
2020/1417

Applicant: Mr John Saul

Description: Erection of 9 detached pods and creation of associated landscape featured and paths

Site Address: Burntwood Sports and Leisure Centre, Common Road, Brierley, Barnsley, S72 9ET

Site Description

The application site is the Burntwood Court complex located off Common Road in Brierley.

The site is currently made up of a number of buildings including a hotel, public house, ceremony hall, restaurant, sports and leisure facilities and a large car park which are set back behind Common Road and the access road serving the development.

The complex is in rural surroundings with fields around the perimeter. There are detached dwellings and a farm located to the west of the site also off Common Road.

A public right of way passes in front of the existing buildings and then wraps around the edge of the site before heading north towards Hemsworth. The B6273 to Hemsworth is also located further to the east of the site.

The area to the front of the buildings is well landscaped by grass lawns and planted trees. There is also an existing children's play area which extends out from the south west corner of the existing pub building adjacent the entrance road into the building.

Proposed Development

The proposed is to build 9 glamping pods, set around a large pond / small lake with landscaping. The pods are:

- 2 x two-storey, two-bed pods (125sqm each approx);
- 2 x single-storey, two-bed pods (60sqm each approx);
- 5 x single-storey, one-bed pods (40sqm each approx);

The single storey pods are 2.75m to the eaves and 5m to the ridge, with the two-storey pods being 5.1m to the eaves and 6.3m to the ridge.

A path links the pods to the hotel complex and facilities available, however, each includes self-catering facilities and can, therefore, provide entirely self-contained accommodation.

In addition, seating areas and a bridge over the pond/lake are proposed around the site.

History

There is a long history of applications at the site. The main ones of significance are as follows:-

B/77/2300/HR – Development of former hospital site as sports complex with associated bungalow, approved

B/82/0582/HR – Change of use from snacks/functions room to restaurant, approved

B/83/1408/HR – Extension to lounge bar of existing sports complex, approved

B/85/1312/HR – Extension to store to convert into tea room, formation of car park, croquet lawn and putting green and erection of livery stables,

B/87/0666/HR – Outline for motel, exhibition room, extension to functions room, golf driving range and tennis courts, approved

B/90/0691/HR – Erection of motel, approved

B/92/1604/HR – Erection of extensions to existing functions room, approved

B/94/0506/HR – Erection of extension to existing motel, approved

B/94/1228/HR – Alterations to premises and erection of new gym extension, approved

B/98/0176/HR – Erection of extension to existing functions room, approved

B/99/0336/HR – Erection of 20 bedroom two storey motel extension and new banqueting and conference facilities - granted planning permission by Secretary of State

B/00/1246/HR – Erection of banquet/conference centre with motel annex and restaurant (reserved matters), approved

B/05/0397/HR – Erection of health and leisure centre, approved

B/05/0684/HR – Erection of two storey office extension, approved

2008/0225 – Erection of children’s play room, approved

2013/0553 - Erection of ceremony building with provision of associated access road, parking and site landscaping and new outdoor children’s play area - Approved

Policy Context

Planning decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. The new Local Plan was adopted at the full Council meeting held 3rd January 2019. In addition, the Council has adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans which provide supporting guidance and specific local policies and are a material consideration in the decision making process.

Local Plan Policies

The site is in the Green Belt as shown on the adopted Local Plan, where Local Plan Policy GB1 protects land from development in accordance with national green belt policy.

