

**NEWCASTLE GOLF CLUB**  
**MS S WALSH**

**13/00940/FUL**

The application is for the erection of a replacement maintenance and equipment store with workshop, office, rest room and on course ladies toilet facilities. The proposed building measures 22 metres by 17 metres in footprint by 4 metres in roof ridge height.

The site is located within the Green Belt and an Area of Landscape Restoration as defined by the Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

**The 8 week period for the determination of this application expired on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014**

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:-**

- **Standard time limit.**
- **Approved Plans.**
- **Materials in accordance with those specified.**
- **Tree protection measures.**

**Reason for Recommendation**

Although the application is for inappropriate development within the Green Belt it is considered that there are very special circumstances to justify the proposal. Whilst the proposal clearly materially reduces the openness of the Green Belt when compared to the scale of the buildings it replaces, taking into account the total area of land involved which is used as a golf course the harm caused by the inappropriateness is outweighed by the functional requirements of the permitted lawful use which are reasonable and the absence of any other significant demonstrable harm.

**Statement as to how the Local Planning Authority has worked in a positive and proactive manner in dealing with the planning application**

The proposal is considered to be a sustainable form of development in compliance with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

**Policies and Proposals in the Approved Development Plan relevant to the decision:-**

Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) 2006-2026

CSP1: Design Quality  
ASP6: Rural Area Spatial Policy

Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan (NLP) 2011

Policy S3: Development in the Green Belt  
Policy N17: Landscape Character – General Considerations  
Policy N19: Landscape Maintenance Areas

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)  
Circular 11/95 Conditions

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Newcastle under Lyme and Stoke on Trent Urban Design Supplementary Planning Document

(2010)

### **Planning History**

01/00298/FUL	Proposed portable building within Green-Keepers Compound	Permitted	2001
--------------	--	-----------	------

### **Views of Consultees**

**Environmental Protection** – No objections subject to contaminated land conditions.

**Landscape Development Section** – Should any excavation (including the pad foundations for the portal frame) be outside the existing building footprint, an upfront arboricultural report would be required before further comments can be made. Should all excavations lie within the existing building footprint then the following information is required:

- Tree Protection Plan
- Schedule of works to retained overhanging trees

### **Representations**

No representations received.

### **Applicants/ Agents submission**

The requisite plans and application forms have been submitted along with a Design and Access Statement (although there is no formal requirement for one). The submitted information is available at the Guildhall and at [www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/planning/NewcastleGolfClub](http://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/planning/NewcastleGolfClub)

### **Key Issues**

The proposed building measures 22 metres by 17 metres in footprint by 4 metres in roof ridge height. The new building is to replace an existing storage and workshop building and a steel framed container that is to be removed from the site.

The application site lies within the Green Belt and a Landscape Maintenance Area as defined on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

The key issues in the determination of this planning application are:

1. whether or not the proposal is appropriate development within the Green Belt;
2. the acceptability of the design of the proposal, and the impact on the wider landscape;
3. the impact to trees;
4. If the development is inappropriate do very special circumstances exist which outweigh the harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm?

Paragraphs 214 and 215 of the NPPF state that for 12 months from the day of publication, decision-takers may continue to give full weight to relevant policies adopted since 2004 even if there is a limited degree of conflict with this Framework. In other cases and following this 12-month period (post 29th March 2013), due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

#### **1. Is the development appropriate or inappropriate in Green Belt terms?**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) represents the most up to date policy with respect to Green Belt considerations. Inappropriate development is defined at paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF. At paragraph 89 it states that a local planning authority should regard

the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt, except those listed in the policy.

The exceptions listed include the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

The proposal comprises of essential facilities for the operation of the golf course. The proportions of the building are largely dictated by functional requirements. The replacement of existing buildings which have an existing impact on openness also needs to be considered in the context of green belt planning policy. However, the new building has a larger volume than the buildings it is to replace and cannot be said to preserve the openness of the Green Belt. The proposed development is therefore inappropriate.

## 2. The acceptability of the design of the proposal, including the impact to the wider landscape

Saved Local Plan Policy N19 states that the Council will seek to maintain the high quality and characteristic landscapes in Landscape Maintenance Areas as shown on the Proposals Map. Where development can be permitted, it will be expected to contribute to this aim. Within these areas it will be necessary to demonstrate that development will not further erode the character or quality of the landscape.

The proposed building is positioned within an enclave of trees and hedgerow which will to a great extent limit direct views of the development. The walls and roof of the building are to be constructed from green coloured metal cladding which would assimilate well with surrounding landscape features. The proposal, which is discretely positioned to a large extent on the footprint of the existing buildings and the courtyard between them, would be in keeping with the existing character of the golf course facility which can be reasonably expected to include maintenance buildings to meet the functional requirements of the use. In conclusion the design of the building and impact to the visual appearance of the surrounding landscape is acceptable.

## 3. The impact to trees

Saved Local Plan policy N12 states that the Council will resist development that would involve the removal of any visually significant tree, shrub or hedge, whether mature or not unless the need for the development is sufficient to warrant tree loss and the loss cannot be avoided by appropriate siting or design.

The site concerned already has buildings and a hard standing situated on it. The footings of the proposed building would have the same relationship with surrounding trees as the existing buildings and associated hard standing erected with the exception of a very small area on the southern boundary where tree coverage is more limited. The view taken is that it would not be appropriate to require an arboricultural report taking into account the extent of existing development and the lack of realistic alternatives to position the new building – the position proposed being the most sensible option available. It is considered appropriate that tree protection measures are employed during the construction of the building however nothing further.

## 4. Are there any very special circumstances?

The NPPF, at paragraph 87, states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. At paragraph 88 it advises that local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. It goes on to state that 'very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

As already mentioned at the beginning of the report, the building is required to provide essential storage facilities to ensure the effective running of the golf club. The overall area of

the golf course is considerable, predominantly open, and requires a substantial investment in labour, time and finance to continuously maintain it. Although the proposal clearly materially reduces the openness of the Green Belt when compared to the scale of the buildings it replaces, taking into account the total area of land involved harm caused by the inappropriateness is outweighed by the functional requirements of the permitted lawful use which are reasonable and the absence of any other significant demonstrable harm. As such it is considered that very special circumstances exist to justify this development in this case.

**Background Papers**

Planning File  
Planning Documents referred to

**Date Report Prepared**

3 February 2014.