

Item 3d	15/00503/FUL
Case Officer	Helen Lowe
Ward	Astley and Buckshaw
Proposal	Part retrospective application for retention of wooden stage, bar and metal storage container, and erection of 16 2.7m high wooden posts.
Location	Euxton Park Golf Centre, Euxton Lane, Euxton
Applicant	Insert applicant
Consultation expiry:	3 July 2015
Decision due by:	24 July 2015
Recommendation	Refuse
Executive Summary	The application proposes the retention of a wooden stage and bar area, and metal container that have been sited adjacent to Euxton Park Golf Centre. The applicant also proposes to erect 16 wooden poles to support a canopy in inclement weather. The site is located within the Green Belt. Given the level of ancillary facilities already available on site, and lack of evidence provided by the applicant it is considered that the proposed facilities are not ancillary to the existing uses on site and therefore inappropriate within the Green Belt. No very special circumstances have been put forward. The proposal is accordingly recommended for refusal.

Representations

Euxton Parish Council have confirmed that they have no comments to make on the proposals.		
Cllr Matthew Lynch has requested that the application be determined at Development Control Committee		
In total 0 representations have been received which are summarised below		
Objection	Support	Not specified
Total No. received: 0	Total No. received: 0	Total No. received:0

Consultees

Consultee	Summary of Comments received
LCC Highways	No objection

Assessment

Background

1. The application proposes the retention of a wooden stage and bar area, and metal container that have been sited adjacent to Euxton Park Golf Centre. The stage is 8.43m wide (excluding the steps to the side), with a depth of 4.9m and a maximum height of 3.8m. It has a gently, sloping monopitched roof. The bar measures 6.7m wide, with a depth of 1.7m and a height of 2.8m. A canopy projects 2.9m from the bar area. These elements are also constructed from wood, with metal shutters to the serving area of the bar. The bar area abuts a metal container measuring 6.7m wide, by 2.5m deep, by 2.6m high. The council became aware of the development as the result of an enforcement query.
2. The applicant also proposes to erect 16 wooden poles to support a canopy in inclement weather.
3. The application site is located on the north side of Euxton Lane, on land that was formerly used as a putting green in association with the driving range and golf course. To the north (served by the same vehicular access and parking area) is a Go-karting track (granted permission in 2005, ref. 05/00928/FUL). Beyond this lies the railway line and Buckshaw Village Strategic Site and to the west is Bolton Wanderers Football Club Training Ground.

Supporting statement from applicant

4. The applicant has provided the following in support of the application:
 - The site as one planning unit (see *Burdle*) is an outdoor sport and recreation facility. It is impossible to differentiate on the ground both physically and functionally between the various elements of golf driving range, foot golf, and go-karting. They share the same access and the same parking facilities;
 - The proposed stage will be used for a variety of all year round activities as a play area, foot pool and foot putting. In the summer months it will also serve for community events, plays, shows, parties and some live music events. These are all outdoor recreational and sporting activities;
 - The arguments as to whether a bar is an 'appropriate' facility for outdoor sport and recreation is often a contentious point. Previous policy required it to be 'essential' for outdoor sport and recreation, now it is a lesser test - that of appropriate;
 - The bar is relatively small scale and is linked to the use of the stage in both structural design and location;
 - It will provide much needed revenue to help develop the existing recreational and sporting facilities;
 - If these were entirely solid structures the loss of openness would be substantially greater than it is, and in that respect the design and materials used help to maintain openness with views through the structures;
 - The container is required by licensing to provide secure facilities for the bar;
 - Marginally smaller and lower in height than the bar and located against a mature hedge and tree it is well screened its visual appearance is minimal. Indeed the location of the stage and bar is only readily visible once anyone enters the site itself, the high walls to the west that form the boundary to Bolton FC football training ground means that views into the site are minimal. Whilst visual amenity cannot entirely mitigate for perceived loss of openness, the design of these open structures and their relative obscurity within the site, mean that the impact overall is minimal;
 - Finally encroachment is limited because the structures are hard up against the rear and side walls of existing buildings and it is on areas where there was already hard surfacing and the edge of a putting area. There is no encroachment of built form onto open fields;
 - The proposal is in keeping with paragraph 89 of the NPPF and as such is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Principle of the development

5. The application site is located within the Green Belt. The erection of new buildings within the Green Belt is considered to be inappropriate, except in a very limited number of circumstances, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Plan. One of these exceptions is the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, 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.
6. This particular site is located at the very fringes of the Green Belt, and it is this land that is the most vulnerable to the pressures of the development. It is considered that it is this type of land that makes a significant contribution towards those purposes of the Green Belt, such as: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas; to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another and to safeguard the countryside from encroachment.
7. The applicant states that they consider the proposals are not inappropriate development in the Green Belt, as the stage would be used for outdoor recreational purposes and the bar would be used in association with the stage. They also state that the stage and bar is part of one single planning unit together with the golf driving range, foot golf and go Karting.
8. It is considered therefore that there are a number of issues to be addressed:
 - Do the facilities proposed constitute a facility for outdoor sport or outdoor recreation?
 - Are the facilities proposed ancillary to an open air sports use?
 - If the answer to both of the above questions, is no, do any very special circumstances exist that outweigh the harm that would be caused by reason of inappropriateness?
 - Should the facilities proposed be more properly be considered as a town centre use?
9. Within the supporting statement it is stated that the facilities are to be used as outdoor recreational and sporting activities, however the premises have been widely advertised locally as a live music venue, with a number of events having already been held at the premises. Although the stage and bar are sited outdoors, it is not considered that these uses are those which rely primarily on open land at this location and are therefore not the type of outdoor sporting and recreational facilities that the Framework is referring to in paragraph 89.
10. However, it is acknowledged that it is possible for buildings within the Green Belt to be considered not inappropriate that are considered to be ancillary to open air sports uses. The applicant states that they consider the proposal to fall within the same planning unit as the golf driving range and go-karting track and that the proposal will provide much needed revenue to help develop the existing recreational and sporting facilities.
11. No further information has been provided about how the proposed development relates to the function of the driving range, golf course and go-karting track or how the bar and stage will support those facilities. When planning consent was granted for the driving range permission was granted for ancillary buildings, and permission for subsequent extensions to that building have also been granted. The permission granted in 2002 (ref. 02/01040/FUL) showed facilities such as a bar area, shop and simulator. A café has been operating from the premises for some time. No evidence has been put forward by the applicant to demonstrate why the proposed bar and stage facilities are necessary or how they relate to the existing uses on site, even if they can be considered to fall within one planning unit.
12. Policy HW1 of the emerging Local Plan states that ancillary development for an existing open space, sport or recreational facility will be permitted if all of the following criteria are met:
 - i. It is in connection with and will enhance the recreational and/or amenity value of the open space;