Other relevant policies include:

- SD1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- GD1 General Development
- LG2 The Location of Growth
- E3 Uses on Employment Land
- E4 Protecting Existing Employment Land
- E5 Promoting Tourism and Encouraging Cultural Provision
- E6 Rural Economy
- T3 New Development and Sustainable Travel
- T4 New Development and Transport Safety
- D1 High Quality Design and Place Making
- GS1 Green Space
- BIO1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- CC1 Climate Change
- CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC3 Flood Risk
- CC4 Sustainable Drainage Systems
- CL1 Contaminated and Unstable Land
- Poll1 Pollution Control and Protection
- I1 Infrastructure and Planning Obligations

NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole; or where specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted or unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Other relevant guidance

Barnsley Visitor Economy Strategy 2017-2020

The Visitor Economy Strategy for Barnsley sets out a broad vision and key priorities for the Council and its Visitor Economy sector partners to address. Coordinating activity across the sector will enable the Borough to realise the benefits from the development and growth of the Visitor Economy sector. The strategy links closely to the Borough's corporate priority of growing a Thriving and Vibrant Economy and to the themes of the approved Jobs and Business Plan.

The strategy identifies the narrow range of accommodation available as a weakness in the current offer and that there is a need to attract private investment.

Consultations

AQ - There are 2 additional disabled car parking spaces proposed for this development, however, although the Sustainable Travel SPD requires 10% of parking to be set aside for electric vehicle charge points, the primary purpose of the additional car parking spaces is for disabled users. Therefore, using one of these additional spaces for an EVCP would compromise their purpose. No objections.

Biodiversity – The applicant has demonstrated a significant Biodiversity Net Gain is offered on the site. Further detail must be secured through the landscaping details and a detailed lighting scheme. This can be secured through appropriate conditions.

Drainage – No objections, the drainage should be dealt with by Building Control.

Highways – No objections

Tree Officer – No objections subject to conditions

Public Rights of Way – There is an ongoing enforcement issue regarding the route of PROW across the site and the proposed development will conflict with another route. A formal application to distinguish and / realign the routes is required.

Regulatory Services – No comments received.

Yorkshire Water – No comments received

Wakefield Council – No comments received

Representations

The application was advertised by site notice and neighbour notification. No letters of representation have been received.

Assessment

The site is in the Green Belt as allocated on the adopted Barnsley Local Plan where inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful and should not be allowed except in very special circumstances. Planning Authorities are required to regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate development in the Green Belt with only a few exceptions. These include: 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.

The proposed is located on land within the curtilage of the Burntwood Court complex as it has been defined in this and previous applications. However, the land is currently open with no buildings or structures and is agricultural in appearance. It is not considered to be within the developed area of the site for this reason. In addition, the development would have greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. Therefore, it is inappropriate development and very special circumstances must be demonstrated to exist.

The applicant has provided evidence within the supporting statements that the proposed will support the expansion of an existing tourism facility, providing alternative accommodation currently not available on site or within the area. This is

stated to be particularly relevant in relation to the wedding services business and as a result of the recent covid 19 pandemic which has seen the tourism industry impacted significantly but also supports a predicted increase in demand for staycations and self-contained accommodation.

Consultation with the Council's Head of Culture and Visitor Economy confirms that there is a need to support the diversification of the tourism accommodation offer in the borough and demand for this type of accommodation post covid with Welcome to Yorkshire and Visit England currently looking to capitalise on the expansion of the staycation market and also to promote new off the beaten track locations in order to manage demand and spread out visitors to improve the overall experience for others. Therefore, weight can be afforded to the economic case for the proposed in compliance with this and Local Plan Policies E5 (Tourism) and E6 (Rural Economy).

The design of the proposed is high quality and the landscaping will soften the appearance as well as providing an attractive location to walk and sit for visitors. The applicant has located the development close to the existing buildings on the site and between them and the B6273 which acts as a defensible boundary to the east. This has the advantage of creating opportunities for shared facilities including access and parking as well as limiting the impact on the green belt in relation to unrestricted sprawl and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. In addition, by locating the proposed next to existing buildings, there is a clear physical relationship, mitigating the appearance of the proposed. The buildings are large for glamping pods but represent an increase in the built footprint on site of just 9% which is relatively modest. Therefore, whilst there is an impact on openness this is limited and the proposed does not conflict with the purposes of the green belt as set out in the NPPF.

