the golf course. There is also a side personnel door in the building that can be accessed from the existing pathway.

The image below shows the location of the proposed storage building edged in red.



Appraisal

The proposed storage building is located just within the defined Greater Manchester Green Belt. The adopted local planning policies of Bury MBC and the National Planning Policy Framework are applicable to development with the Green Belt. The Green Belt policies within the local plan are consistent with the more recent policies within the NPPF. The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of

Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. We are advised that: *“Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.”* (Paragraph 147, NPPF).

The NPPF provides some exceptions criterion for new buildings at Paragraph 149 which specifies that certain types of development are acceptable within the Green Belt. The exceptions are given as:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- 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 size of 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;
- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
 - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
 - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

Paragraph 149 of NPPF

Included within criterion b) is the allowance within the green belt for appropriate sporting facilities. It is up to the decision maker to determine what is an appropriate facility, but the applicant considers that the provision of a store for golf buggies is appropriate. This is especially the case as principally the buggies are used by those people wishing to play golf who have reduced mobility. Having useable golf buggies that are protected from weather, vandalism and theft will greatly enhance the ability for people who are not mobile to be able to play golf. In this sense we suggest the store is essential. The siting of the store is tucked away next to the existing building and in a location where it will be useable by golfers with reduced mobility – right next to the clubhouse and car park. The only place that the storage building could be sited as an alternative would be in a more open location on the actual golf course. We suggest the proposed location for the store is the most suitable in terms of keeping the Green Belt open.

The design and appearance of the building would be considered standard for a storage facility of this type at a golf club location. The applicant has been keen to ensure that the external construction materials suitably match and harmonise with the adjacent clubhouse building and this is the reason why they have chosen to use a white render finish for the walls and dark grey tiles for the roof.

Conclusion

The applicant wishes to support existing and future members of the golf club who have reduced mobility by providing this golf buggy storage facility, so they can enjoy playing the sport of golf. They have been keen to ensure that the proposed storage building is well designed, fit for purpose, and easily accessible for the users, and it has been carefully positioned on the site adjacent to existing buildings to limit its overall impact. The Bury MBC local plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) both confirm that the provision of a new building for outdoor sports facilities, such as proposed in this application, is an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt. Therefore, we consider that the proposed store complies with Green Belt policy, and we respectfully request that planning permission is granted for this development.