

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

12th February 2014

Planning Application 2013/316/COU

Change of use to private recreational use including golf practice facility comprising construction of one golf green, two golf tees, water pump housing (retrospective) and tractor shed

Tookeys Farm House, Tookeys Drive, Astwood Bank, Worcestershire, B96 6BB

**Applicant: Mr Mark Rolph
Expiry Date: 30th January 2014
Ward: ASTWOOD BANK AND FECKENHAM**

(see additional papers for Site Plan)

The author of this report is Ailith Rutt, DM Manager, who can be contacted on Tel: 01527 534064 Email: ailith.rutt@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk for more information.

Site Description

The site is formed from a grassed field adjacent to the residential curtilage of Tookeys Farm House, which is a grade 2* listed building. It is an undulating field, with a valley in the middle running approximately east-west where water collects and drains towards an existing sizeable pond. The pond has recently had its sides firmed up and reinforced to improve safety.

The site lies west of residential areas in the village of Astwood Bank, with a field between it and the village settlement itself.

Proposal Description

The proposal is partially retrospective, in that works have begun but are now pending the outcome of this application as a result of the advice of the enforcement officer.

The works include:

- Engineering operations comprising the creation of two golf tees and one golf green at three of the top four corners of the field (already completed)
- Installation of a water pump and housing over a borehole, to provide water for the dwelling and its garden area (already completed)
- Installation of a tractor shed of timber construction on a concrete base - the base has already been constructed

The application originally included the erection of a summerhouse, but that has been withdrawn from the application and thus from the matters for consideration; it will be dealt with separately.

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Relevant Policies

Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3:

CS02 Care for the Environment

CS07 The Sustainable Location of Development

CS08 Landscape Character

BRA01 Detailed Extent of Control of Development in the Green Belt

BBE13 Qualities of Good Design

Others:

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework

Relevant Planning History

None

Consultations

Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

Additional information requested which applicant has provided – final comments awaited

Worcestershire Archive And Archaeological Service

No Comments Received

Development Plans

The summerhouse and shed are not considered to be appropriate for the outdoor recreational use that has been created. These buildings therefore constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The applicant has not put forward a case for very special circumstances to justify the harm that would be caused to the Green Belt.

The engineering operation involving the construction of the golf green and tees is considered to be an appropriate form of development since it preserves openness and does not conflict with any of the purposes of the Green Belt. The water pump building is considered to constitute an appropriate facility for the outdoor hobby of golf.

Conservation Officer

No objection except to the summerhouse as it would affect the landscape and setting of the listed building. Request that a physical boundary between the garden curtilage of the farm house and the field that forms the application site be re-instated, the details having been agreed with the Council.

In a farmstead situation such as this, an outbuilding such as the tractor shed would normally be located within the residential curtilage as part of the farm complex of buildings. However, in this case, the farm has been divided such that there is less need for it to be read with the other buildings and a higher risk of harm to the historic fabric. The proposed location is considered to be acceptable as it would not harm the setting of the listed building or the landscape character of the area.

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English Heritage

No Comments Received

Public Consultation Response

14 letters of objection received raising the following concerns:

- * Infringement of GreenBelt
- * Precedent for future development of this and adjacent sites
- * Negative impact on wildlife
- * Increase in traffic
- * Impact on Public Right Of Way network
- * Damage caused by stray golf balls
- * No need - enough golf clubs in the area already
- * Drainage changes will affect watercourse downstream

Assessment of Proposal

It should be noted that retrospective (or part retrospective as in this case) applications should be considered in policy terms as if work had not yet commenced on site, and if permission is not granted, then enforcement action would be considered.

The site lies within the Greenbelt outside the Astwood Bank village envelope and as such, acceptable uses are restricted in terms of sustainability and in order to protect its openness.