Biodiversity

The site currently is largely lawns and improved grassland. There are hedgerows around the perimeter, which are retained in the development proposals. The applicant has provided an ecological survey which confirms the limited biodiversity value of the site.

A Landscape Planting Strategy and Schedule has been provided along with a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Metric Calculation. Various enhancements are proposed to biodiversity on the site including the creation of a pond with wetland meadow, circa 65 new trees and 370m of native, species rich hedgerows and areas of wildflower meadows. In addition, bird and insect boxes are incorporated within the scheme. Existing hedgerows and trees on the site are retained and unaffected by the development.

The Biodiversity Metric Calculation demonstrates an enhancement to the habitat on site and a net gain in biodiversity. This has been assessed by the Council's Biodiversity Officer and the findings accepted. As this is over and above the no net loss required under BIO1 it can be viewed as a significant benefit of the development.

Residential Amenity

There are very few residential properties located close to the development with the nearest being on the opposite side of Common road and to the north west. These will not be affected by the development as the existing hotel sits between them and the location of the pods.

Visual amenity

The overall design quality is high with the pods arranged around a central water feature and interspersed with mixed planting, including trees and hedgerows which create a woodland feel and over time will screen and soften the appearance of the pods.

The pods are simple in design, appearing similar to small scale agricultural barns and constructed of natural materials including timber and stone. The glazed elements are set back within the structure of the buildings with a covered area for seating and hot tubs or simple overhang and timber cladding. This approach maximises the ability for occupants to enjoy the views whilst retaining the modest appearance of the buildings and reducing glare.

A walkway winds around the lake to access the pods as well as an attractive walk around the lake, with a bridge over providing alternative routes. Seating is also proposed around the site.

The overall design of the buildings and landscaping is accepted to be very high quality and is a benefit of the scheme in accordance with Local Plan Policy D1.

Sustainability

The site is not located within or close to an existing settlement with options to walk or access public transport being limited. The applicant has stated that sustainable design and construction will be maximised but limited details are provided over and above what is likely to be required under current building regulations. As such this aspect of the development is assessed as neutral.

Highway Safety

The site utilises the same access and parking as the existing site. therefore, no objections have been raised in terms of highway safety.

PROW

There are two Public Rights of Way crossing the site, one was diverted by the applicant some time ago without formally applying for a formal diversion order. The second will be affected by the proposed development, requiring diversion.

The applicant has been advised that the Council's PROW team would be likely to support a diversion and extinguishment in this case but that they must submit a diversion and extinguishment application (1 application covering both PROW) prior to starting works on site. This application has now been submitted.

It should be noted that this is a separate, defined legal process and approval of planning permission does not mean that the footpaths can be built over without securing agreement of the diversion and extinguishment beforehand. This is made clear in the informative proposed for the decision notice and the applicant has been advised separately in writing.

Conclusion

The proposed is inappropriate development within the green belt and whilst it is an expansion of an existing employment facility, it is not limited infill being located outside of the existing built form on the site. However, the location is close to existing buildings and provides opportunities to utilise existing facilities including access and parking. This reduces the overall impact on the openness of the green belt.

The pods will provide an alternative accommodation option, complimenting the existing facilities on site. It has been demonstrated by the applicant to provide an enhanced offer which will support the existing rural business both to recover from the current pandemic and to grow their wedding business in the future. In addition, there is an identified need to enhance the overall accommodation offer within the borough to support growth in the tourism industry and the recent pandemic has highlighted the benefits of self-contained accommodation. These economic benefits are in accordance with Local Plan Policies E5 and E6 and are afforded weight as a benefit of the scheme.

The design of the pods and surrounding landscaping is sufficiently high to be considered a benefit of the scheme both in accordance with Local Plan Policy D1 and, as a result of significant biodiversity habitat enhancement, BIO1 Biodiversity.

Taking account of the overall harm, weighed against the benefits of the proposed it is considered that very special circumstances do exist and the proposed is recommended for approval.

Recommendation

Grant planning permission subject to conditions