

APPLICATION NO.	P13/V2610/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	23.12.2013
PARISH	WOOTTON
WARD MEMBER(S)	Dudley Hoddinott Judy Roberts John Woodford Elizabeth Miles Val Shaw
APPLICANT	The Scout Association
SITE	Youlbury Scout Activity Centre Youlbury Boars Hill (in the parishes of Wotton and Cumnor), OX1 5HD
PROPOSAL	Replacement of the existing Scouting museum building to create a new accommodation lodge. The redevelopment of an existing toilet block and the refurbishment and extension of the existing activity barn.
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	448319/203335
OFFICER	Miss H Bates

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The site, measuring approximately 17 hectares and predominantly woodland (some designated as ancient woodland), is located on Boars Hill within the Oxford Green Belt and the North Vale Corallian Ridge. It is accessed via the junction of Sandy Lane and the Ridgeway. A site plan is **attached** at Appendix 1.

1.2 The application is partially retrospective as work as already commenced on site, but it not completed.

1.3 The application comes to committee because of the number of objection letters.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

2.1 The application seeks planning permission for an amendment to the scheme granted planning permission in 2010 (P09/V0016) which permitted the replacement of existing buildings with new accommodation lodges, a reception building, an activity barn, two new ablution facilities and ancillary drainage works. The proposal was concentrated in two areas within the site, known as the 'South' and 'North' sites and sought to replace outdated and unsuitable buildings with new high quality buildings to provide indoor overnight accommodation for children and young adults and better facilities for campers.

2.2 The amendments proposed here relate to three buildings approved towards the south of the site, forming phase two of the permitted application. The proposed accommodation block to replace the Scout Museum is to be enlarged by 14 beds to be able to accommodate 50 visitors instead of the approved 36. The overall number of bedrooms for the whole site would increase from the previously approved total of 144 to a total of 158. The activity barn is to be retained rather than replaced and would have a reduced footprint and height. The proposed ablution block adjacent to the activity barn would have an amended design increasing the footprint but retaining the approved height.

2.3 The application plans are **attached** at Appendix 2.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Wootton Parish Council** – “No objection but a) construction traffic should not go through Wootton Village and there should be a construction traffic management plan and b) disabled facilities should be to best modern standards for use by all.

3.2 **Cumnor Parish Council** – No objections

3.3 **Highways Liaison Officer (Oxfordshire County Council)** – No objections: “The site has approval for an increase of 50 bedrooms making a total of 144 bedrooms. That proposal was assessed by the local highways authority and approved subject to conditions. A further 14 bedrooms are now proposed (158 in total). The submitted supplementary transport document confirms that this will not result in a significant increase in vehicle movements or demand for parking, and I therefore have no objection to this proposal subject to conditions previously applied, including a construction management plan.

3.4 **Drainage Engineer (Vale of White Horse District Council)** – No objections subject to the work being carried out in accordance with the submitted plan.

3.5 **Countryside Officer(South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse)** – No objections.

3.6 **Neighbour Representations** – Eight letters have been received objecting to the proposal on the following grounds:

- Contrary to Greenbelt policy;
- The site has been expanded enough;
- This application provides indoor facilities not outdoor facilities;
- A traffic management plan has not been submitted;
- The development would inhibit use of the local road network for pedestrians cyclists and horses;
- The road network cannot support access for fire and emergency services;
- The site should not be used for corporate activities;
- The site should just be used for scouting activities as per a covenant on the land;
- The submitted transport assessment is out of date;
- The development would increase traffic generation;
- A formal entrance/exit should be formed and road improvements carried out;
- Some of the buildings are ugly;
- The increase is 40% which is too large;
- The increase in traffic would cause greater disturbance to the environment;
- It is disturbing that work as begun without approval;
- The applicants have made no attempt to canvas local opinion;
- The increase in numbers would mean a change in the character of the area.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 There have been a number of planning applications on the site, the most recent of which are:

[P13/V2368/DIS](#) – Pending (27/11/2013)

Discharge conditions 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 and 14 of planning permission P09/V0016.

[P13/V0744/DIS](#) - Approved (17/05/2013)

Discharge of Condition 7 of Planning Permission P09/V0016.

[P12/V0383](#) - Approved (12/04/2012)

Installation of a new multi-activity tower and crate stacking facility.

[P09/V0016](#) - Approved (08/04/2010)

The proposed development involves the replacement of existing buildings to create new Accommodation Lodges, a Reception building, an Activity Barn, two new Ablution facilities and ancillary drainage works.

[P06/V0351](#) - Approved (28/04/2006)

Erection of activity rope courses- hexagonal activity ropes course and swing, two zip wires and climbing frame.

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework

5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework has replaced all previous PPG's and PPS's. Central to the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means approving proposals that accord with an adopted local plan, or, where relevant policies of the adopted local plan are out-of-date, to grant planning permission for sustainable development unless any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF as a whole.

5.2 Paragraph 81 of the NPPF states that once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt such as (amongst others) to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation.

