

## **BOLTON METRO**

### **ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**

#### **PLANNING CONTROL POLICY NOTE No 15**

##### **The Conversion of Traditional Buildings in the Countryside**

### **Introduction**

1. A significant area of the Borough lies within the Green 'Belt'. The Green Belt has been successful around Bolton in fulfilling its primary purposes of safeguarding the countryside from further encroachment, preventing towns from merging together, checking the sprawl of built-up areas, preserving the character of historic towns and assisting in urban regeneration. However, the Green Belt contains a significant number of redundant buildings which, in certain circumstances, may be suitable for conversion or re-use.
2. This Planning Control Policy Note offers advice and guidance to developers and applicants wishing to convert redundant buildings located within the Green Belt.

### **Policy**

3. The Government's Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (PPG 2) contains advice about the diversification of the rural economy. In paragraph 16 it states:
4. Green Belts contain a large number of substantial and attractive agricultural buildings which, with normal repair and maintenance, can be expected to last for many years. When these are no longer needed for farming, the planning Authority will need to consider whether they might be appropriately re-used for other purposes which help to diversify the rural economy. Redundant agricultural buildings can provide suitable accommodation for small firms or tourist activities or can be used as individual residences. The re-use of redundant buildings should not be refused unless there are specific and convincing reasons which cannot be overcome by attaching conditions to the planning permission.
5. Policy CE10 of the Council's Unitary Development Plan states:

**The Council will maintain a Green Belt, the main purposes of which will be to check the unrestricted sprawl of large, built-up areas; to safeguard the surrounding countryside from further encroachment; to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; to preserve the special character of historic towns; and to assist in urban regeneration.**

6. The Green Belt around Bolton has been successful in fulfilling its primary purposes which are set down in this policy. There is still sufficient land outside the Green Belt to accommodate anticipated development until well beyond 2001.

7. Policy CE1 I states:

**The Council will not normally allow development within the Green Belt, unless it is clearly needed for agriculture, forestry or other uses appropriate to a rural area and does not prejudice the purposes and visual amenities of the Green Belt by reason of its scale, design and siting.**

8. This policy gives effect to policy CE10 by stating how the Council will react to proposals for development within the Green Belt. The effect of the Policy is to ensure that the Green Belt will generally be kept open, and certainly protected from inappropriate development. Policy CE11/1 list the limited circumstances in which development could be acceptable.

9. Policy CE11/1 states:

**The Council will not allow development within the Green Belt unless it falls within one or more of the following categories:**

**(a) development in connection with an outdoor recreation facility; together with ancillary buildings required in connection with that facility;**

**(b) development in connection with cemeteries or institutions requiring large grounds;**

**(c) development for mineral extraction in accordance with the policies for minerals;**

**(d) small scale business industrial or warehouse development in existing industrial estates;**

**(e) changes of use of existing redundant buildings which possess architectural or historical merits;**

**(k) limited infilling in settlements or ribbon developments that are within the green belt where it is in scale with the area and will not adversely affect its character or surroundings.**

10. Development in any of the above categories will be acceptable only if it does not prejudice the purposes and the visual amenities of the Green Belt by nature of its scale, design and siting.

11. This policy recognises that certain developments can be accommodated in the Green Belt without prejudicing the primary purposes.

## **Advice**

### **General**

12. The building in question should be genuinely redundant. This policy note relates solely to redundant buildings which are no longer in use and is not concerned with planning applications for the conversion of buildings which are still in beneficial use.

### **New development**

13. Proposals for the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt (except those defined as acceptable in Policy CE11/1 of the UDP) will normally be refused regardless of whether they include an element of the re-use of redundant buildings. This requirement is to ensure that the purposes of the Green Belt are not prejudiced.

### **Extensions to existing buildings**

14. The Council will not normally permit proposals which include the extension of existing buildings. Any new development conflicts with Green Belt policy and will be judged against this.

### **Building suitability: appearance**

15. Only buildings possessing attributes of architectural, visual or historical importance will be acceptable for & change of use. In addition, they must also have substantially retained their original character and appearance. Buildings which are unsightly, especially those not built of traditional materials, will be unlikely to gain approval for re- use.
16. Proposals which significantly change the visual character of the building will not normally be permitted.
17. The proposed change of use must be acceptable under category (h) of the UDP policy CE11/1.

### **Building suitability: condition**

18. The Council will require applicants to provide a structural survey of the building to ensure that the building is suitable for the proposed use and that major reconstruction works are not necessary.
19. Proposals which require extensive rebuilding works, rather than renovation schemes, will not be permitted.
20. The Council will not normally permit amendments to the approved scheme resulting from a failure to adequately safeguard the fabric of the building.

### **Conversion and renovation of buildings**

21. Proposals for the re-use of redundant buildings in the Green Belt may require alterations to the buildings. Significant alteration to the building's external appearance, especially that which detracts from its rural character will not be permitted. Changes, leading to proposals for such features as dormer windows, considerable additional fenestration and doors, and new extensions will not normally be permitted.
22. Planning applications for a conversion or change of use should always include full details of the proposed layout, external appearance, materials and landscaping, together with parking provision.

23. Buildings in sound structural condition will not normally require extensive external renovation. However, any renovation works which are necessary will be required to conform with the existing appearance of the building.
24. Any required building works must use existing materials on site, or if these are unavailable, then traditional materials which are of no difference in terms of colour, texture and size from those of the existing building should be used.
25. Applicants will normally be required to prove to the Council that their proposals are structurally practicable. Any existing architectural features of the building should be reflected or protected in the proposals.

### **Curtilages and access**

26. The conversion of buildings in the Green Belt and their re-use may conflict with the primary purposes of the Green Belt through the treatment of access arrangements and development within the curtilage.
27. The characteristic setting of buildings in open countryside can easily be damaged by development within the curtilage of the building. In particular, the development of garages, sheds and outbuildings can spoil the landscape. The Council will expect that full use be made of existing buildings on site to provide ancillary accommodation such as garaging facilities. The Council will normally include conditions restricting permitted development rights in granting planning consent.
28. A high standard of design will be required at all times to ensure that the essential elements of the building's original character and setting are retained and adequately preserved and incorporated into any proposed development.

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