

# Planning Committee

16 November 2017

**Reference:**  
**APP/17/01112**

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

**Case Officer:**  
**Mrs S Lacey**

**Ward:**  
**Pensby and  
Thingwall**

**Location:** Barnstondale Centre, STORETON LANE, BARNSTON, CH61 1BX  
**Proposal:** Demolition of existing timber shed and erection of new portacabin style unit

**Applicant:** Mr Jones  
**Agent :** Garry Usherwood Associates Limited

## Site Plan:



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**Development Plan Designation:**

Green Belt

**Planning History:**

Location: Barnston Dale Centre, Storeton Lane, Barnston. L61 1BX  
Application Type: Full Planning Permission  
Proposal: Erection of floodlighting to play area and erection of 3m. high fencing.  
Application No: APP/90/05054  
Decision Date: 15/02/1990  
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Barnston Dale Camp ,Storeton Lane ,Barnston  
Application Type: Full Planning Permission  
Proposal: Toilet Block  
Application No: APP/74/00754  
Decision Date: 23/08/1974  
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Barnston Dale Camp M.Y.A.,Storeton Lane,Barnston  
Application Type: Full Planning Permission  
Proposal: Alterations and extensions to improve existing kitchen facilities.  
Application No: APP/76/05825  
Decision Date: 01/11/1976  
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Barnston Dale Centre, Storeton Lane, Barnston, Wirral, L60 1BX  
Application Type: Full Planning Permission  
Proposal: Erection of an accommodation Block  
Application No: APP/99/05218  
Decision Date: 31/03/1999  
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Merseyside Youth Association,Barnston Dale Camp,Storeton Lane  
,Barnston ,L61 1BX  
Application Type: Full Planning Permission  
Proposal: Erection of storeroom  
Application No: APP/77/08803  
Decision Date: 06/02/1978  
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Barnston Dale Camp Barnston L611bx  
Application Type: Full Planning Permission  
Proposal: Alterations and improvements to frontage, conversion of toilet block to committee room, formation of new double car port, and garage, garden shed, alterations and improvements to existing kitchen.  
Application No: APP/75/03542  
Decision Date: 04/11/1975  
Decision Type: Conditional Approval

Location: Merseyside Youth Association,Barnston Dale Camp,Storeton Lane  
,Barnston ,L61 1BX  
Application Type: Full Planning Permission  
Proposal: Erection of front porch to Dale Camp  
Application No: APP/77/08804  
Decision Date: 06/02/1978  
Decision Type: Conditional Approval

Location: Barnston Dale Camp, Storeton Lane,Barnston  
Application Type: Full Planning Permission  
Proposal: Covered play area

Application No: APP/74/00073  
Decision Date: 11/03/1975  
Decision Type: Conditional Approval

Location: Barnston Dale Camp,Storeton Lane,Barnston,L61 1BX  
Application Type: Reserved Matters  
Proposal: Erection of 3 chalets for accommodation of group leaders.  
Application No: DLS/81/18409  
Decision Date: 18/06/1981  
Decision Type: Conditional Approval

Location: Barnston Dale Camp,Storeton Lane,Barnston,L61 1BX  
Application Type: Full Planning Permission  
Proposal: Erection of 3 chalets for accommodation of Group Leaders.  
Application No: APP/80/16212  
Decision Date: 22/09/1980  
Decision Type: Conditional Approval

### **Summary Of Representations and Consultations Received:**

#### **REPRESENTATIONS:**

Having regard to the Council Guidance on Publicity for Applications, 4 notifications were sent to adjoining properties. A site notice was also displayed. No objections have been received.

#### **CONSULTATIONS:**

None required.

#### **DIRECTORS COMMENTS:**

#### **REASON FOR REFERRAL TO PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The application is a departure from the Unitary Development Plan

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The proposal is for a portacabin in the green belt, for the purpose of staff welfare in connection with the existing children's activity centre.

The main issues are whether the proposed development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and, if so, whether there are any very special circumstances that outweigh the harm from inappropriateness and any other harm.

Appropriate facilities for the outdoor recreational use of the site could be acceptable, but not the proposed structure in this particular case, and care must be taken to not approve development that would lead to an unacceptable proliferation to the detriment of the Green Belt. However, the container is sited close to an existing buildings and the appearance of the Green Belt has not been unduly affected, although the container is inappropriate as it does not directly related to outdoor recreational use. As such the proposal has been advertised as a departure from the statutory development plan and the development should not be approved unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.

The applicant has submitted a statement with the application setting out the need and very special circumstances for the proposal. The demand for use at the centre has increased considerably in the past 5 years, which has resulted in an increase in staff on the site. Until now staff have used whatever areas are available for their breaks, but this is becoming impossible as the areas are being used for clients. There is a need for a designated canteen to meet current legislation for providing hygienic and welfare facilities required by Health and Safety Law Executive. The existing timber shed is no longer required as the equipment stored there has been absorbed into existing storage rooms. The extra area required to achieve the footprint of the canteen is 15 square metres, and will not encroach on the area used for activities.

Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the green belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

### **PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT**

The application site is within the adopted Green Belt in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The principle of outdoor recreational activities in the Green Belt is acceptable under terms of UDP Policy GB2 'Guidelines for Development in the Green Belt', and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) or provided it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. The proposed development is not appropriate and the application has been advertised as a departure from the UDP. National guidance makes exceptions for appropriate facilities for outdoor recreation and limiting infilling of previously developed sites that have no greater impact on the Green Belt.

