

**Planning Committee**

16 April 2014

**Reference:**  
**APP/14/00120**

**Area Team:**  
**South Team**

**Case Officer:**  
**Miss A McDougall**

**Ward:**  
**Clatterbridge**

**Location:** Fieldcrest, THORNTON COMMON ROAD, THORNTON HOUGH,  
CH63 0LT

**Proposal:** To construct a small scale, single storey, low impact timber structure  
for horticultural and training purposes on designated horticultural land

**Applicant:** Mr Paul Davies

**Agent:** N/A

**Site Plan:**



**Development Plan allocation and policies:**

Green Belt  
AG1  
GB2  
NPPF

**Planning History:**

Location: Fieldcrest, Thornton Common Road, Thornton Hough, Wirral, L63 0LT  
Application Type: Full Planning Permission  
Proposal: Removal of agricultural occupancy condition (b) from planning approval no 1/1/S.5105 dated 5/4/67  
Application No: APP/97/06535  
Decision Date: 13/03/1998  
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Fieldcrest, Thornton Common Road, Thornton Hough, Wirral, CH63 0LT  
Application Type: Full Planning Permission  
Proposal: Change of use from horticultural land to inclusion in domestic curtilage.  
Application No: APP/03/07480  
Decision Date: 14/01/2004  
Decision Type: Refuse

**Summary Of Representations and Consultations Received:**

**REPRESENTATIONS:**

Having regard to the Council Guidance on Publicity for Applications, 6 notifications were sent to adjoining properties. A site notice was also displayed. At the time of writing this report no objections have been received.

**CONSULTATIONS:**

Head of Environment & Regulation (Traffic & Transportation Division) - No Objections

**Director's Comments:**

**REASON FOR REFERRAL TO PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The proposal includes development that does not fall under the categories appropriate within the Green Belt and as such is a departure from the Unitary Development Plan. Under the provisions of the Council's Scheme of Delegation for Determining Planning Applications, this application is therefore required to be determined by the Planning Committee.

**INTRODUCTION**

The proposal is for the erection a wooden building on existing horticulture land for the purposes of horticultural training. The proposed building measures 8.5m by 4.5m and has a height of 2.4m to the top of the pitch.

**PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

Local Policy

The site is within an area designated as Green Belt in the adopted Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

Policy GB2 of the Wirral Unitary development Plan states that the construction of new buildings inside the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it is for certain specified purposes:

1. agriculture and forestry;
2. essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation;
3. limited extension or replacement of existing dwellings;
4. limited infilling in existing villages;
5. limited infilling/redevelopment of major developed sites.

UDP Policy AG1 states that in assessing the siting, design and layout of proposals for new development near existing agricultural land holdings, the Local Planning Authority will need to be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken in order to:

- (i) protect the operational needs of continued and viable agricultural enterprise within the area;
- (ii) minimise direct or indirect disturbance to existing agricultural land uses;
- (iii) take the main focus for public recreation away from areas used for agricultural production

#### National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) echoes previous Government guidance that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land open and that the essential characteristics of Green Belt are their openness and permanence. It goes on to indicate that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate with exceptions as follows:

1. buildings for agriculture and forestry;
2. provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
3. the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
4. the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
5. limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan; or
6. limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.

The National Planning Policy Framework Section 3 states;

Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should;

1. support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;
2. promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
3. support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres and
4. promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship

#### Very Special Circumstances

The land to the west of the residential plot Fieldcrest is an established Nursery (Harifola Nursery) and is used to grow plants, herbs and fruit. The site has been open to the public since 2011 in aid of the National Gardens Scheme which raises money for charity. The applicant has stated that the proposed building will be used in connection with educational and teaching workshops relating to growing plants, the outside space will continue to be used for horticulture and assist with the courses as a practical element. The building is low level and constructed out of timber, the proposed building supports the continued use of the land for horticultural purposes and promotes the development and diversification of a land based business. Having regard to the NPPF paragraph 3, the proposed building supports an existing agricultural piece of land and develops the site into a land based business within the green belt, the building is a low level timber structure which would not be out of character in a rural area, having regard to the appearance of stables and barns, for example. The

land use allocation of the site is agriculture, the land itself could currently be used for training purposes ancillary to the established agricultural allocation which supports paragraph 3 of the NPPF, the proposed building is well designed in terms of its scale and location, therefore supporting the rural economy, having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework, is a very special circumstance in this instance.

