

STAPLEGROVE SPORTS CLUB PROPERTY TRUSTEES

CONSTRUCTION OF PARKING AREA, ERECTION OF EXTENSION TO EQUIPMENT STORE AND ERECTION OF 2 NO. MANAGERS/SUBSTITUTES DUG OUTS ADJACENT TO FOOTBALL PITCH AT STAPLEGROVE SPORTS CLUB, MANOR ROAD, STAPLEGROVE

Grid Reference: 321524.126712

Full Planning Permission

RECOMMENDATION AND REASON(S)

Recommended Decision: Conditional Approval

The proposed development would not cause a significant increase in likely disturbance to neighbouring residents above and beyond the existing situation and would not cause harm to the visual amenities of the area nor highway safety. It, therefore, accords with Policies DM1 (General Requirements) and CP8 (Environment) of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy.

RECOMMENDED CONDITION(S) (if applicable)

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

(A4) Floor Plans & Elevations Equipment Store Extension
(A4) Floor Plan Existing Equipment Store
(A4) 3D View and Elevations Manager's and Substitute's Shelter
(A4) Proposed Car Park Layout
(A4) Location Plan
(A4) Property Boundary
(A4) Proposed Car Park with Manager's and Sub Shelters

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. (i) Prior to its implementation, a landscaping scheme, which shall include details of the species, siting and numbers to be planted, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

- (ii) The scheme shall be completely carried out within the first available planting season from the date of commencement of the development, or as otherwise extended with the agreement in writing of the Local Planning Authority.
- (iii) For a period of five years after the completion of each landscaping scheme, the trees and shrubs shall be protected and maintained in a healthy weed free condition and any trees or shrubs that cease to grow shall be replaced by trees or shrubs of similar size and species, or the appropriate trees or shrubs as may be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development does not harm the character and appearance of the area in accordance with Policy DM1 of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy.

- 4. Before the parking area hereby permitted is first brought into use, full details of the treatment of the western and southern boundaries shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details either prior to the car park being brought into use in the case of a solid boundary or in accordance with condition 3 in the case of a planted boundary.

Reason: To protect the amenities of the neighbouring residents, in accordance with Policy DM1 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan.

- 5. The block walls to the equipment store and dug outs hereby permitted shall be painted before they are brought into use and shall thereafter be maintained as such.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area, in accordance with Policy DM1 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan.

- 6. The car parking area hereby permitted shall not extend further north than a line drawn east from a point adjacent to the boundary between numbers 6 and 8 Lawn Road at the point where it meets the site boundary.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

- 7. The car park and access drive hereby permitted shall be permeable or provision shall be made to dispose of surface water within the site prior to the car park being brought into use in accordance with details that shall previously have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To prevent any increase in off site flooding in accordance with Policy CP8 of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy.

PROPOSAL

This application seeks full planning permission for the construction of a parking area, erection of extension to equipment store and erection of two pitch-side dug outs. The application has arisen following the club's first team's acceptance into the County League and the need for a longer playing pitch to comply with the League's rules. As a consequence, the club has decided to re-orientate the football pitch through 90 degrees, which in itself is not considered to require planning permission. However, this encroaches onto the existing car park, which it is proposed to be relocated along the western site boundary. A new access drive would be constructed along the southern boundary, necessitating the removal of a number of trees (which has already occurred) and the car park laid along the western side of the club's grounds up to a point level with the boundary between numbers 6 and 8 Lawn Road.

The two dug outs would be simple block built buildings, with partially open front and sides and a clear corrugated PVC roof. The proposed store extension would also be constructed in painted block and would extend off the rear side of the existing building on the ground's northeast side.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

The site is the grounds of Staplegrove Sports Club, a privately run club hosting a cricket and football pitch club house, equipment store building and car park. The club house and car park are located along the southern side of the grounds, with the football pitch laid out in the west part of the site and cricket pitch to the east. Existing residential properties border the site on the southwestern and western sides, with a further dwelling off the southeastern corner.

There is no relevant planning history for this site.

CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION RESPONSES

Consultees

SCC - TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT GROUP – The proposal would not appear likely to result in an increase in vehicle movements to the site, nor would it have a detrimental effect on the existing highway network there is no objection to this proposal from the Highway Authority.

STAPLEGROVE PARISH COUNCIL – OBJECTS for the following reasons:

We have had consultations with the club and local residents. We made a proposal for an alternative scheme which would involve creating a car park on the opposite side of the field but this was decided inappropriate and unworkable.

We are pleased at the success of the club and do not wish to stand in the way of progress, but we are inclined to support the objections raised by the local residents who will be adversely affected by the new car park. For these reasons we would prefer this planning application to be heard by the Planning Committee.

Should planning permission be given, it would be beneficial to restrict the number of vehicles.