The proposed use has been described by the applicant as 'private amenity space' however in planning terms, this equates to garden land, and as such causes difficulty in this case as the extension of gardens within the Green Belt is normally resisted. Such a use would bring with it rights such as permitted development rights to add other structures into the field (which could be removed by condition if it were felt appropriate), and also would allow general residential use and associated paraphernalia to be introduced, even if not immediately intended, then gradually over time such things could creep into place. Therefore, an alternative description of the proposal as stated above has been agreed with the applicant.

The use of the site for private, low key recreation is considered to be acceptable in principle; however it should be restricted to private rather than commercial recreation due to the lack of associated facilities, business plan etc. The applicant has indicated that the intended use is solely for the residents of Tookeys Farm House and any guests that they might have, and therefore the use of the practice facility can be restricted both in terms of which and how many users it can accommodate.

In terms of openness, the engineering operations associated with the remodelling of the topography and levels of the field are considered to be minimal and given the undulating nature of the site, do not have any impact on the openness or character of the site. Some concerns have been raised about historic landscape features that may have been present

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on the site, however as the proposal is retrospective, it would not be possible to re-instate these. However, any changes to the biodiversity of the site as a result of the engineering operations may require mitigation. Further information is awaited in this regard, and conditions could be attached if necessary to ensure such works occur. Further information will be provided on the update report as appropriate.

The installation of a summerhouse, which is not considered necessary for the use of the site for private golf practice, would affect the openness of the site and therefore this element of the proposal has been removed from the application. The proposed tractor shed should normally be located within residential curtilage in order that it is within the land to which it relates however in this case the farm house is listed and such an outbuilding in its immediate grounds would not necessarily be considered to be sympathetic. Therefore, its location within the field adjacent to the dwelling is considered to be more appropriate as the shed would store maintenance equipment for both the residential curtilage and the golf practice facility and is not in an intrusive location.

Given its location at a distance from other residential properties, it is not considered that the proposal would cause undue harm or disturbance to surrounding residential or visual amenities.

The water pump housing is very minor in scale and in a corner of the field where it is not visually intrusive. It is a very small, low structure and thus considered to be acceptable.

Whilst the engineering operations may have altered the shape of the land, it still drains in the same direction and has a similar surface to before, and as such it is not anticipated that significant changes to the amount or rate of run-off would occur such that any downstream impacts needed to be examined in detail. The presence of the pond on the site and the resultant ability to control the release of water is also considered to mean that no further consideration is required in this case.

It is considered reasonable to control matters as stated above in order that the use not stray beyond the realms of the policy restrictions and so that the Council retains control over any future developments on this site.

RECOMMENDATION:

That having regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

- 1) The development hereby approved shall be implemented in accordance with the following plans:

Application form
ROLPH 11-1250
ROLPH 02-500

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ROLPH 03-500

ROLPH 04-500

ROLPH 06-100

Design and access statement (except the elements relating to the withdrawn summerhouse)

Reason: To accurately define the permission for the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is satisfactory in appearance in order to safeguard the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policy B(BE).13 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3

- 2) The use of the private golf practice facility hereby permitted shall be limited to occupiers and guests thereof of Tookeys Farm House, and the occupiers shall always be in residence when the facility is in use. The facility shall not be used by more than 6 adults and 4 children under 16 at any time.

Reason: In the interests of surrounding residential amenity and to prevent the over-intensification of the use of the site in accordance with Policies B(RA)1 and B(BE)13 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3.

- 3) Within three months of the date of this decision and prior to the first use of the golf practice facility, details of a physical barrier to be installed between the residential curtilage of the farm house and the application site shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The programme for the implementation of the agreed works, both actually and in relation to the first use of the golf practice facility shall also be agreed and the works shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed programme.

Reason: In the interests of the setting of the listed building and to separate the residential curtilage from the golf practice facility in accordance with the NPPF.

Informatives

- 1) It should be noted that this permission does not give the site benefits from permitted development rights, nor does it include it within the residential curtilage of the listed farm house.

Procedural matters

This application is being reported to the Planning Committee because two (or more) objections have been received.