

APPENDIX A: RESPONSE OF INTERESTED PARTY TO ORIGINAL SUBMISSIONS IN
RELATION TO APPLICATION REF: P/2018/00846

SUMMARY

Planning considerations

Development outside the Settlement / Development Boundary

The development will be outside the development / settlement boundary for Rocester as designated in ESBC's adopted Local Plan and so must conform to both its Strategic Planning Policy SP8 and those of the overriding National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Given that the principle of having a golf course has already received full planning approval, it can be considered that there is already a lawful business.

It is not known whether the golf course and its facilities will be solely for JCB purposes or both available to and generally affordable by the local community in Rocester. If they are to be available to the general public, it could well be that traffic volumes will increase.

The visual impact of the development should be minimal. The character of the local area has already been markedly altered by the creation of the existing golf course and the proposed development site is already screened by earth mounds.

It is expected that ESBC as the local planning authority has already considered the implications of the loss of a considerable are of agricultural land when granting planning permission for the existing golf course.

Sustainable development

The NPPF states that for development to be truly sustainable, it must be considered against three specific criteria, economic, social and environmental.

Economic benefits

Whilst the additional golf course facilities will bring benefits JCB (and hopefully some that will trickle down to the immediate local community) besides encouraging growth, whether they will be truly 'sustainable' is not altogether clear.

Social benefits

There is likely to be none, the overall golf facilities seeming to be solely for JCB purposes. There have already been some social disbenefits from the creation of the golf course in that the facilities of the former JCB Club are no longer available for local community use.

Environmental benefits

The setting of Mince Pie Hall / Banks Farm has already been altered considerably by the changes of levels arising from the formation of the golf course. The earthmoving carried out as part of creating the golf course has provided banks that largely make the lodges invisible from the existing dwellings on Hollington Road. Thus it is considered that no further changes should arise from the proposed development.

Whilst it is the residents opposite the entrance whose amenity could be affected the most, the community elsewhere within the parish could be adversely affected by increases in traffic. Consequently, ESBC must consider the traffic implications of the proposal thoroughly.

The Applicant's assertion on vehicle movements cannot be accepted unless it can be guaranteed that the lodge users will indeed use the on-site catering facilities, especially if they are not there to play golf and will share cars

The footways alongside Hollington Road do not extend from the JCB World Headquarters to golf course entrance at present. Given that the highway is illuminated whereas footpaths through the golf course are seemingly not, visitors will be tempted to use the public highway. The Highway Authority should be consulted on whether this is acceptable.

No information is given concerning waste management. By the development ESBC must be assured that all waste generated will be handled by any existing central facility.

Design Considerations

The Planning Statement comments that "The design of the buildings, structures and materials are visually well related to the proposed site and its setting with careful choice of materials, landscaping, massing of buildings and attention to local architecture and roofscape design."

Whether the existing building needs to be made to match the lodges is debatable. There is an equally valid case for Pinewood Cottage not being rendered but rather retain its brickwork, roof and period details as a visual and historical reference to Mince Pie Hall and the derelict Woodseat building once was intended for preservation and conversion.

BACKGROUND

1.0 The Application

1.1 In July 2014, planning permission was granted in July 2014 for the creation of various facilities for 18 hole golf, so this this latest application is for additional buildings within the golf course itself to accommodate visitors to it and the JCB complex as a whole.

2.0 Purpose of the development

2.2 The purpose of the development is given in the accompanying Planning and Heritage Statement (P+HS). 'One key area where the course is currently lacking is the provision of high quality visitor accommodation and this proposal has been designed to meet this need. This will provide a significant improvement in the customer experience that JCB are able to offer and will enable visitors to stay within close proximity to the main factory in bespoke, premium accommodation. All accommodation will be provided in connection with the wider JCB business'.

2.3 This suggests that new accommodation may well be used for non-golfing activities, which could affect the traffic flows.

3.0 Planning considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

3.1 The Applicant maintains that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development where it complies with an up-to-date Local Plan. NPPF Paragraph 19 is quoted in the P+HS, stating that "The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth" and that "significant weight should be placed on the need to support (such) growth through the planning system".

3.2 The additional golf course facilities will indeed encourage growth but whether they will be truly 'sustainable' is not altogether clear.

