

Report to Planning Committee

Application Number: 2025/0107

Appeal Ref: APP/N3020/W/25/3369300

Site Address: Abbey Quarry, Quarry Lane, Linby, Nottingham NG15 8GA

Application description: Retrospective permission for installation of workshop building (Use Class B8).

Case Officer: Amy Schofield

The planning application was refused permission on the 25th April 2025 for the reason outlined below:

1. The proposal has resulted in the construction of a new building in the Green Belt and fails to provide convincing evidence that it accords with any of the identified exceptions of development. It would therefore constitute inappropriate development which would be by its definition [be] harmful to the openness of the Green Belt and which should be given substantial weight in the determination of this application. It has not been demonstrated that very special circumstances exist for this proposal to outweigh such harm. As such, the proposal fails to accord with the NPPF and Policy 3 (The Green Belt) of the Aligned Core Strategy.

The proposal is a former quarry site within the Green Belt, primary used for domestic recreation and in association with a certification for five pitches from the Caravan and Motorhome Club (CMC). The proposal is for a large utilitarian workshop sited close to the site's boundary with Quarry Lane.

Main Issues

1. Whether the proposal was inappropriate development in the Green Belt

It was common ground that none of the exceptions which might otherwise allow for development in the Green Belt had been met and that consequently the building amounted to inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which by definition is harmful.

2. The effect of the proposal on the Green Belt

The Inspector agreed that the building had introduced a significant built form into an area previously free of structures, consequently that the bulk and mass of the building is detrimental to the openness of the Green Belt in spatial terms. They acknowledged that limited scope for public views of the building limited the perception of reduced openness in visual terms but that this nevertheless did not alter the spatial impact. The Inspector also noted that the effect of a proposal on the openness in the Green Belt is not a relative concept dependent on the overall size of the Green Belt. The Inspector concluded that, in addition to be deemed to be inappropriate development, there is an adverse effect on openness of the Green Belt as a result of the building.

3. Whether any harm was clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances required to justify the proposal

The Applicants attested that the building was essential storage for equipment necessary to maintain the site. However, the Inspector noted a duplication of function between this use and that already granted for a boathouse and storage structure in 2016, now built out on site. The Inspector also found that the type and capabilities of the machines stored seemed to be considerably more extensive and diverse than the list of maintenance operations required to maintain the site, as set out by the Appellant. Given no site changes since 2016 the Inspector concluded that it was unclear why the storage provided by the Boathouse should now be considered inadequate.

The Inspector also noted the Appellant's statement that the machinery was required for maintain the CMC use but noted that while this certification has resulted in a change of use on the site which does not require planning permission, this does not justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt and that if additional storage areas were needed to facilitate the change of use, this should have been taken into account and the necessary permissions sought beforehand.

The Inspector considered the Appellant's argument that the machinery is used for works in the local area and for maintaining the lane, but noted neither evidence of firm agreements with other parties in this regard nor that storing machinery on site would be the only option to maintain an unadopted lane. The Inspector also noted the inconsistency that the building was described as being used to carry out works for the Parish Council but that they had objected to the proposal.

In response to the argument put forward that the machinery is required to protect and enhance wildlife the Inspector found that there was no evidence to indicate that maintenance operations on the site are compatible with, or key to, maintaining the integrity of that Local Wildlife Site designation or that a building of this size would, in any event, be consequentially required.

In conclusion the Inspector found insufficient evidence to conclude that the machinery listed is needed solely for maintenance of the site, and consequently, that such a large storage area is essential for the site's ongoing maintenance. The Inspector attached only minor weight to other possible linked social or community benefits.

Inspector conclusions

- That the building comprised inappropriate development in the Green Belt
- That the building had a moderate harm to the openness of the Green Belt
- That there is insufficient evidence to conclude very special circumstances exist to justify the harm.

The appeal was dismissed.

The case now lies with this Council's Enforcement Officer.

Recommendation: To note the information.