

Development in Green Belt

LOCATION: Red Hall Hotel
Manchester Road
Ramsbottom
Bury BL9 5HA

BACKGROUND

The Red Hall Hotel was originally a farm house building that was converted into a restaurant in 1978. Planning consent was later granted to erect a bedroom wing and subsequently became a hotel. The hotel was very successful, located close to junction 1 of the M66 motorway and convenient for travellers to the area.

In July 2008, an application for planning consent to extend the bedroom block and re-develop the hotel was submitted. The application (No 49938) was given planning consent for the refurbishment and additional bedrooms; bringing the accommodation up from 20 to 37 bedrooms, with a function room to accommodate 144 persons, restaurant, and meeting rooms. The hotel was designed and fully equipped for disabled people.

The Red Hall Hotel is a very popular venue within the Borough of Bury, for weddings, local functions, afternoon tea's, conferences and accommodation.

PLANNING POLICY

A report was submitted at the time of the previous planning application to address the planning requirements of PPG2 (Green Belt) and PPS7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas).

The report outlined special circumstances to respond to the matter of "*Inappropriate development*" in green belt areas; which included:

- A need for this type of facility in this location
- Absence of an alternative site outside the Green Belt which could satisfy this need
- Employment opportunities in the area
- Benefits to sustainability and accessibility
- Absence of harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

It is recognised that the primary intention of Green Belts is to “prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence” (s.13 para 137, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)). The special circumstances attached to this application are substantially the same as accepted on the previous application (Application Number: 61190).

It should be noted that this application is specifically to provide a wedding garden to allow wedding services to be conducted in an outdoor, open space, to address public demand and to facilitate social distancing in line with infection, prevention and control measures associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. The wedding garden development is proposed on land adjacent to the existing hotel car park.

The Red Hall Hotel was sold to the current owners in October 2019 and the government forced lockdown has caused extreme difficulties throughout the hospitality industry. The proposed wedding garden will seek to address the backlog of weddings and demand arising from the covid-19 restrictions, providing outdoor recreation in line with s.150 (e) of the National Planning Policy Framework, and maintain the employment of hotel staff.

The proposed wedding garden will not have a negative impact on the openness of the countryside/green belt area; given the area of land is located at the rear of the properties next to the existing rear gardens and garage site. Landscaping will be undertaken along the boundaries of the site under this proposal, in line with the application plans and design and access statement, which will ensure minimum visual impact and enable the overall objectives of the proposal to be achieved. The proposed wedding garden would consist of a pergola and a storage building for seating when not in use.

It should be noted that this application is made in the context of the importance of retaining economic development and employment and thereby in line with s.6 of the NPPF ‘Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy’, by way of supporting tourism and promoting the retention and development of local services and employment. Meeting the demonstrated need; absence of an alternative site and employment opportunities all remain pertinent factors for this application.

The very special circumstances formerly approved: meeting demonstrated need for this type of facility in this location; absence of an alternative site outside the green belt which could satisfy this need; investment and employment opportunities and absence of harm to the openness of the green belt; remain in accordance with NPPF.