



Planning Statement

Bowlee Park Driving Range

P0019

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July 2024

Rev P00



Planning Statement

**Bowlee Park Driving Range - Construction of a first floor driving range & indoor golf area.
Construction of a covered adventure golf facility
Extension of existing car park to form 102 car parking spaces in total
& associated landscaping
Installation of ball protection netting and columns ranging from 30m
-10m in height**

1 Pre - Planning Summary

Pre-planning advice was sought for the proposed development in September 2023 - ref PREAPP/00075/23.

Further dialogue with the council was received early May 2023 to review the pre-app response which helped inform the current proposed scheme and as the basis of this planning application.

In summary the response highlighted the principle of expanding the existing facility per se is acceptable, however, concerns are raised about the totality of works and their visual impact. The extent of the works proposed must be justified against the relevant policies within a planning statement, which will then be reviewed by the planning officer, in addition to suitable visual representations supplied to demonstrate that the design of the extended building and covered adventure golf area will need to have consideration for the surrounding context of the area.

The existing building amasses into the landscape and any future design will also need to provide justification for the design.

Since the pre-planning application stage the adventure golf facility has reduced in sized to allow further external public realm space, with further green screening along the perimeter to help maintain and enhance a green viewing corridor towards the rear fields.

2 Planning Statement

This statement is made in support of a planning application submission to Rochdale Council for the redevelopment of Bowlee Park Driving Range, Heywood Old Rd, Middleton Manchester, M24 4TH.

2.1 Site Location

The proposed site lies off Heywood Old Road (A6045); it is located to the north Manchester, North of the M60 and South of the M62.

On the site is an existing single storey building consisting of a shop, storage, toilets and a bar. This building is not visible from the highway as it is concealed by the site surroundings due to its height and colour. There is also an existing driving range with 34 bays and an existing golf ball protection net.

Land beyond the bays is open and used for the driving range and is surrounded by fencing.

The site forms part of a wider designation of Protected Open Land and protected recreational open space. It is also within an existing Greenspace Corridor. It lies outside the Defined Urban Area.

North of the Site is David Lloyd Gym. The development east of the site is an area of trees and residential housing, south of the site is fields and west of the site is Bowlee Nursery.

There is an informal path that runs along the northern boundary of the site which is a public right of way and provides full view of the site when on foot. There is also an informal path to the south but this does not form a formal public right of way.

2.2 Planning History

89/D24491 – Extension to golf driving range

94/D30726 - Application for certificate of lawfulness for existing use as a golf driving range

98/A4824 - Advertisement consent for Non-illuminated free standing sign

00/D38198 - Erection of 10m high golf ball stop fence

Very limited development has occurred at the driving range over the last 35+ years, the most recent being a strip of 10m high golf ball stop fencing to prevent balls from landing to the informal paths to the north & south.

3 The Proposal

The proposed development consists of the following main elements:

- Construction of a first floor driving range & indoor golf area.
- Construction of a covered adventure golf facility
- Extension of existing car park to form 102 car parking spaces in total & associated landscaping
- Installation of ball protection netting and columns ranging from 30m -10m in height

The redevelopment demonstrates an ambition to provide the best facilities to help golfers of all levels to improve and enjoy golf practice, which has benefited from significant investment in recent months including Trackman Technology in every bay.

The proposal will use a neutral palette of materials similar to surrounding buildings to blend in with the surrounding streetscene.

Rachel Ann Lucy Architect has produced a set of detailed plans for the application; it is not the intention of this supporting statement to analyse these plans in detail, they are very clear and set out exactly what is proposed and where on the site it will be positioned. For the avoidance of doubt the submitted plans are numbered as follows:

BDR-RALA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-(00)-0000_P00 - Site Location & Block Plan

BDR-RALA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-(00)-0001_P03 - Existing Ground Floor Site Plan

BDR-RALA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-(00)-0002_P00 - Existing Plans & Elevations

BDR-RALA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-(00)-0003_P01 - Existing Entrance & Ancillary Spaces

BDR-RALA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-(00)-0004_P05 - Proposed Ground Floor Site Plan

BDR-RALA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-(00)-0005_P00 - Proposed Plans

BDR-RALA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-(00)-0006_P05 - Proposed Entrance & Ancillary Spaces

BDR-RALA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-(00)-0007_P05 - Proposed First Floor & Ancillary Spaces

BDR-RALA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-(00)-0008_P00 - Proposed Elevations

BDR-RALA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-(00)-0020_P00 - Existing Sitewide Elevations

BDR-RALA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-(00)-0021_P00 - Proposed Sitewide Elevations

4 The National Planning Policy Framework

4.1 The National planning Policy Framework applies to all developments. The Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and permission should be granted unless adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole.

