



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 June 2025

by **C Rafferty LLB(Hons), Solicitor**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/N4720/C/24/3354618

Land at Leeds Golf Centre, Wike Ridge Lane, Alwoodley, Leeds LS17 9JW

- The appeal is made under section 174 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
 - The appeal is made by The Parklane Foundation against an enforcement notice issued by Leeds City Council.
 - The notice was issued on 30 September 2024.
 - The breach of planning control as alleged in the notice is without planning permission, the erection of an extension to driving range building, shown as red hatched on the plan accompanying the notice.
 - The requirements of the notice are to demolish the extension in its entirety and remove all debris and detritus from the land.
 - The period for compliance with the requirements is 4 months.
 - The appeal is proceeding on the grounds set out in section 174(2)(a) and (f) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). Since an appeal has been brought on ground (a), an application for planning permission is deemed to have been made under section 177(5) of the Act.
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Decision

1. It is directed that the enforcement notice is corrected by the deletion of the word “land” in section 5 and its substitution with the word “Land”.
2. Subject to the correction, the appeal is allowed, the enforcement notice is quashed and planning permission is granted on the application deemed to have been made under section 177(5) of the 1990 Act (as amended) for the development already carried out, namely the erection of an extension to driving range building at Land at Leeds Golf Centre, Wike Ridge Lane, Alwoodley, Leeds LS17 9JW as shown on the plan attached to the notice.

The Enforcement Notice

3. The enforcement notice defines the Land at Leeds Golf Centre, Wike Ridge Lane, Alwoodley, Leeds LS17 9JW as “the Land”. However, in setting out the steps required to be taken, section 5 of the notice refers to “the land” rather than the correct defined term.
4. In accordance with section 176(1)(a) of the 1990 Act I can correct the steps required to be taken in section 5 of the notice to read: “demolish the extension in its entirety and remove all debris and detritus from the Land”. I can make this correction without injustice to the appellant or the local planning authority.

Appeal on ground (a)

5. An appeal on ground (a) is brought on the basis that planning permission ought to be granted for the breach of planning control stated in the notice. Where an appeal on ground (a) is duly made, an application for planning permission is deemed to have been made.

Main Issues

6. The main issues are:

- (i) whether the development would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt, having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework);
- (ii) the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area; and
- (iii) if found to be inappropriate development, whether the harm, by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposal

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

- 7. The appeal site comprises land at Leeds Golf Club within the Green Belt, and includes a clubhouse with associated driving range. The development relates to an extension of the driving range building.
- 8. Policy GB20 of the Leeds Unitary Development Plan 2006 (the UDP) states that new buildings and other structures essential for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation will be permitted in the Green Belt provided: (i) the development is required for a use which preserves the openness of the Green Belt; (ii) does not exceed in size the needs of those taking part or viewing the sport or recreation; and (iii) the visual impact on the countryside is minimised.
- 9. For the purposes of this appeal, this largely aligns with the spirit of the Framework. This states that construction of new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate development which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances, subject to certain exceptions. Such exceptions include paragraph 154(b): “the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation...as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it”.
- 10. The main parties agree that the development would comprise facilities for outdoor sport. Accordingly, whether it would constitute inappropriate development will depend on whether it would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
- 11. Openness has both spatial and visual aspects. From a spatial perspective, the development has introduced an element of vertical built form in an area formerly free from such a structure. However, it remains that the development is single storey in nature and limited in scale compared to both the clubhouse and the sprawling open grounds of the golf course itself. While I note the sizeable dimensions of the clubhouse, the scale and positioning of the development ensure that the buildings at the site remain confined to a singular location, and that the built form of the clubhouse is extended by only a very modest degree.

12. From a visual perspective, the development is experienced primarily from within the golf club grounds. It is largely screened from School Lane due to existing boundary planting, with views mainly possible from the entrance and exit points to the car park. From these locations it is experienced in the context of the other development at the golf club. It is viewed alongside and adjoining the existing clubhouse and does not read as a sprawling addition to the site or a standalone feature among the wider openness of the golf course. Similarly, while views of the development may be possible from surrounding residential dwellings, due to the intervening distance and the context within which the development is viewed, the degree of visual change to openness experienced from these locations would be extremely limited.
13. The Council has raised that the materials used in the construction of the development further impact on openness, being that they fail to assimilate with those of the clubhouse. However, while the timber clad development may not match the external stone of the main clubhouse, I observed comparable elements of wooden construction, in particular the teaching facilities adjoining the clubhouse further west. In this context, the timber cladding of the development does not appear jarring or result in having a greater visual impact on openness.
14. Planning Practice Guidance further advises that the degree of activity likely to be generated by a development should be taken into account when considering the impact on openness. The development results in three additional bays at the driving range, which evidence suggests are unlikely to be in use by more than 6 people at one time. In the context of the golf course and club as a whole the development is therefore unlikely to generate significant additional activity in terms of usage of, and comings and goings to, the appeal site.
15. In reaching my conclusion I have taken account of the nature of the use and the physical characteristics of the site, and am satisfied that the openness of the Green Belt is preserved by the development.
16. The Framework sets out the purposes for including land within the Green Belt as follows: i) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; ii) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; iii) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; iv) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and v) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
17. The Council contends that the countryside is encroached upon by the development. However, given its scale and precise location within the confines of the golf club and alongside existing built form, I find the development to be well contained such that it does not conflict with this purpose of Green Belt land. There is nothing substantive, either before me or observed on site, to suggest that the development conflicts with any of the other purposes for including land within the Green Belt.
18. For the reasons set out above, the proposal would fall within the exception as set out in paragraph 154(b) of the Framework. It would not therefore constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the Framework, and would comply with Policy GB20 of the UDP.

Character and appearance

19. The enforcement notice alleges that the development results in harm to the character of the area, with its timber-clad appearance being discordant with the

locality, driving range, and club house. However, as outlined above, I observed this to align with other features on the site, such as the teaching facilities. Accordingly, the timber-clad appearance of the development does not appear incongruous.

20. Overall, the design of the development assimilates with the immediate context. Its limited scale, flat roof, and positioning adjoining the existing built form ensures it reads as a subservient addition to the site. Its external materials and colour palette reflect those elsewhere within the clubhouse. As such, it does not appear out of place or result in visual harm.
21. The appeal site forms part of a Special Landscape Area (SLA), which covers a sizeable area of land. It has not been alleged in the notice that the development harms the SLA and, based on my observations outlined above, the scale, positioning, and design of the development ensures that no such harm arises.
22. For the reasons given, the proposal does not have a significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area. As such, it complies with Policies GP5 of the UDP and P10 of the Core Strategy Leeds Local Plan 2014 insofar as they seek to ensure development includes design considerations and is appropriate to its location, scale, and function.

Other Considerations

23. Given my findings above, it is not necessary for me to assess whether the other considerations put forward would amount to very special circumstances or whether the appeal site would comprise grey belt land.

Conditions

24. No conditions have been suggested by the Council. Based on the information before me and my observations on site, it is not necessary to impose any. While the appellant expresses an openness to conditions limiting the lifetime of the development and requiring submission of a landscaping scheme, given my conclusions above I do not find these to be necessary.

Conclusion

25. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal succeeds on ground (a). I shall grant planning permission for the development as described in the notice. The enforcement notice will be corrected and quashed.
26. In these circumstances the appeal on ground (f) does not fall to be considered.

C Rafferty

INSPECTOR