



CHORLTON PLANNING LTD

Town Planning & Development Consultants

PLANNING APPLICATION: FUL/349499/22

**NEW EXTERNAL CANOPIES AND PLANT ROOM TO EXISTING BUILDING,
IMPROVEMENTS AND EXTENSION TO EXISTING CAR PARK TO INCLUDE
DISABLED SPACES AND PEDESTRIAN ROUTE**

**LANCASTER PARK & ANIMAL FARM, MIDDLETON ROAD, CHADDERTON,
OLDHAM OL1 2TG**

PLANNING DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Prepared by

Chorlton Planning Ltd

on behalf of

Lancaster Park and Animal Farm

A2371

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0.0 PREAMBLE

0.1 This Statement has been prepared to support the proposals contained in Planning Application FUL/349499/21 submitted by C J Partnership Limited.

1.0 THE SITE

1.1 Lancaster Park and Animal Farm is a well-established enterprise, opened in 2011.

1.2 Visitors are invited to meet, touch and feed the animals, which include horses, donkeys, pigs, sheep, rabbits and chickens. The site offers two play areas with swings, slides and zip lines along the scenic nature walk that runs along the River Irk.

1.3 The layout of the site comprises a cluster of buildings, car parking etc., in the south with the main country walk area being to the east around the River Irk and the Rochdale Canal. A plan of the whole site was submitted with the application. The current application site relates to the built part of the site and is shown on the attached OS plan.

1.4 The built-up part of the site includes a two-storey building which will accommodate toilets, offices, café, soft play and other facilities. The building is complete but not yet fitted out internally. Other, smaller buildings are located in this part of the site together car parking and circulation space

1.5 To the south of the application site is a terrace of dwellings and businesses, a bus turning area and public car parking area, and another car parking area for rail users. Beyond this is Middleton Road, the A 669. To the west of the site is the Manchester/Halifax railway line, while to the north is the River Irk and open countryside. The open countryside part of the site is in the eastern area, beyond which, across the Rochdale canal is Irkvale Housing Estate and the more extensive built-up area of this part of Chadderton.

1.6 There is extensive mature tree cover around the application site

1.7 Both vehicular and pedestrian access is via the bus turning area, off Middleton Road.

2.0 THE PROPOSALS

2.1 It is proposed to provide canopies to the existing building together with an external plant room to improve the air circulation/heating within the building. Improvements are also proposed to the existing car parking area, which will be extended, to bring it up to a high standard. The car park will be marked out to include disabled spaces and a pedestrian route.

2.2 Appropriate landscaping will be provided within the car park area

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 As referred to above the site is well established as an animal park and education centre and has been developed as the usage has grown.

3.2 Planning application PA/335465/14 for the erection of a two-storey entrance building was approved on the 29th July 2014.

3.3 The position of the building was amended slightly, reference NMA/336751/15. The current application refers to additions and alterations to this building, as well as improvements and an extension to the car parking area.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 The site is located within the Green Belt as designated on the Oldham Local Plan Development Framework (LDF) Proposals Map. It is also close to a Site of Special Biological Interest, which is centred on the River Irk. The following LDF policies are considered to be relevant:-

Policy 5 – Promoting accessibility and sustainable transport choices.

Policy 6 – Green Infrastructure.

Policy 9 – Local environment.

Policy 16 – Local Services and facilities.

Policy 20 – Design.

Policy 22 – Protecting open land.

Policy 23 – Open space and sports.

4.2 Advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also relevant, along with the emerging Places For Everyone, Strategic Greater Manchester document.

4.3 The principal use of the site as a local recreational/educational attraction based on contact with animals and the surrounding natural environment has been established. The current proposals relate essentially to improvements to the existing facilities for the benefit of visitors and staff.

4.4 An extract from the Lancaster Park and Animal Farm website is attached. This sets out the purpose of the land use and the activities provided.

4.5 Looking at the Oldham LDF Policies in more detail.

4.6 LDF Policy 1 – Climate Change and Sustainable Development, aims, inter alia, to improve the benefit of the health and well-being of people in Oldham. It states that

“development must be in sustainable and accessible locations within the built-up area and must not prejudice the development of other land or the regeneration plans of an area identified by the Council as being in need of investment”.

4.7 As referred to above the use of the site is already well established. It provides recreational and educational experiences, in particular for children, that will assist in their physical and mental well-being. It is also in a highly sustainable location being accessible by on foot, by car, bus and rail. A bus stop and bus layby is situated immediately adjacent to the site and

the Mills Hill Railway Station is located across Middleton Road. The Mills Hill Railway Station is on the main Manchester/Halifax line which gives frequent service to stations throughout the North of England. The proposed development will enhance the facilities already provided by the Park.

4.8 LDF Policy 5 – Promoting Accessibility and Sustainable Transport Choices, requires development to be located in accessible locations to promote and encourage use of public transport, walking and cycling.

4.9 As mentioned above, the site is in a sustainable location with easy access to rail, bus and private car journeys. There is also footpath access through the valley with footpath systems linking through to Chadderton Park and to the countryside beyond.

