

Development Control Committee
Meeting to be held on 21st May 2014

Electoral Division affected: Skelmersdale East

West Lancashire Borough: Application No. LCC/2014/0044
Retention of single storey demountable office unit. Wrightington Highways Depot, Moss Lane, Wrightington.

Contact for further information:
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Executive Summary

Application - Retention of single storey demountable office unit. Wrightington Highways Depot, Moss Lane, Wrightington.

Recommendation – Summary

That planning permission be **granted** subject to conditions controlling working programme and colour of building.

Applicant's Proposal

Planning permission is sought for the retention of a demountable office unit at Lancashire County Council's Highways Depot in Wrightington. The unit measures approximately 24m x 9.5m. The roof is pitched to an approximate height of 3.5 metres. The unit has external ramps and steps with handrails and guardrails with external walls coloured opal green (RAL6026).

Description and Location of Site

Wrightington Highways Depot is an existing Lancashire County Council highway maintenance depot accessed from the south side of Moss Lane, Wrightington approximately 6.5km northeast of Skelmersdale town centre. The depot is surrounded by agricultural land except along the eastern boundary where there is a residential property. A 40m wide belt of trees separates the depot from Moss Lane.

The depot comprises an area of hardstanding used for the storage of materials and equipment associated with highway maintenance in the area. The demountable unit is sited on the west side of the depot adjacent to the site access. A salt storage barn, vehicle / materials storage facility and plant rooms and storage units are along the eastern boundary.

The site is located within the Green Belt.

Background

The demountable unit is located within an established highways depot.

Planning permission for the erection of a vehicle / materials storage facility was granted in April 2011 (ref 08/11/0323).

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraphs 11 – 14, 17, 56 – 66, 79 – 81 and 87 - 90 are relevant with regard to the requirement for sustainable development, core planning principles, the requirement for good design and protecting green belt land.

West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan

Policy DS2 Protecting Green Belt
Policy GD1 Design of Development

Consultations

West Lancashire Borough Council – No objection.

Wrightington Parish Council – No objection.

LCC Developer Support (Highways) – No observations received.

Representations – The application has been advertised by press and site notice and neighbouring residents have been notified by letter. No representations have been received.

Advice

Planning permission is sought for the retention of a single storey demountable office unit at Lancashire County Council's Highways Depot in Wrightington.

The applicant has advised that the unit has been on the site since January 2008. It provides office facilities for management and highways operations staff at the depot. 20 full time staff currently use the building.

The Highways Depot is a function of the Environment Directorate. The application must therefore be determined by the Development Control Committee.

Planning permission has previously been granted but subject to a temporary permission in view of the demountable unit being considered unacceptable as a permanent form of development in the Green Belt.

Paragraphs 87-90 of the NPPF advise that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. 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, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Certain forms of development are not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt.

Policy DS2 of the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan states that planning permission will not be granted for the erection of new buildings within the Green Belt other than for a limited number of uses including those which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with its purposes.

New buildings connected with highways maintenance functions are not one of the uses considered as appropriate development within the Green Belt. Consequently the applicant must demonstrate very special circumstances to justify the development in this location. The demountable offices provide office accommodation to allow the continued delivery of the highway maintenance service within an existing highways depot which has become established in this location for operational reasons. The whole highways depot is located within the Green Belt and therefore there is no alternative location within the site which would not affect the Green Belt. Very special circumstances are therefore considered to exist to justify the development in this location.

The demountable office is located well within the depot and is screened from the surrounding area by the trees around the site. Consequently, it is now considered that the unit does not have a harmful effect on the character and or openness of the Green Belt. However, to ensure it does not have a harmful effect, a condition is proposed requiring the unit to be retained in the current green colour. A condition limiting the life of the development is no longer required given the period of time the unit has already been in situ, the acceptable design and quality of the unit and subject to it being maintained in its current green colour.

Subject to the condition to retain the green colour, it is considered that the unit does not generate any unacceptable adverse impacts and therefore complies with the policies of the NPPF and the policies of the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan and can be supported as a permanent form of development.

In view of the scale, location and nature of the proposed development it is considered no Convention Rights as set out in the Human Rights Act 1998 would be affected.

Recommendation

That planning permission be **granted** subject to the following conditions:

Working Programme

1. The development shall be carried out, except where modified by the conditions to this permission, in accordance with the following documents:
 - a) The Planning Application received by the Director of Transport and Environment on 17 March 2014.

b) Submitted Plans and documents received by the Director of Transport and Environment on 17 March 2014:

Location Plan
Drawing No. B01 - Planning Reference Drawing

Reason: To minimise the impact of the development on the amenities of the local area, and to conform with Policies DS2 and GD1 of the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan.

Building Materials

2. The external elevations of the building shall be maintained in its existing colour RAL 6026 (or similar) throughout its presence on the site.

Reason: To protect the visual amenities of the area and to conform with Policies DS2 and GD1 of the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan.

Notes

The applicant's attention is drawn to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the British Standards Institution Code of Practice for Design of Buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of Disabled People (BS8300:2009). The design of the building will also need to comply with Part M of the Building Regulations 2010.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Ext
LCC/2014/0044 08/11/0323	17 March 2014	Rob Jones/Environment/534128

Reason for Inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A