

December 2024

PLANNING
STATEMENT

CUSTOMER CAR PARK AT BOLSTER MOOR
FARM SHOP, BOLSTER MOOR ROAD, GOLCAR.

Ref: 2933

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement has been produced to support a retrospective planning application for an extension to the Customer Car Park at Bolster Moor Farm Shop, Bolster Moor Road, Golcar

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND AND SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 Bolster Moor Farm Shop has been trading for many years and is seen as a valuable asset to the local community, as well as providing valuable jobs.
- 2.2 In 2011 a café was a valuable addition to the business serving drinks and light snacks initially to around 40/50 customers per day, but as its popularity rose, this quickly increase to around 150 customers a day which put pressure on the kitchen and dining area and waiting time for customers grew to unacceptable levels.
- 2.3 In 2014 a planning application was submitted and approved for an extension to the café, which provided additional seating and W.C. along with a larger kitchen and storage area. Popularity for the farm shop and café has continued to grow resulting in a further planning application for an extension to the tearoom that was approved in March 2023.
- 2.4 Whilst the site is within the Green Belt and planning officers determined that the proposals would comprise inappropriate development in the Green Belt, the Council concluded the proposed development would enable the sustainable growth and expansion of a business in a rural area, which they concluded does comprise the Very Special Circumstances that allowed the extension to be approved.
- 2.5 The popularity of the farm shop and café has continued to grow to such an extent that the farm shop and café can attract over 1,000 visitors in a day. Recent surveys show that just under 1,500 people visited the shop and café on Saturday 30th November 2024.
- 2.6 The number of visitors has resulted in additional car parking in the area, with the existing car park not being sufficient to serve the number of visitors. In 2023 the farm shop introduced an additional area for parking to reduce on street parking in the area. The applicant was unaware that the additional parking required planning permission, but after being contacted by the Council, the applicant pursued a short-term solution in securing a Certificate of Lawful Development for the temporary use of the site for a car park.
- 2.7 This application now seeks to regularise the use of the land as a car park.

SECTION 3: APPRAISAL

- 3.1 The site is within the Green Belt, where development is considered inappropriate, however paragraph 153 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that *“Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances”* The NPPF then continues *“Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations”*
- 3.2 As explained above the farm shop and café benefit from planning permission for the reason that on balance the benefits of the sustainable growth and expansion of the business outweigh the impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 3.3 Whilst the business has lawfully extended and diversified over the last 15 years, resulting in an increase in the number of visitors to the farm shop, the on-site parking has remained the same.
- 3.4 Accompanying this planning application is a Technical Note prepared by Paragon Highways. The note includes details of a car parking survey carried out on Friday and Saturday 29th and 30th November. The survey showed that on both days there are times around lunchtime that less than 5 of the 89 on site spaces are available, with cars queueing in and around the car park looking for available space. The survey results also show that many of the customers use on-street parking around the area, but the high level of demand means that on-street parking is also scarce.
- 3.5 As set out in the attached Technical Note, the on-street parking affects the traffic flows in the area. There are the further dangers caused by cars driving slowly looking for parking spaces, with reduced concentration focusing on other hazards. The on-street parking increases risk to safety for pedestrians in the area, with visibility splayed affected by parked cars, and queuing traffic accessing the car park.
- 3.6 Other uses in the area, notably the children’s day nurse to the east of the site, also generate demand for parking, and with parents collecting young children throughout the day, the on-street parking situation creates a dangerous environment for both pedestrians and vehicles.
- 3.7 The Technical Note prepared by Paragon Highways concludes that *“by releasing more parking spaces off street and significantly reducing parking demands on Bolster Moor Road and Slades Road, the proposals would reduce the likelihood of indiscriminate car parking on the local highway network and improving road safety especially for pedestrians crossing the*

- road to access the adjacent nursery. The proposals are therefore considered to be acceptable from a highway safety point of view and would provide a significant road safety benefit for visitors and staff at the site along with all road users travelling along Bolster Moor Road and Slades Road.”*
- 3.8 We believe that the proposed development and the benefits in Highway Safety terms comprise Very Special Circumstances. The NPPF explains that *‘Very Special Circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm of the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations’*
- 3.9 The main consideration to weigh against the improvements to highway safety is the impact on the openness of the Green Belt. In this situation the proposed development comprises a flat car park. There are materials that can be used that can reduce the perception of built development, however the main impact on the openness is created by the cars parking there.
- 3.10 The first point to note is that the impact on the openness created by the parked cars is only temporary and at quieter times of days and when the business is closed there is not impact created by parked cars.
- 3.11 It should also be noted that the car park itself does not increase the cars in the area. It simply regularises their parking in a safe and formal matter. Without the car park, the same cars will park along the highway, which is still in Green Belt, in a linear fashion. The visual impact from the cars parking in the road is far greater than the visual impact from the cars parking in a neat and controlled fashion in a car park, whereby the layout of the car park, means many of the cars will be screened by adjacent parked cars.
- 3.12 We therefore believe that the proposed car park will reduce the impact on the openness of the Green Belt created by the parked cars in the area.
- 3.13 Notwithstanding the above the benefits and improvements to highway safety outweigh any perceived harm created by the proposed car park.

SECTION 4: CONCLUSION

- 4.1 This planning application seeks to regularise the additional car park at Bolster Moor Farm Shop. The demand for parking created by the attraction of the farm shop and café has resulted in a significant increase in the levels of on-street parking in the area, which creates a risk to highway safety.
- 4.2 The proposed development will reduce the number of cars parked on the road and will have a positive impact on Highway Safety which we believe comprises very special circumstances.

- 4.3 The proposed development will mean the cars can park in a regulated manner rather than in a line along the highway which should reduce the impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 4.4 We therefore believe that the proposed development accords with the National Planning Policy Framework.