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Our Ref: 2017-887

Your Ref:

Date: April 2024

PLANNING STATEMENT

Bush Farm Back Lakes, Upminster, Essex

SITE LOCATION

The site is located between Upminster and Aveley in the Metropolitan Green Belt. The private access road is on the east side of Aveley Road, opposite Damyns Hall Aerodrome, and the site, which is set back some 130 metres from the road is not visible from the public highway. The use of the site is a private recreational fishing club, owned by the applicant.

The existing site includes fishing lakes, woodland, hardstanding and a number of portacabins which relate to the use of the site as a fishery, including refrigerator cabin, equipment and bait stores, WC facilities and administration cabin.



SITE PLAN - NTS

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PROPOSAL

The proposed works are for the provision of appropriate facilities in connection with the existing use of the land for outdoor recreation as permitted by the NPPF.

The proposal is for a small building and secure store to replace the existing portacabins and WC facilities.

The facilities would include:

1. Equipment store for small power tools.
2. Utility area for washing equipment.
3. Office for administration.
4. Bait preparation and associated equipment storage.
5. Refrigeration unit for storing feed and bait.
6. Disabled WCs and shower.
7. Tea bar for anglers to make hot drinks.
8. Secure store for large equipment including driveable mower and weed-boat.

The proposed building would be clad in black recycled composite boarding, (recycled composite slatted cladding) which works in harmony with the rural setting. The materials would be in black which is typical in Essex rural design. The roof tiles are also recycled composite materials. The information provided indicated that the proposed materials would be long lasting with minimal maintenance.

The proposed structure would have a prevailing rural character (or better described - appears as a fisherman hut) which would be in keeping with the rural / agricultural setting of the area.

In terms of sustainability, the proposal would incorporate passive design, with refrigeration area set within the building away from direct sunlight, adjacent to mature shrubbery along the boundary. The scheme also incorporates PV panels along the length of the pitched roof, visible to users to promote sustainability.

Pergolas are incorporated to provide natural shade to the admin office and tea bar, along with inbuilt planters to enhance biodiversity to the building. A water butt is also included for capturing runoff rainwater from the roof to water the planters and reduce surface water run off on the existing hardstanding.

ECOLOGY & TREES

The adopted local plan explains that the biodiversity of sites will be protected and enhanced throughout the borough. The retention of the fishing lake would contribute to the diversity of the wildlife in the locality.

The proposal would not result in loss of any significant trees on site.



ACCESS/HIGHWAYS

The proposal retains the existing access and hardstanding, it is not proposed for this to be extended.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The site is located in the Metropolitan Green Belt. As per Paragraph 145 of the National Planning Policy Framework, this proposal is for the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of the land) for outdoor sport and recreation. There is a clear need to replace the portacabins to provide more sustainable, suitable facilities to house equipment and provide facilities to maintain the fishery. Without these facilities there would be devastating impacts on the fish including disease and death and in turn this would have an adverse impact the Green Belt.

The proposed structures are relatively small, single storey with pitched roofs. The designs have emerged by studying and analysing the character and appearance of similar buildings in the local area.

The proposed building is located in the same position of the existing cabins, set back adjacent to the west boundary, with an appropriate access to the rear of the building for maintenance such a cleaning gutters etc. This position, set back from the lakes, allows views over the lakes and shrubbery, maintaining an open view to the lake.

The Local Plan also advises that there is an increasing need for social infrastructure in the borough, stating that it is a 'key issue for the Council to address' (A.3.8). Furthermore, policy 18 advises the council will *"Support proposals that improve the quality of and access to, existing open space, sports and recreation facilities"*. Policy 12 also states *"The Local Plan will promote health and wellbeing by Providing and protecting open space, leisure and recreation facilities"*.

This proposal addresses all those needs, and by continuing use as a private recreational fishing club with the existing lake and number of swims, member numbers will remain constant. Consequently, there won't be any adverse impacts, only positive enhancements to the Green Belt with the continued use and improved, eco-friendly, sustainable facilities.

VERY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES TO JUSTIFY THE DEVELOPMENT

There is a clear need for facilities and storage to ensure the lake is maintained for ecological reasons, and the public, the anglers and the fish are safe. Appropriate facilities for recreation and outdoor sport are permitted by the NPPF in the Green Belt.

This proposal replaces unsightly portacabins and structures with a sustainable, passive design, low maintenance structure. As per paragraph 99 in the NPPF,

"Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:



...b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; ..."

In addition, Local Plan Policy 18 advises the council will 'Support proposals that improve the quality of and access to, existing open space, sports and recreation facilities'. Policy 12 also states "The Local Plan will promote health and wellbeing by Providing and protecting open space, leisure and recreation facilities". There are similar policies in London Plan.

It is therefore, considered due to a number of factors the proposal would be given some weight in terms of its positive enhancement to the green belt with respect to special circumstances.

IMPACT ON NEIGHBOURING AMENITY

There will be no impact on neighbouring amenity. The use has been continuous for decades and the proposed scheme does not increase the size of the lake or the number of swims. The proposed works will enhance the site and the Green Belt and therefore would have a positive impact on neighbouring amenity.

The proposed development is located to the west of the site. The development is set well back from Aveley Road and there is an existing entrance and access to the site. UK Paintball Upminster operate a large site to the north of the development site.

SUMMARY

In line with Havering's Local Plan Objectives, this proposal protects and enhances Havering's Green Belt.

National and local policy has been considered and their objectives support the principle of development. This is a relatively small proposal for the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of the land) for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, improving the quality of and access to existing open space and recreation facilities. The proposed facilities replace the portacabins and structures currently used to run and maintain the lake.

The proposed use will not harm the openness or compromise the purposes of the Green Belt. It is an appropriate use in Green Belt and rural area and promotes outdoor recreation and access for the enjoyment of the countryside.

The proposal is passively designed, minimal, low energy and sustainable and will have no impact on neighbouring amenity.