A set of core planning principles underpin decision making. Those most relevant to this development include:

- Achieving sustainable development (Chapter 2)
- Delivering a sufficient supply of homes (Chapter 5)
- Promoting healthy and safe communities (Chapter 8)
- Promoting sustainable transport (Chapter 9)
- Making effective use of land (Chapter 11)
- Achieving well-designed places (Chapter 12)
- Protecting the Green Belt (Chapter 13)
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (Chapter 15)

5 The Development Plan for Rochdale

5.1 In preparing this supporting statement, reference has been made to the relevant policies in the Development Plan. It is noted on the Rochdale Borough Council web site that the current development plan is the

Local Plan (Rochdale Adopted Core Strategy in 2016); however, it is clear that the planning authority is currently in the midst of preparing the Development Plan for Rochdale which, together with the Places for Everyone plan, will form a key part of Rochdale's overall development strategy for the next 15 years. The local plan will contain a range of locally specific planning policies and identify local sites where development should be built as well as areas where development should be restricted or controlled.

5.2 Rochdale's Unitary Development Plan & Policies:

- D/10 Protected Open Land
- G/3 'Protection of Existing Recreational Open Space'

6 Background

6.1 Protected Open Land

The site is located within Protected Open Land as defined on the Proposals Map under Policy D/10 of the UDP. This designation relates to sites such as this which are located beyond the Defined Urban Area, but are outside of Green Belt. The aim of the policy is to limit development to keep the land largely open by allowing development that falls within one of the specified categories:

- a) development which would be acceptable were it in the Green Belt; or
- b) limited infilling within an established pocket of housing or industry where this is in scale with the area and will not adversely affect its character or surroundings; or
- c) a limited extension to an existing building which:
 - i. forms part of an existing source of employment; or
 - ii. is necessary for the establishment of a new enterprise or business which satisfies other policies of the Plan; and
 - iii. is sited within the existing curtilage of the business concerned, and will not adversely affect the character of the surrounding land and its openness.

The policy goes on to state that if a new building is permitted, 'they should be sited to form a group with existing buildings. Where this is not possible, buildings, car parking areas and other new structures, should be sited where they will be well screened and unobtrusive in the landscape'.

It is considered exception (b) and (c) above are most relevant. The proposal relates to the expansion of an existing driving range business and is located within close proximity to the existing building footprint. Proposed greening along with the siting of the car park, adventure golf facility and main driving range have been considered to protect the character of the open land, improving the openness adjacent to the public right of way.

6.2 Open space

The site is also designated as open space whereby the development of public or private recreational open space for any other purpose will not be permitted unless one or more of the following exceptions applies:

a) The development is for a non commercial community use within a park or other outdoor recreation area, is ancillary to the recreational use of the area, would not lead to a deficiency in recreational open space in relation to present or future needs, and does not harm the recreational, townscape or nature conservation value of the remaining open space; b) Alternative provision is made of at least the equivalent quantity and quality of recreational open space, in a satisfactory location and taking account of local environmental and traffic considerations; 120 Rochdale UDP 2006 Greenspace

c) The development funds improvements to existing outdoor sports facilities within the site or on another site, commensurate with the open space being lost; and

d) The development comprises a built recreational facility of greater benefit to the wider community than the open space being lost and does not result in a serious deficiency in open space in the area.

The most relevant exception to the proposal is (d), where such proposals will only be permitted where no suitable alternative brownfield site exists.

Similarly, at the national level, paragraph 103 of the NPPF prohibits the loss of existing open space unless one of the three criteria can be met. The site also lies within a green space corridor which Policy G8 of the UDP (shall be read in conjunction with Policy G6 of the Core Strategy) seeks to protect. Part G/8 (C) relates to recreational facilities and states that they should be of a 'scale and nature appropriate to the location and should not lead to an unacceptable level of recreational activity having regard to visual amenity, nature conservation interests and the need to retain an informal or unspoilt character.

Development or activities should not conflict with existing uses or activities (e.g., grazing) and should not create disturbance for local residents.'