4.10 LDF Policy 6 – Green Infrastructure, looks to value local natural and historic environments, green infrastructure, bio-diversity, geo-diversity and landscapes and their wider settings.

4.11 The Policy recognises the part that green infrastructure plays in the health and well-being of residents of the borough and beyond. The enhancement of the facilities already provided at the Lancaster Park and the experiences that visitors, in particularly children, enjoy help them to understand and value the green infrastructure in and around the area, which is particularly visually attractive and abundant with wildlife. It is noted that the River Irk Valley is designated SBI.

4.12 LDF Policy 9 – Local Environment, seeks to protect and improve local environmental quality and ensure that proposed development does not have an unacceptable impact on the environment or human health caused by air quality, odour, noise, vibration or light pollution.

4.13 It also aims to ensure that development does not cause significant harm to the amenity of occupants or future occupants of the development or to existing and future neighbouring occupants or users through impacts on privacy, safety and security, noise, pollution, the visual appearance of the area, access to daylight or other nuisances.

4.14 The improvements to the existing facilities will not adversely affect nearby residents or users of the land around. The improvements will, in fact, significantly enhance the visitor experience to the site for the benefit of all. The plant room is small and to the rear of the existing building. The canopies will cover existing open hardstanding areas immediately adjacent to the building and the extension to the car parking area to the rear of the building will not affect occupiers of the houses to the south. The application site in this area is bounded by a high solid fence and mature trees beyond which is a passageway used by private vehicles.

4.15 LDF Policy 20 – Design, requires high quality design in all developments.

4.16 The proposed developments, in particular the canopies will enhance the appearance of the existing building and from a functional point of view will provide cover for tables and chairs and people circulating around the building. The surfacing and laying out of the car park together with associated landscaping will significantly improve the appearance and character of the general area.

4.17 LDF Policy 21 – Protecting National Environmental Assets, seeks to protect, converse and enhance the local and natural environments.

4.18 The improvements to the existing facilities will enhance the visitor experience to Lancaster Park and the surrounding area. It will help people, in particular children, to appreciate and value the natural environment and the green infrastructure.

4.19 LDF Policy 22 – Protecting Open Land, seeks to maintain the openness of the countryside and to protect it from unacceptable development. The site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt where new development, unless required for agricultural, forestry or horticultural uses is normally resisted unless very special circumstances demonstrated.

4.20 LDF Green Policy is backed up by National Green Belt Policy in the NPPF.

4.21 Paragraph 149 of the NPPF states a number of exceptions to Green Belt Policy. These are:

b. the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

c. 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.

4.22 As referred to above the primary use of the site - to provide educational and recreational facilities, in particular association with the animals - is already well established.

4.21 The building to which the plant room and canopies will be attached was granted planning permission under reference number PA/335465/14 and the whole application site is classified as 'previously developed' for planning purposes.

4.22 The proposals are intended to enhance and improve the existing facilities. A small extension to the existing building, the plant room and the lightweight open canopies are an extension to the existing building. These do not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building and as such will be compliant under exception criteria c of NPPF paragraph 149

4.23 The surfacing and improvements to the car park will not affect the openness of the Green Belt and are seen as compliant with exception criteria b, the provision of appropriate facilities in connection with the existing use of the land. The proposals therefore are not contrary to Green Belt Policy.

5.0 DESIGN

Amount, Size, Use

5.1 The use of the site is already well established. The extensions to the building are proportionate to its size. The plant room is small and the canopies are adequate to protect the circulation and seating areas around the building. The upgrading and extension of the car park and improvement to the circulation areas are of an appropriate size for the site.

Layout

5.2 The layout of the extensions to the existing building and the car parking areas are appropriate to the use and will enhance visitor parking and associated vehicle and pedestrian movements.

Scale

5.3 The scale of the development is appropriate to the site and the use.

Landscaping

5.4 Appropriate landscaping is included as an integral part of the car park design.

Appearance

5.5 As stated above, the proposed development will improve the appearance of the site and enhance the visitor experience. It will also improve the working conditions for staff and other operational visitors.

6.0 ACCESS

6.1 Access to the site is via the bus turning area in Middleton Road. It is a well-established existing access and will remain unchanged. The site is accessible by public transport. The bus stop/bus turning area is close to the entrance to the Park. Bus services 59 and 396 are served by the bus stop. Mills Hill Railway Station is situated across Middleton Road.

6.2 The new canopies will improve the quality of access around the building. The enhanced car parking areas and pedestrian/vehicular circulation will again significantly improve the visitor experience.

6.3 Facilities for ease of access for those with mobility impairments are already in place.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The proposed development will improve the appearance of and enhance the parking and circulation facilities for both pedestrians and vehicles.

7.2 The proposals will be a significant investment in the recreation/educational facility and in turn will assist in the health and well-being of visitors to the Lancaster Park, in particular children, and those employed by the Park

7.3 The proposals are in compliance with National, Regional and Local planning policy and will be of significant benefit to Chadderton and the image of Oldham as a key provider of recreational and educational open space centred on countryside and bio-diversity.

7.4 Further information can be provided if necessary.

Chorlton Planning Ltd

August 2022