#### **SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

The site is currently relatively open with the exception of planting and maturely vegetated boundaries, the site adjoins the residential curtilage of Fieldcrest and is well screened from the highway, other than the dwelling at Fieldcrest the site does not contain any other buildings.

#### **APPEARANCE AND AMENITY ISSUES**

The proposed building is located approximately 60m back from Thornton Common Road and approximately 7m from the residential boundary of Fieldcrest, the proposed structure is to be located within an existing enclave of mature vegetation so will not impact onto the openness of the Green Belt. The design of the building is low level and will be constructed out of timber, the appearance of the outbuilding is appropriate having regard to the character of the area.

The proposed use of the building is an extension of the established use of the land as horticulture/agriculture, having regard to paragraph 3 of the National Planning Policy Framework; which indicates that local plans should support the existing business, both through the conversion of existing buildings and the erection of well designed new buildings. The proposed building is low level and will have a timber exterior which is a typical design feature within the green belt, the continued use of the land supports the established land use allocation without having a detrimental impact onto the character of the area. The proposed building therefore supports an existing rural enterprise and is acceptable having regard to Section 3 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The siting and design of the building blends well with the surroundings reflecting existing structures appropriate to rural locations and will not have a harmful impact in terms of the openness of the green belt.

#### **SEPARATION DISTANCES**

Separation distances do not apply in this instance.

#### **HIGHWAY/TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS**

There are no Highway Implications relating to this proposal.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES**

There are no Environmental/Sustainability issues relating to these proposals.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Having regard to the existing use of the site, and the siting and design of the structure, the proposal is considered acceptable having regard to UDP Policies GB2 and AG1 and National Planning Policy Framework and the applicant's case setting out very special circumstances in this particular instance.

#### **Summary of Decision:**

Having regard to the individual merits of this application the decision to grant Planning Permission has been taken having regard to the relevant Policies and Proposals in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan (Adopted February 2000) and all relevant material considerations including national and regional policy advice. In reaching this decision the Local Planning Authority has considered the following:-

Having regard to the existing use of the site, and the siting and design of the structure, the proposal is acceptable having regard to UDP Policies GB2 and AG1 and the National Planning Policy Framework and the applicant's case setting out very special circumstances to justify the development in this particular instance.

**Recommended            Approve**  
**Decision:**

**Recommended Conditions and Reasons:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

**Reason:** To comply with Section 91 (as amended) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans received by the local planning authority on 11 February 2014.

**Reason:** For the avoidance of doubt and to define the permission.

3. The building hereby approved shall be used for horticultural training purposes only and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in use class D1) of the schedule to the Town and Country Planning Use Classes (Amendment) Order 2005, or any subsequent Order or Statutory provision revoking or re-enacting that Order.

**Reason** For the avoidance of doubt as to what is being applied for and to protect the character of the area and accord with Policy AG1 OF Wirrals Unitary Development Plan

4. NO DEVELOPMENT SHALL TAKE PLACE until a Site Waste Management Plan, confirming how demolition and construction waste will be recovered and re-used on the site or at other sites, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Plan shall be implemented in full unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

**Reason:** To ensure that the proposed development would include the re-use of limited resources, and to ensure that the amount of waste for landfill is reduced to accord with policy EM8 of the Waste Local Plan.

5. PRIOR TO FIRST OCCUPATION OR USE OF THE DEVELOPMENT, arrangements for the storage and disposal of refuse, and vehicle access thereto, shall be made within the curtilage of the site, in accordance with details previous submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, prior to the first occupation of the building.

**Reason:** To ensure a satisfactory appearance and adequate standards of hygiene and refuse collection, having regard to Waste Local Plan Policy EM9.

**Last Comments By:** 20/03/2014 13:32:28

**Expiry Date:** 08/04/2014