East Staffordshire Local Plan (2015)

3.3 Principle 1 of the 2015 East Staffordshire Local Plan states that, as the local planning authority, the Council will be positive regarding the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development. In its Planning Statement, the Applicant maintains that the application should be 'approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.' Rather strangely, it is stated that no pre-application advice has been sought.

3.4 The Local Plan is also said to seeks the 'creating (of) opportunities for new businesses to form and existing businesses to expand, relocate and diversify". To some degree, the proposed additional on-site overnight visitor accommodation may meet such objectives, if only for providing 7 full-time and 2 part -time jobs, hopefully to be filled by persons from the immediate area.

3.5 Even if the is proposal recognised to be part of JCB's expansion plans, the P+HS acknowledges that it must 'not adversely affect the amenities enjoyed by existing land users, including, in the case of proposals for development close to an existing settlement, the occupiers of residential and other property within that settlement".

3.6 Whilst it is the residents in Hollington Road opposite the entrance whose amenity could be affected the most, the community elsewhere within

the parish could be adversely affected by increases in traffic. Further comment on both is given in paragraphs 3.21 to 3.24.

Development Outside Settlement Boundaries

3.7 The development will be outside the development / settlement boundary for Rocester as designated in ESBC's adopted Local Plan and so must conform to both its Strategic Planning Policy SP8 and those of the overriding National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

3.8 The Applicant already recognises that 'the site lies within the wider JCB Golf Course complex (but) is outside of any designated development boundary, and therefore Policy SP8 of the East Staffordshire Local Plan is relevant.' Such development is not be permitted unless it meets one of the following criteria as listed by the Applicant.

3.9 "Essential to the support and viability of an existing lawful business or the creation of a new business appropriate in the countryside in terms of type of operation, size and impact and supported by relevant justification for a rural location."

Given that the principle of having a golf course has already received full planning approval, it can be considered that there is already a lawful business.

3.10 "Providing facilities for the use of the general public or local community close to an existing settlement which is reasonably accessible on foot, by bicycle or by public transport."

It is not known whether the golf course and its facilities will be solely for JCB purposes or both available to and generally affordable by the local community in Rocester. If they are to be available to the general public, it could well be that traffic volumes will increase.

3.11 "otherwise appropriate in the countryside."

Whilst perhaps not always to the standards now being sought by JCB, overnight visitor accommodation already exists within the within the local rural area which could be adversely affected by such a development if to be used for or in conjunction with non-golfing activities.

3.12 "The detailed siting of the proposed development and its associated environmental impact (must be) compatible with the character of the surrounding area,

The visual impact of the development should be minimal. The character of the local area has already been markedly altered by the creation of the existing golf course and the proposed development site is already screened by earth mounds.

3.13 "The design of the buildings, structures and materials are visually well related to the proposed site and its setting with careful choice of materials, landscaping, massing of buildings and attention to local architecture and roofscape design."

See Section 4.0 Proposed Design

3.14 "The proposed development will not have an adverse impact on the transport and highway network and provides adequate access for all necessary users."

See 'Highway Safety'.

3.15 "The need to maintain land of high agricultural value for food production."

In this regard, the proposed development has no effect. It is expected that ESBC as the local planning authority has already considered the implications of the loss of a considerable are of agricultural land when granting planning permission for the existing golf course.

Sustainable development.

3.16 The NPPF states that for development to be truly sustainable, it must be considered against three specific criteria, economic, social and environmental.

Economic benefits

3.17 Not unexpectedly, the Applicant asserts that the proposal 'will provide for significant economic benefits locally, nationally and

internationally from JCB's increased business and market share'. Whilst there will clearly be economic benefits to JCB, hopefully some that will trickle down to the immediate local community.

Social benefits

3.18 There are likely to be none, the overall golf facilities seeming to be solely for JCB purposes. There have already been some social disbenefits from the creation of the golf course in that the facilities of the former JCB Club are no longer available for local community use.

Environmental benefits

3.19 It is important that ESBC considers the traffic implications of the proposal thoroughly.

Character and Appearance of the local area

3.20 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has concluded that the impacts on the wider landscape will be 'negligible' in that 'the proposals will not ... harm the character or appearance of the local area and will sit acceptably within the managed landscape of the golf course.' . Indeed, they are unlikely to be, in themselves, dominant.