- ii. It will not have a detrimental effect on any site of nature conservation value;
 - iii. It does not result in the loss of any other sporting facility on the site.
13. As discussed above, it is considered that the link between the existing and the proposed facilities has not been adequately demonstrated. It is considered that due to the nature of the existing uses it does not have any nature conservation value. However, the structures are adjacent on the putting green, an area that appears to be used for seating during events.
14. Given the level of ancillary facilities already available on site and lack of evidence provided by the applicant it is considered that the proposed facilities are not ancillary to the existing uses on site and therefore inappropriate within the Green Belt. No very special circumstances have been put forward.
15. Furthermore, the Framework is clear that a sequential approach must be applied to planning applications that involve main town centre uses. Leisure and retail development are defined as main town centre uses (paragraph 23). This is reiterated in policy EP9 of the Local Plan. Out of centre locations should only be considered where suitable sites within town or edge of centre locations are not available. The Framework states that preference should be given to sites that are well connected to the town centre. Although the site is within the Green Belt, it is acknowledged that the site is easily accessible, and located within walking distance of a relatively built up area.

Design and Appearance

16. It is acknowledged that both the stage and the bar are not significant structures and that there is some screening from Euxton Lane by the existing hedge. They are of a similar height to the existing buildings on site and would be seen in the context of those buildings. Whilst there would be a visual impact, the significance would be moderate and limited to views from Euxton Lane.
17. It is considered that the design and appearance of the facilities is acceptable in accordance with policy BNE1 of the Local Plan.
18. Although the proposals may not be visually intrusive however, this does not mean that they will not cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt. It has been established however, in case law, that openness and visual impact are different concepts in terms of Green Belt policy. Openness is the freedom from built development. The proposal would result in additional development, albeit small, within the Green Belt and result in an increased level of activity at the site.

Neighbour Amenity

19. No information on the intended hours of operation have been provided by the applicant. Recent events were advertised as running from 7pm until 11pm. The nearest residential properties are Woodcock Fold Cottage, approximately 66m to the south west and properties on Mimosa close, approximately 190m to the south east. These are separated from the application site by Euxton Lane, a busy road.
20. The premises licence allows opening hours of 8am until 11.30pm, seven days a week and performance of live music from 11am until 11pm Monday to Friday and 10am until 11pm Saturdays and Sundays. It is considered that if the application were to be recommended for approval a suitable condition restricting the hours of opening could be imposed.
21. There is an existing parking area utilised by all of the adjacent uses. No objections have been raised by LCC Highways.

Overall Conclusion

22. The proposals are considered to form inappropriate development in the Green Belt. They do not constitute an outdoor sport and recreation facility, nor has it been demonstrated that they are ancillary to such a facility. No very special circumstances have been put forward. The development is accordingly recommended for refusal.

Planning Policies

23. In accordance with s.38 (6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), the application is to be determined in accordance with the development plan (the Central Lancashire Core Strategy, the Adopted Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026 and adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance), unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Consideration of the proposals has had regard to guidance contained with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the development plan. The specific policies/ guidance considerations are contained within the body of the report.

Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Date
76/00016/FUL	Lorry Park	Refused	26 April 1976
88/00703/FUL	Use of land as Golf Driving Range incorporating car parking and floodlighting and erection of driving booths and club shop	Approved	29 November 1988
89/00605/ADV	Wall mounted illuminated entrance sign	Approved	29 September 1989
90/00716/FULMAJ	Extension to existing golf driving range, construction of pitch and putt course, extension to building, amendments to approved plans, additional booth and crazy golf, roof mounted floodlights, relocated flagpoles and practise bunker etc.	Approved	25 September 1990
02/00257/FUL	Extension to existing club house	Approved	8 May 2002
02/01040/FUL	Extension to existing club house	Approved	24 December 2002
05/00549/FUL	Creation of Go-Kart track	Refused	15 July 2005
05/00928/FUL	Creation of Go-Kart track	Approved	26 October 2005

Suggested Reason for Refusal

The proposed development is located within the Green Belt as defined in the Adopted Local Plan Review 2012-2026. The proposed development would be inappropriate within the Green Belt, as defined in the Framework. There are insufficient very special circumstances to outweigh the harm that would be caused to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and to the openness of the Green Belt as a result of the proposals.