

PLANNING STATEMENT

Canopy at Rear

Sunnywood Project Hub, 15 Stock Street, Bury BL8 1BU

Introduction

The Sunnywood Project is a non-profit outdoor education and events provider, combining arts and nature to promote a love of the great outdoors through a variety of events, conservation and educational programmes, stimulating a mentally and physically healthy lifestyle for those living in Bury and surrounding areas.

The Hub has recently been established at 15 Stock Street, an end terraced property leased from the Council in Burrs Country Park. The Hub is the base for the Sunnywood Project Team made up of outdoor professionals, experienced teachers, youth workers, youth workers and counsellors. The work includes support programmes and educational opportunities for individuals struggling with mainstream education and walk leadership training. The Hub is ideally situated in the Country Park, with its woodland and waterways, for families and school children to be taught to appreciate and conserve the natural environment.

The Hub building includes a recreation area, classroom/workshop, counselling space and a meeting room. Space inside is limited and some activity takes place outside at the rear. The canopy has been erected to shelter visitors from the rain. It is a simple structure with a felt clad sloping roof supported by three timber posts

Planning Policy

Bury's development plan is still the old 1997, **Bury Unitary Development Plan**. Green Belt policies are still relevant and are broadly in accordance with guidance in the current National Planning Policy Framework.

UDP Policy OL1/2-New buildings in the Green Belt states that the construction of new buildings on the Green Belt is "Inappropriate Development" with exceptions that include "essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation.....which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it".

UDP Policy OL5/2- Development in River Valleys would allow development that would not lead to the division of open sections of the valley. However Green Belt policies must be applied where relevant.

UDP Policy EN9/1- Special Landscape Areas requires new development to be sympathetic to its surrounding in terms of its visual impact. High standards of design, siting and landscaping will be expected. Unduly obtrusive development will not be permitted.

UDP Policy RT3/1/4 seeks to protect Burrs Country Park as a focal point for informal recreation.

UDP Policy RT4/1 –Tourism Development encourages and supports proposals for the development of appropriate visitor related attractions and facilities, particularly in the upper Irwell Valley.

The UDP has still not been replaced with an up to date Local Plan but there are other Council policies which support the development.

Bury Green Space Audit and Strategy 2015 makes specific reference to developing Burrs Country Park.

Burrs Country Park Strategy 2015-2029 sets out the Council's vision to create a "destination park" over a 15 year time period, recognising the range of attractions for visitors. It includes "a focus for outdoor recreation and learning" with development as an outdoor classroom.

The **National Planning Policy Framework** encourages the granting of planning permission for sustainable development in accordance with the development plan. It asks local planning authorities to look for solutions rather than problems. It encourages the supply of a variety of new homes.

Current Green Belt guidance is contained in the NPPF. It reiterates the purposes of including land in the Green Belt including checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas and the merging of neighbouring towns.

Paragraphs 147 and 148 Of the NPPF make it clear that “inappropriate development” is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in “very special circumstances”. 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.

Paragraph 149 of the NPPF considers the construction of new buildings as inappropriate development in the Green Belt subject to exceptions which include:-:

- “b)The provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation.
- 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.”

It is normally considered that a building up to 30% larger than the original would be “appropriate. The existing building has a floor area of some 60 square metres and a volume of 350 cubic metres. The area below the canopy has a floor area of 15 square metres and a volume of 45 cubic metres, both well below the 30% figure.

Justification

- The canopy is a minor addition to the building. It would be “permitted development” if it was on the rear of a house.
- In terms of Green Belt policy and guidance the structure is not disproportionate to the floor area and volume of the existing building.
- Its simple design is in accord with the rural setting.
- The Sunnywood Project is complementary to the Council's ambitions for the Country Park.

Any potential harm to the Green Belt would be as a result of visual impact on its openness. In this instance there would be no harm, justifying the grant of retrospective planning permission.