Representations

Cllr. Weymouth: "I wish to register my support for the above application to be put before the Planning Committee and not decided by delegated powers. Neighbour Mr Chris Garcia has registered his objections to the present plans and is, I believe, supported by Staplegrove Parish Council and his neighbours in Lawn Road Staplegrove. Mr Bale has been also sent a letter by Mr Garcia's Planning Consultants C2C of Exeter which sets out his objections, however, Mr Garcia has stated he is supportive of the Club and hopes a satisfactory negotiation regarding the size of the parking area, the maximum number of days additional parking is allowed and boundary fence/hedge can be reached. I am told 6 objections have now registered so I presume this covers the requirements set down by Taunton Deane".

1 letter of SUPPORT raising the following points:

- This will provide better facilities for a community sporting activity and the proposed wall at the boundary of the neighbouring property will help avoid further flooding to the dwelling. Cannot see that the plan would have a negative impact on the village or neighbouring property.

6 letters of CONCERN/OBJECTION raising the following points:

- The proposed new car park increases spaces in excess of 60%. A small village club does not need such a large facility.
- The car park surface will cause noise and disturbance to neighbouring properties. The size of the car park gives a good indication of the amount of traffic likely to be attracted.
- Noise disruption goes beyond cars entering and leaving the car park. During matches – especially in colder weather, spectators often sit in their cars with radios playing and engines running.
- Concern about increase in traffic.
- In the cricket season, use of the club house can continue for many hours causing comings and goings to continue until quite late, immediately adjacent to Lawn Road houses if the new car park is sited as proposed.
- There are discrepancies in the plans as to the length of the proposed car park.
- The club has mentioned that on busy days overspill parking will be permitted onto the grassed area beyond the proposed formal car park – it is not clear whether this will be a formal change of use.

- 6 Lawn Road has ground and first floor windows overlooking the proposed car park and is the closest to it. It's rear garden is somewhat shorter and the rear facade is some 10m away from the proposed car park.
- Spectators, and associated noise will be brought closer to neighbouring properties by the pitch re-orientation.
- Cars leaving late at night will shine lights directly into the rear windows of 6 Lawn Road. If fence panels are hit and broken by cars, the exhaust fumes will permeate the garden.
- The parking area will be much more visible from the site entrance and will be much more of an urban intrusion than its location along the southern boundary, particularly as advertising hoardings may be located along the proposed railings.
- The blockwork managers and substitute shelters are not becoming to the existing village/rural pitch character.
- The creation of the driveway will require the loss of trees within the site, leading to a loss of rural amenity. There is no commitment to their replacement, nor any indication of the relocation of the ball catch net to the southern boundary.
- The increased car park will lead to an increase in traffic. No alterations are proposed to the access and no passing places are proposed along the length of drive to the car park. There is also minimal width for pedestrians to walk.
- It is queried whether there sufficient distance has been left on the southern touch line to allow for players to come to a controlled stop safely without encountering the rail or vehicles on the drive.
- It is unclear whether the drains have capacity to take the additional water runoff in this location. If not, this will increase the risk of flooding to the adjoining residential properties.
- Adequate drainage must be installed during the construction of the car park in order for flood risk to be minimised.
- The County League rules reference arrangements in respect of turnstiles and floodlighting along with provision to a special fund to allow improvements to grounds and facilities. There is a concern that these initial changes would incrementally increase over time.

Other letters have been received from neighbouring properties drawing attention to inaccuracies in a rebuttal statement made by the club.

PLANNING POLICIES

DM1 - TD CORE STRATEGY - GENERAL REQUIREMENTS,
CP8 - CP 8 ENVIRONMENT,

LOCAL FINANCE CONSIDERATIONS

None.

DETERMINING ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

The main issues in the determination of this application are the impact on neighbouring property and visual amenity. Whilst the existing car park is bigger than that existing, it is considered unlikely to result in a significant increase in vehicles attracted to the site – people do not normally choose whether or not visit a sports club such as this due to the capacity of its car park. It is, therefore, considered that the impact on the highway network would be negligible, in accordance with the Highway Authority's consultation response.

Neighbouring property

The relocation of the car park will bring the parking area closer to adjoining residential properties 4-8 Lawn Road, off the western site boundary. It is not considered that physical presence of the car park itself would have a detrimental impact on the amenities of these neighbours, but concerns have been raised from two of these adjoining properties about the potential for increased disturbance arising from its use.

It is considered that noise will be created from vehicles manoeuvring on the proposed gravel surface and it cannot be denied that some disturbance is likely. However, movement within the car park is likely to be concentrated to relatively short periods of time, mainly before and after matches or training sessions and it would be unlikely to create significant ongoing disturbance. Therefore, it is not considered that the noise from vehicles on the gravel surface would be sufficient to warrant refusal of the application.