### **SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

The whole site is known as Barnstondale Activity Centre, the site provides overnight accommodation and activities within the grounds for outdoor sport and recreation predominantly for school children and as respite for children with disabilities.

The proposed building is to be located adjacent to the existing buildings and car park, and not on an area used for activities. The proposal will be well screened from the highway by existing vegetation.

The application site is designated as Green Belt, and is a developed site comprises of several buildings for the purpose of activities and overnight accommodation. There are residential properties located to the east, whilst open uses of land border the south of the site.

### **POLICY CONTEXT**

The Government attaches great importance to green belt land. The fundamental aim of green belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of green belts are their openness and their permanence. Design is also a key aspect in achieving sustainable development.

The proposal is for a new building located within Barnstondale Activity Centre, the site is a currently developed site within the Green Belt, as such the proposed development should be assessed in accordance with Wirral's UDP Policies GB2, & RE13; Development Management Policies CS3, CS42 & CS43 in the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### *GB2 Guidelines for Development in the Green Belt*

Within the Green Belt there is a general presumption against inappropriate development and such development will not be approved except in very special circumstances. Planning permission will not be granted for development in the Green Belt unless it is for the purposes of:

- (i) agriculture and forestry;
- (ii) essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, for cemeteries, and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- (iii) the limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings, subject to Policy GB4 and Policy GB5;
- (iv) the limited infilling in existing villages, subject to Policy GB6, including limited affordable housing subject to local community needs;
- (v) the limited infilling or redevelopment of major existing developed sites identified under Proposal GB9;

Such appropriate development shall not damage the visual amenities of the Green Belt by virtue of its siting, materials or design.

#### *RE13 Criteria for Sports Facilities in the Green Belt*

Proposals for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation will be permitted in the Green Belt where:

- (i) adequate provision has been made for highway access, and on-site car parking and servicing requirements;

- (ii) the level of traffic generated can be accommodated without requiring major alterations to rural roads;
- (iii) the visual impact of the proposals would not be intrusive within the local landscape and the openness of the Green Belt would be preserved; and
- (iv) the proposals would not cause unacceptable noise or other disturbance to neighbouring land-uses, including wildlife.

With the exception of proposals involving the re-use of an existing building, associated buildings and structures will only be permitted where they are essential to the use proposed and where their siting, scale, design and external appearance are appropriate to the setting of the area.

When granting planning consent the Local Planning Authority will, where necessary, apply conditions on the time and duration of use of the playing area and associated club facilities and other measures required to minimise the impact of the proposals on the rural environment.

Inappropriate development as defined in national policy is not permitted under Policy CS3 – Green Belt in the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft except in very special circumstances and temporary buildings/structures where justified could only be permitted in unobtrusive locations for a period not exceeding three years under Policy CS43.

The NPPF states; A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- (i) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- (ii) 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;
- (iii) 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;
- (iv) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- (v) limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan; or
- (vi) 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.

## **APPEARANCE AND AMENITY ISSUES**

The applicant's design and access statement indicates that the proposed building is of a similar size and location of the existing shed that would replace, however, the portable building would have a larger footprint.

The applicant has also submitted a supporting statement outlining the provision of the facility at an established activity site and the sensitive siting of the building against the existing buildings. In summary, it is indicated that the demand for the use at the centre has increased considerably in the past 5 years, which has resulted in an increase in staff on the site who require a designated area available for their breaks that meets current legislation for providing hygienic and welfare facilities required by Health and Safety Executive.

Having regard to the scale and siting of the building and the overall established use of Barnstondale Centre, it can be concluded that the building would not have a detrimental visual impact on the appearance or character of the area, the proposed structure is not considered disproportionate in terms of the established buildings within Barnstondale.

## **SEPARATION DISTANCES**

The proposal is not considered to result in overlooking or loss of privacy to neighbouring properties.

## **HIGHWAY/TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS**

There are no highway safety implications relating to this proposal.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES**

It is not considered the proposal will result in a significant noise nuisance to neighbouring residential properties.

## **CONCLUSION**

Substantial weight must be given to any harm to the Green Belt that could arise from the proposed development. Harm would arise from the permanent loss of openness, however, there would be very limited visual impact and provision for staff facilities in line with HSE requirement can be considered as very special circumstances to justify the proposal in this particular case.

The scale, siting and appearance of the building is considered acceptable within the established use of the site and having regard to Wirral's UDP Policy RE13 and the National Planning Policy Framework. It is considered that the development would not be disproportionate in scale and would not have an adverse impact onto visual amenity or the objectives of protecting the openness of the Green Belt.

## **Summary of Decision:**

Having regards to the individual merits of this application the decision to grant Planning Permission has been taken having regards to the relevant Policies and Proposals in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan (Adopted February 2000) and all relevant material considerations including national policy advice. In reaching this decision the Local Planning Authority has considered the following:- Substantial weight must be given to any harm to the Green Belt that could arise from the proposed development. Harm would arise from the permanent loss of openness, however, there would be very limited visual impact and provision for staff facilities in line with HSE requirement can be considered as very special circumstances to justify the proposal in this particular case. The scale, siting and appearance of the building is considered acceptable within the established use of the site.

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

## **Recommended Conditions and Reasons:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

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

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans received by the local planning authority on 21 August 2017 and listed as follows: drawing number A100 Revision D (dated 24/03/2015)

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

## **Further Notes for Committee:**

**Last Comments By:** 21/11/2017 16:50:52  
**Expiry Date:** 16/10/2017