There is no immediate residential dwelling to the site that would be negatively impacted by the development through loss of light or outlook. A noise assessment also accompanies this planning application to demonstrate that the proposal will not create any disturbance.

This supporting statement addresses the issues raised in relation to the site being within protected open land and designated open space particularly insofar as it concerns whether or not the proposal affects the essential characteristic of the green appearance, its openness and equally, whether the proposal would impact this appearance.

The submitted plan/s prepared by Rachel Ann Lucy Architect, set the context of the proposal both in terms of impact upon the landscape character and, more importantly, impact upon the openness of the site.

The positioning of the proposed elements are located either on the existing footprint or immediately adjoining the existing footprint and is shielded from the open views in the landscape by further greening.

It is respectfully submitted that the proposal is entirely appropriate to the site, the surrounding area and its openness.

6.3 Character & Appearance

Paragraphs 131 and 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) state that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping. This is largely reflected within Policies DM1 and P3 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy, which requires development proposals to demonstrate high quality design.

Proposed elevations have been developed alongside the feedback given at the pre planning stage - using a profiled rainscreen cladding with a reflective quality, along with internal timber cladding to the interior of the driving range.

The adventure golf facility is proposed on an area of existing grass, this development will have a silver grey frame, curved poly tunnel roof and windbreak netting similar to the appearance of Bowlee nurseries.

A Biodiversity net gain calculation and statement accompanies this application to show that any grassland lost will be accounted for by planting of a wildflower meadow and further greening so as to reduce its visual impact and to protect the character and appearance of this semi-rural location, and in order to comply with Policies G6, G8 and D/10.

The proposal will have a ground and first floor. This will be set back from the highway and also the public right of way but may still be visible, some screening through landscaping has been shown. A new 30m high golf ball protection net is proposed to prevent loss of golf balls and protecting the safety of the surrounding areas.

Further details on the proposed materiality can be found on the design & access statement.

6.4 Highways

Paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

The Council's Highways Officer has been consulted at the pre-app stage and provided the following comments: 'The proposed development although remote from any real population centre is located along public transport links and can be accessed by public transport. We would not expect any problematic increases in traffic as a result of this proposal.

The pre-application proposals show adequate parking for the new proposals.

Access to the site is adequate for vehicles but any subsequent application should show improvements to links to public transport for pedestrians and cycle parking provision. There is no new highways proposed as a result of this development.

We envisage no issues collecting refuse from this location.

We cannot identify any new road safety issues as a result of this proposal.

NO PROW or Bridleway is obstructed as a result of these proposals.'

Improvements have been made at the site entrance for pedestrians and cycle parking will be provided.

6.5 Drainage

Policy G8 of the Core Strategy sets out the Council's strategy for managing water resources and flood risk more effectively in the interests of public safety, protecting property and infrastructure and the conservation of the natural environment.

The NPPF also establishes that inappropriate development in areas at risk at flooding should be avoided and that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere.

The Council's Drainage Officer was consulted at the pre planning stage and provided the following comments: "Because the site is relatively remote and the parking areas are bordered with grass, there doesn't appear to be an issue with runoff nuisance to adjacent sites. However, the new parking areas should be constructed in fully permeable areas. Alternatively, soakaway drainage from non-permeable car parking could be provided. Either would meet the modern standard requirements for sustainable drainage. The existing road and parking areas indicate puddling due to lack of any formal sustainable drainage.

The proposed car park will provide suitable drainage requirements - full details of which can be prepared prior to construction.



7 Planning Conditions

The planning authority can impose relevant planning conditions that seek to ensure that the overall character of the openness is not harmed by inappropriate development.

8 Conclusions

The site relates to an existing golf driving range facility and the proposed development involves the intensification via additional buildings, infrastructure and car parking. The site is within a sensitive location that is designated as protected open land and protected open space, as well as being within a greenspace corridor. It is visible from long distance views, including from the adjacent PROW.

For the reasons set out in this supporting statement and the details contained in the submitted plan/s, it is considered that the proposal does not prejudice the overall aims and objectives of the Development Plan both adopted and emerging, in safeguarding the open character.

The proposal does not prejudice the overall development strategy set out in the UDP, the emerging local plan or the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework. The development will have no adverse impact whatsoever upon the essential character and quality of this part of the greenspace corridor, and its openness.

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Principal

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