It has also been suggested that there may be disturbance from people watching matches from within their cars, possibly leaving the engines running and listening to the radio. Whilst such behaviour is denied by the club, it is feasible that it may occur. It may also occur in relation to cricket matches and the club's representative for the current application is responsible only for football. That said, on cold days when engines would most likely be run for heat, neighbouring residents are less likely to be in their gardens for prolonged periods of time, so disturbance sufficient to warrant a refusal of permission is again unlikely. Noise from radios and indeed engines would also mainly be present at times when matches were in play and it seems likely that there would be a general increase in noise at these times in any case, as there would be at the present time. Most people would be shouting towards the pitch and away from the neighbouring properties, whereas in the current situation, they may well shout towards the dwellings, albeit that the disturbance from car engines and radios would be further away in the current situation. Concern has also been raised about late night leavers causing disturbance close to the boundaries with these properties and car head lights shining into bedroom windows. Again, this is considered to be relatively infrequent and not a continuous disturbance. New boundary fencing is proposed and this will limit disturbance to ground floor windows and reduce light from headlights falling onto first floor windows. It has been suggested by the club that one of the neighbouring residents may prefer a hedge, so a condition is recommended to agree the final boundary treatment and secure its implementation.

It should also be noted, that if permission were denied for the new car park, the club could still re-orientate the pitch and allow parking on the grass in this location without planning permission – such being an ancillary activity to the overall use of the sports club. Interestingly, the occupiers of 6 Lawn Road have commented in a subsequent

representation that their objections would be significantly reduced if the overall size of car parking area were reduced to the current size and simply relocated. However, for the reasons noted above, the additional size of car park proposed is not considered likely to result in significant additional traffic in itself.

The re-planning of the site will bring new activities closer to the boundaries with the neighbouring properties, yet will take other activities further away. With regard to the considerations expressed above, it is not considered that the change in the location of the activities – all of which go on in parts of the site at the present time – would give rise to such an increase in disturbance to the neighbouring properties as to warrant refusal of permission. If persistent noise disturbance does become a problem, then the appropriate recourse would be through environmental health legislation.

Visual amenity

The car park would be a ground level development on land which is generally higher than the public highway at the site entrance – which offers the only public views into the site. The increase in parking area in the west would also be compensated by a return to grass in the southern part of the site. It is not, considered, therefore, that it would detract from the visual amenities of the area.

The loss of trees along the southern boundary is regrettable, but they were not afforded protection by Tree Preservation Orders and the like. The club has confirmed a willingness to carry out some replacement planting and it is considered that a landscaping condition should be incorporated on any grant of planning permission.

In the context of a small sports club, the external painted blockwork finish to the dug outs and equipment store (which would be sited away from public view) is acceptable and would not cause harm to the visual amenities of the area.

Other matters

Some concerns have been raised regarding a potential increase in flood risk. However, the club intends to carry out repairs to an existing drainage ditch on the northern side of the site, which would drain to a soakaway, whilst the proposed car park surfacing would be permeable. It is not considered, therefore, that there would be a significant increase in flood risk arising from the proposed development.

Concerns have been raised about the accuracy of the plans and a conflict between the block plan and Ordnance Survey location plan. The club has subsequently confirmed that the car park area would terminate at a northern point level with the boundary between no's 6 and 8 Lawn Road and this intention is considered to be clearly shown on the location plan. A condition is recommended to ensure that this is the case.

Neighbouring residents have recommended imposing a limit on the number of parking places. However, this would be undesirable for two reasons – firstly, that the capacity of the existing car park is not clearly defined and it would be difficult to decide on a suitable number; secondly, that as in the existing situation, overspill

parking could occur off the formal surface and onto the surrounding grass. Such a condition is, therefore, rather pointless. As mentioned at the head of these determining issues and considerations, it is not considered that the provision of a larger car park is likely to result in an increase in traffic attracted to the site, it would simply better manage that which would be attracted anyway.

The proposed access drive at around 4m wide may not be ideal for two way traffic. However, it is considered that the access is wide enough at the site entrance to prevent vehicles backing up onto the highway whilst other vehicles exit. In any case, it seems likely that the majority of traffic would be flowing in the same direction at any given time – into the site before matches/training sessions, and out at the end. The Highway Authority have not raised any objection and, therefore, this is more an issue for the club to manage internally within their site.

Conclusions

It is not considered that the proposals would lead to additional disturbance to neighbouring property to such a degree that would warrant the refusal of planning permission. The proposals would not harm the visual amenities of the area and would not give rise to additional highway safety problems. It is, therefore, considered that the proposals are acceptable and it is recommended that planning permission is granted.

In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

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