Amenity of Neighbours

3.21 The Applicant considers that 'The proposed lodges are sufficiently distant from neighbouring dwellings on the opposite side of Hollington Road to avoid causing any unacceptable effect upon the amenities enjoyed by their occupiers.'

Given that the lodges are to be set within an existing golf course, they can be considered to be part of what might be expected. The earthmoving carried out as part of creating the course has provided banks that largely make the lodges invisible from the existing dwellings on Hollington Road.

But proximity is not everything. Traffic also affects amenity and, in this case, that of the 'neighbouring dwellings' in particular. Comment is made in 'Highway Safety' below.

Highway Safety

3.22 The access to and off-street parking spaces for the lodges will be from the existing main entrance on Hollington Road.

Vehicles

3.23 Both the Planning and Transport Statements forming part of the application maintain that the development is unlikely to increase the volume of trips using the Golf Course. 'This is because the trip associated with the lodges will already be travelling to the site for a golf event. In fact, the lodges are likely to reduce the number of trips to and from the site as JCB visitors requiring an overnight stay can now stay on site rather than having to travel to and from the site'.

This assertion on vehicle movements cannot be accepted unless it can be guaranteed that the lodge users will indeed use the on-site catering facilities, especially if they are not there to play golf. It also may not be correct that 4 parking spaces each (1 per bedroom as mentioned in the Design Access Statement) will be sufficient since not everyone may share a car.

Pedestrians

3.24 The footways alongside Hollington Road do not extend from the JCB World Headquarters to golf course entrance at present. Given that the highway is illuminated whereas footpaths through the golf course are seemingly not, visitors will be tempted to use the public highway. The Highway Authority should be consulted on whether this is acceptable.

Heritage

3.25 The NPPF requires that the significance of any heritage assets (in this case the Grade II* Listed Mince Pie Hall / Banks Farm) affected should be described, including any contribution made by their setting.

3.26 It can be argued that the setting of Mince Pie Hall has already been altered considerably by the changes of levels arising from the formation of the golf course. It is considered that no further changes should arise from the proposed development.

Waste storage and collection

3.27 According to the Application Form, there are no waste storage facilities proposed as part of the development and seemingly no separation of recyclable waste, something that should be provided. When determining the application, ESBC should be assured that all waste will be handled by any existing central facility.

4.0 Proposed design

The lodges

4.1 The plans for the bedrooms as submitted indicate double-bed accommodation. For maximum occupation, their occupants might have to be more than just golf partners(!).

4.2 The Design Access Statement mentions that 'the proposed design for the lodges uses larch boarding and cedar roof shingles to ensure the proposal sits comfortably within its setting and which will weather naturally over time', whereas, on the Application Form, the roof covering is stated 'to be discussed with the LPA'.

Pinewood Cottage

4.3 It is noted that the existing Pinewood Cottage building is to be retained and refurbished to provide office accommodation, new WC facilities, a meeting room, a bag store, three en-suite bedrooms, a communal lounge and kitchenette. All will require a number of new window rooflight and door openings to be created.

4.4 Rather surprisingly, given that some works were done to the building in the late 1990s, the external elevations will undergo total replacement of external doors, windows, soffits, fascias and rainwater goods. Furthermore, it will be partly clad with larch boarding to match the new lodges and rendered with a white finish. Other changes are replacement decorative ridge tiles with simpler items and bay windows roofing replaced with balconies with glass balustrading.

4.5 Whether the existing building needs to be made to match the lodges is debatable. There is an equally valid case for this two-storey building not to be rendered but rather retain its brickwork as a visual and historical reference to Mince Pie Hall and the derelict Woodseat building that JCB once was intended for preservation and conversion.

It is not clear if the render is to be part of a system to provide external insulation to Building Regulation standards. If the condition of the existing masonry does not necessitate rendering, then it might be painted as part of the making good after the insertion of new windows.

Whilst the timber cladding may be intended to echo that of the single storey lodges and golf academy, if not detailed well, it could well appear to be mere 'applique', not being traditional in what is obviously a C19th / 20th building with proportions and roof pitches of the period.