
ITEM 3b - 23/00616/PIP – Whitegates, 75 Gorsey Lane, Mawdesley

The recommendation remains as per the original report

(1) No further letters neither objecting to or supporting the Planning Application have been received setting out the following issues:

- Highway safety concerns.
- The dwellings are not proposed as being “affordable”.
- There are apartments at Stocks Hall for those over 50, and they are still on the market, which could question need.
- Impact on privacy of nearby occupiers.

(8) No further letters of support have been received on the following basis:

- Much needed accommodation for downsizing.
- Meets a local need providing housing for older people.
- Would help to maintain the community.
- The land serves no purpose currently.
- The site is dilapidated.
- Development would have very little impact on highways and drainage.
- Health and well being benefits.
- The development would free up larger homes for families.
- There is a housing crisis and more houses are needed.
- The benefits outweigh the harm to the Green Belt

The following consultee responses have been received:

Mawdesley Parish Council submitted the following comments on 08 September 2023:

We have spent a lot of time considering our comments to this application, as initially if we just look at the 'headlines' - up to 9 new residences built on Greenbelt within a plot of about an acre, it would normally be a fairly open and shut case and an objection on the usual grounds for us.

However, given the quite specific nature of the proposal, I do think it deserves some further thought and we would urge the Planning Committee to consider the following points: Firstly, there is rarely a Parish Council meeting that goes by when we discuss planning matters when the comments made don't arise as to the continuing proliferation of 'executive homes' and yet another 4/5 bed property being built or extended from a smaller property.

We have also commented on many occasions that our ageing population would benefit from more smaller, and ideally single storey properties being built. Given this, we would also like to request a clause, as Agricultural Restriction, which states that these properties must remain as true bungalows.

This scheme therefore seems to fulfil a variety of needs - it provides the accommodation that we all believe would be popular with the age bracket in question, and in doing so, potentially frees up a number of larger houses which are currently occupied by older couples or single people whose families have now left home, creating opportunities for the younger, growing families of the village to access more appropriate accommodation.

On the matter of being in Greenbelt. If this development was in a location that had not seen any recent building and several applications approved in Greenbelt, then we would probably have a different opinion. However, within a section of less than 100 yards of Gorsey Lane,

there have been 6 approvals for properties - some claiming volume from other buildings, but 6 new residences nonetheless.

Add to this that the proposed bungalow development wouldn't actually have any road frontage (as it's behind two new houses fronting onto Gorse Lane - both recently approved in the same area of Greenbelt) and we have less to object to than the variety of much larger houses in exactly the same location that Chorley Council have already approved.

The National Planning Policy Framework defines inappropriate development in the Greenbelt as follows:

147. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

148. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. '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.

The key factor that has been used in a number of recent applications (that we have actually objected to) such as the Robin Hood development and the two new properties at Mayfield on Bluestone Lane is whether the proposal causes harm to the Greenbelt, or indeed that the benefits of the development outweigh the potential 'harm'.

In those instances, it was found that there were 'very special circumstances' to allow the application to proceed, whereby the benefits outweighed the harm to Greenbelt. Many of our residents would dispute that contention in relation to the two aforementioned applications, but in this case, I do believe that there are genuine 'very special circumstances' which do outweigh the potential harm, particularly given that the very same half dozen acres or so has already had 6 properties approved for building upon in the last couple of years.

If this proposal was within the settlement area in the centre of the village, I know that the vast majority of residents would be massively in favour but sadly the land available within the settlement area has mostly already been earmarked by larger developers and we suspect that they won't be falling over themselves to build bungalows for our older generations.

However, having said all the above, we do also think that the density of the proposal is perhaps too high, and that slightly fewer properties would sit better within the proposed site.

There is also a potential issue with the access onto Gorse Lane. Whilst this has already been approved as suitable for the two houses at the front of the development, the additional traffic could cause an issue. We would therefore suggest a re-think of the access, perhaps to widen the splays and set the access slightly further back into the site, allowing for better vision for traffic both entering and leaving the site but also passing traffic in both directions.

Furthermore, we believe there is also great potential here to create a much more 'eco-friendly' development - the addition of rainwater harvesting to feed toilets for example, sedum roofs, permeable surfaces etc etc which could all be stipulated as a condition of development and in turn would offset any perceived harm to the Greenbelt.

We also understand that the applicant is minded to gift the remainder of the land behind the proposed development so that a wildlife/conservation area could be created. The history of that site also used to include a large attenuation pond, which was filled in when the land was razed some years ago. If this pond was reinstated, that would aid any potential drainage issues from surface water run off created by these new buildings as well as creating a nice environment and access to the public footpath network beyond that leads over to a Tarnbeck Drive and the village centre.

On balance, we would therefore support this application, subject to some revisions to the scale and trying to limit any issues created in relation to surface water drainage etc along with the reinstatement of the pond and the creation of a wildlife area.

Lancashire County Council Highways have made the following comments:

LCC Highways does not have any objections regarding the proposed permission in principle application for up to 9 new build older persons accessible bungalow dwellings and are of the opinion that the proposed development will not have a significant impact on highway safety, capacity or amenity in the immediate vicinity of the site.

The amended drawings show a radius kerbed access and 2m wide footway fronting the site. The internal layout of the site shows that the proposal including the two permitted developments can be to adoptable standards.

The original report has been amended as follows:

Paragraph 26 of the report refers to enhanced open space, which it is implied would become public open space. The report sets out that this is a benefit considered to carry moderate weight as a social benefit. It is noted, however, that the area of land implied as possible public open space lies outside the red edge application site and therefore no weight can be attributed to this as it would not be secured through any grant of permission in principle.