5.3 Paragraph 89 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt apart from certain exceptions. One of these exceptions is the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as the facilities preserves the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

5.4 Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 policies

DC1 - Design

DC5 - Access

DC6 - Landscaping

DC8 - The Provision of Infrastructure and Services

DC9 - The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses

GS3 - Development in the Oxford Green Belt

GS6 - Redevelopment of buildings outside settlements

NE4 - Other Sites of Nature Conservation Value

NE7 - The North Vale Corallian Ridge

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The main issues in determining this application are considered to be: i) whether the proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt ; ii) the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the locality, including the North Vale Corallian Ridge; iii) the impact of the proposal on the amenities of the neighbouring residents; and vi) highway issues.

Development in the Green Belt

- 6.2 This application is an amended application following the granting of planning permission P09/V0016 in April 2010. The principle of the development has therefore been established. At that time, it was considered that very special circumstances existed to justify permitting the new accommodation buildings and associated works in line with the current policy framework. The national policy framework has changed since that decision was issued and as such a fresh assessment is made here in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 6.3 Paragraph 89 of the NPPF confirms that one of the exceptions for erecting new buildings within Green Belts is the provision of appropriate facilities for 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.
- 6.4 Youlbury Scout Camp is a national scout activity centre that was first used as a scout camp in 1912. Since then it has been developed with the specific aim of providing leading resources to enable Scouts to take part in recreational and outdoor activities. In order to continue to offer these facilities to an appropriate standard and quality, the applicant says that the redevelopment of the site is required. The additional 14 bedrooms are required following feedback from the Scout Association on accommodation demands throughout the year and will provide capacity for larger groups.
- 6.5 The new accommodation and associated upgraded activity barn and ablution block would provide the opportunity for more children and young people, as well as other members of the community, to visit and stay at the site to make use of the recreational facilities and enjoy its attractive woodland location. Officers consider the proposal provides appropriate facilities for outdoor recreation and, as such, complies with the policy in the NPPF.
- 6.6 The proposed buildings are located wholly within the established main site which is contained by woodland. Consequently it is considered they would not appear prominent or harmful to the openness of the Green Belt.

Character and appearance of the area

- 6.7 The proposed buildings, as amended, are considered to be of a high quality design and 14 additional beds is not considered to be a significant increase in terms of the amount of accommodation proposed. The design of the accommodation block remains similar to that approved, but it has been enlarged slightly to accommodate the additional bedrooms and a larger communal hall, and the footprint has been altered. The activity barn is to be retained rather than replaced; it is to be extended to provide a larger footprint but the height is reduced from the previous application. The retained structure will receive insulated roof panels and the external walls will be treated with timber larch cladding in line with the adjacent buildings. The ablution block is proposed to have an enlarged footprint to reflect additional visitor numbers, and will have an amended roof design although the height would not increase from that previously permitted.
- 6.8 The buildings will not appear prominent or out-of-place and are well screened from the wider locality. As such, the visual impact of the proposed development and its impact on the character and appearance of the North Vale Corallian Ridge are considered acceptable.

Impact on the amenities of the neighbouring properties

- 6.9 No undue harm would be caused by the proposal to properties adjoining the site in terms of additional noise, overlooking, loss of light or privacy. The new buildings are located well away from neighbours and adequate boundary treatments already exist between adjoining properties and the site which will be unaffected by the proposal.

Highways

- 6.10 On the issue of parking, access and traffic generation, a supplementary transport document has been submitted with the application providing an update to the original transport assessment provided with the previous application. The supplementary transport document assesses the proposal in light of the additional proposed 14 beds which are to provide capacity for larger groups. The document states that groups are expected to continue to travel to the site by minibuses and coaches and that the slightly higher provision of beds in the amended scheme is not expected to have a noticeable impact on the traffic generation of the site.
- 6.11 This assessment has been carefully considered by the Local Highway Authority Liaison Officer who has considered that the additional 14 beds will not result in a significant increase in vehicle movements or demand for parking and therefore raises no objections subject to the conditions previously applied, which include a construction traffic management plan.

Other issues

Ecology

- 6.12 The demolition of the three buildings the subject of this application has already taken place and as such the countryside officer comments that any ecological impacts would have already taken place. However, the demolition of these buildings was assessed under the original application P09/V0016 and the survey information and mitigation measures were considered acceptable by Natural England, and conditions were applied securing the mitigation measures.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposal is considered to provide appropriate outdoor recreation facilities in the Green Belt without harming its openness or conflicting with the purposes of including land within it. The design, size and location of the amended buildings is considered acceptable and will not be harmful to the character of the area, residential amenity or highway safety.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 **That Planning Permission is granted, subject to the following conditions:**

- 1 : MC2 – Materials in accordance with conditions application P13/V2368/DIS.**
- 2 : LS1 – Landscaping details**
- 3 : LS4 – Tree Protection details**
- 4 : HY6 – Access, parking and turning in accordance with submitted plan.**
- 5 : U31754 – Construction Traffic Management Plan**
- 6 : U31755 – Green Travel Plan**
- 7 : MC24 – Drainage Scheme (surface and foul water)**
- 8 : MC19 – Removal of specific buildings**
- 9 : U31756 – Work to be carried out in accordance with submitted Protected Species Survey**

- 10: U31758 – Work to be carried out in accordance with submitted Flood Risk Assessment.**
- 11 : MR24 – Details of culverted water course**
- 12 : Approved Plans**

Author / Officer: Holly Bates – Planning Officer
Contact number: 01235 547664
Email address: holly.bates@southandvale.gov.uk