

Design and Access Statement

PROJECT: Extension to existing function suite

LOCATION Marsh Farm Hall, Garstang Road, Great Eccleston, Preston PR3 0XA

Applicant: Mrs E White

The Site

1. The existing development comprises two interlinked elements. There are two holiday cottages and a function suite, all in one purpose-built building
2. The site is to the east of Great Eccleston immediately north of Garstang Road, in the designated open countryside. The business has been located here for many years. It is run by the family living on site, with the main duties now being with Mrs White, the daughter of the owners, Mr & Mrs Miller.
3. The T shaped building is laid out with the function venue centrally covering an area of 185 sq m, with the two holiday cottages being either side of the main event hall.
4. For a number of years, the applicants have erected a temporary marquee to the north of the facility to accommodate events. This is costly and not always appropriate in inclement weather episodes. They now seek to provide a permanent extension to the existing suite.
5. There are well established mature trees and hedges on the southern, boundary to the site.
6. Beyond the north eastern and western boundaries is agricultural land. The landscape is typical of both the Fylde Coast and Amounderness plain, being largely flat with hedge lined fields down to grass affording expansive views.
7. The site is well contained and screened with limited views gained from Garstang Road when approaching from the east or west on Garstang Road. Owing to the site features, development on the rear portion of the site is largely obscured and does not detract from the wider landscape or its characteristics.

The Proposal

8. The proposal is to extend the existing facilities to provide an area for guests to socialise and celebrate various events in an undercover, purpose-built facility. Whilst also enjoying the outward views across the open countryside
9. The proposed extension has been designed after much research by the applicants, in order to create a rustic yet light and accessible bespoke facility in keeping with the existing style of the location.
10. There is ample parking already on site, and the proposed extension is not essentially about additional numbers, but to provide more spacious environs in which to host events.

Planning Impacts

11. Overall it is considered that the proposal represents an extension to the existing facility
12. The general appearance of the extension will be in keeping with the host building. New glazed areas will provide stunning views across the Wyre countryside, which is already a USP for the business.
13. Existing hardstanding will be extended at the rear, and patio doors from the extension will open up onto the outside area for additional experience for the guests. As such there is minimal impact on openness or the landscape character. The proposal seeks to improve conditions on site and these in turn will have benefits to the area.

Relevant Policies of the Wyre Local Plan (2011 – 2031)

14. The Wyre Local Plan (2011-2031) supersedes the 'saved policies in the Wyre Borough Local Plan (1991 – 2006)

SP1 'Development Strategy', SP2 'Sustainable Development' and SP4 'Development in the countryside

15. The abovementioned policies deal with the appropriateness of any planning proposal based on its location within the borough and the adopted proposals map.
16. SP1 describes development scenarios relating to settlement boundaries and hierarchies, along with other objectives of the Council (i.e. infrastructure projects).
17. Fundamental strategic aims of the policy are '*growth within environmental limits*' and that '*New development is required to be of appropriate type and scale to the character of the settlement in the hierarchy*'
18. The site is well outside of any settlement and is in the open countryside when referring to the adopted proposals map. SP1 (5) is therefore engaged when land is defined as 'open countryside'. SP1 (5) mainly concerns 'strategic' development scenarios which are inevitable in countryside, citing the below as an example: -

Individual opportunities which will help diversify the rural economy or support tourism will be supported where they are appropriate in scale and in accordance with other policies where relevant.

19. The proposal entails development to support an existing rural business by providing expansion and improvements to its current tourist accommodation provision and is as such provided for by the policy.
20. As SP1 concerns growth rather than restriction, SP2 is applied to SP1 in order to ensure proposals are environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. SP1 (5) can also be applied in combination with SP4 ('Development in Countryside'), but only to land

designated as Open Countryside on the proposal map and which places a protection on *open and rural character*.

21. SP4 sets specific development types appropriate to the Countryside area, the theme of the policy is that in open countryside development should be '*strictly limited*' but supports amongst others suitable forms of tourism in line with specific policy EP8.
22. Policy SP2 requires all development to be sustainable, but it is accepted that some forms of development where vehicle movements are less frequent for example may be appropriately located in rural areas.
23. The proposal is supported by information to demonstrate viability of the proposed venture. It is considered that the proposal, demonstrates sufficiently that the provision of the proposed extension is a viable proposition within this rural area of Wyre, and is therefore considered to meet with policy requirements of EP8 and SP4 which seeks to ensure proposals are a positive sustainable economic development.

24 Conclusion

Principle of development and Policy compliance –

The application site is an existing function suite and holiday cottages located in an area designated as countryside under the adopted Wyre Local Plan (2001-2031) (WLP31). As such the overriding policy that is most relevant to the proposal is Policy SP4 (Countryside Areas). SP4 seeks to control development in these countryside areas to that which is considered appropriate. There are a range of uses which are considered appropriate with tourism being one of them provided it is in line with the provisions of the Policy EP8. The proposal is supported by a sound business plan demonstrating long term viability.