

20/13/0024

MS K HOWARD

ERECTION OF TIMBER FOREST CLASSROOM, FORMATION OF CAR PARK AND AN ASTRO TURF PLAY AREA AT THE GRANGE, KINGSTON ROAD, KINGSTON ST MARY

Grid Reference: 322241.129473

Full Planning Permission

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RECOMMENDATION AND REASON(S)

Recommended Decision: Conditional Approval

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:

(A1) DrNo 1801.001 Rev A Appraisal and Landscape Plan

(A1) DrNo A-02 Rev A Scheme Proposals

(A3) DrNo A-03 Block Plan

(A4) DrNo 3434 Location Plan

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

3. Prior to the parking area hereby permitted being brought into use, the cycle rack facility capable of accommodating up to 14 cycles shall have been repositioned within the site, in accordance with details, which shall have been submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The cycle shelter shall thereafter remain available and not be used for any purpose, other than for the storage of cycles in connection with the development hereby permitted.

Reason: To provide for the parking and storage of bicycles, in order to promote sustainable travel.

4. The area allocated for parking and turning on the submitted plan, drawing

number A-02 rev A, shall be kept clear of obstruction and shall not be used other than for parking and turning of vehicles in connection with the development hereby permitted.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

5. The proposed protective fencing shall be erected prior to commencement of any other site operations and at least two working days notice shall be given to the Local Planning Authority that it has been erected. It shall be undertaken in accordance with the notes stipulated on Drawing 1801.001 Rev A.

Reason: To ensure the enhancement of the development by the retention of existing trees and natural features during the construction phase in accordance with Taunton Deane Core Strategy Policy CP8.

Notes to Applicant

1. In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework the Council has worked in a positive and pro-active way and has imposed planning conditions to enable the grant of planning permission.

PROPOSAL

The Grange is a substantial stone C19 Grade II listed building with a part plain clay tile/part artificial slate roof, within the Conservation Area and Area of High Archaeological Potential of Kingston St Mary. The site fronts the main road running through Kingston St Mary and to the north and east are residential properties.

The property occupies a large site with an area of hardstanding for parking, extensive gardens and there are protected trees close to the boundary with the road. Two large two storey annexe buildings lie within the curtilage of The Grange and fronting the road is a low wall and black metal railings.

Planning permission was granted in January 2012 for the change of use of the site to a C2 education facility with boarding accommodation for use by Taunton School. This application now seeks planning permission for the erection of a forest classroom, an octagonal timber building set amongst the trees to the east of the main house; an extension to the car parking area, which would provide an additional 8 car parking spaces to the rear of annex 2; and an astro turf all weather playing surface (11m x 22.1m) to the south-west of the main building.

During the processing of the application the query was raised with the agent as to whether any mitigation could be proposed to overcome the concerns raised regarding noise. The agent confirmed that no mitigation is proposed.

CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION RESPONSES

Consultees

KINGSTON ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL - Support subject to measures being taken to mitigate the noise to neighbouring properties.

In light of there being no mitigation proposed, the Parish Council have confirmed that there are some concerns regarding noise and disturbance to local residents.

SCC - TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT GROUP - The development seeks the construction of an astro turf play area, formation of additional vehicle parking area and erection of a classroom. A specific use of the site being used in connection with Taunton School for boarding accommodation for students, it is considered that there will be no significant increase in traffic.

The site is located along Kingston Road a designated classified unnumbered section of highway to which a 30mph speed limit applies. It was observed whilst carrying out a site visit that vehicle speeds are lower than the allocated speed limit due to the traffic calming measures along this section of highway and the limited width of the carriageway.

As part of the development the site will see the inclusion of 8 additional vehicle parking spaces taking the total site provision to 20. The Highway Authority sees the provision of additional vehicle parking as betterment to the existing internal layout.

It is assumed that the proposed astro turf facility is to be used for the boarding residents of The Grange. Therefore, it is considered that the development proposes no additional vehicle movements. I would request that the astro turf facility is to be used only by the applicant. Finally, I do not consider that the proposed 'woodland' class room will result in any additional vehicle movements to and from the site. No objection, suggest conditions.

LANDSCAPE - Subject to implementation of scheme with tree protection as proposed, landscape and tree impacts should be acceptable.

HERITAGE - No objection.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH - NOISE & POLLUTION - No comments received

SCC - DEVELOPMENT CONTROL ARCHAEOLOGIST - Comments awaited at the time of writing

Representations

Four letters received OBJECTING on the grounds of:

- Since school established suffered considerable noise nuisance from in excess of 40 young children and staff playing/sporting activities in the garden, shouting, screaming and cheering, often from 4.30 until 8.30pm each evening. Noise has forced occupiers of Cala to leave garden and go indoors/close windows and occupiers of Grange lodge have had to close windows in hot weather to get young children to sleep.

- Noise particularly disruptive and unreasonable during summer school, even intrusive when indoors with windows closed.
- Proposal to establish permanent play area would intensify use and increase opportunity for outdoor sport and activities throughout year, further creating disturbance which is already unbearable, would perpetuate a totally unacceptable noise hazard.
- At present noise thought to improve in winter months when too dark or ground wet but astro turf no doubt with lighting would exacerbate situation making conditions intolerable for immediate neighbours all year round.
- No attempt made to use land at western end of site where buildings would partly shield domestic premises from noise. Suggest swapping astro turf and parking area so noise masked by buildings.
- Originally told that sporting activities would take place at main Taunton School site. Lawn at the Grange is neither adequate or suitable for type of recreational use to which it is being put by number of students accommodated at the site. Consider play/sporting activities must be limited to Taunton School's own playing fields or Kingston Village Playing Field.

Two letters received in SUPPORT on the grounds of:

- Cannot see any reason why proposed play area will create additional noise. Play surface is located some distance from the road. Welcome increased provision for pupils that astro turf and forest school building will provide.
- Planned on site car parking will alleviate current pressure/strain on already inadequate off-road parking in centre of village that increased car population.
- Taunton School and headteacher have been a welcome addition to the village. Welcome extended to the community has been experienced by many members of village.
- Observed benefits to pupils of primary school from interaction with overseas students

Two letters received raising the following points:

- Do not see that the plans will result in increased noise levels, would concur with recommendation of parish council,
- Taunton International School (TIS) are anxious to work with the village and co-operate on this issue. They have made considerable effort to open their doors.
- TIS has already been beneficial to Kingston St Mary Primary School and staff are anxious to continue to be an active and positive part of our lives. Hopes of developing shared links/activities with Primary School and links with church developing positively. This brings considerable enrichment into Kingston Community, just as we hope to add enrichment to the TIS community.
- Car parking has been provided in church car park but there are times of considerable pressure, would help greatly if cars accommodated at The Grange.
- Hope for an outcome sensitive to local community cohesion and enable us to continue building on and benefitting from the relationships and activities we are already enjoying.

Letter received from Principal of Taunton International School raising the following points:

- The children who live at The Grange have all organised sport at Taunton School main campus and continue to do so.
- Application for multi-use surface to play on as lawn of The Grange is not suitable.

- Surface is for children to play on, not organised sport.
- No floodlighting as one person suggests.
 - Considered reasonable that young children at boarding school are allowed to play outside at what is their own home, as long as this does not go on too late in the evening.
 - Play only takes place until 8pm at latest, in summer light, this is not considered to be unreasonably late.
 - Surface on which they play does not affect the level of noise, so this will stay the same, regardless of whether the application is granted.
 - We have invited all those who find this unacceptable to visit us for negotiations/open dialogue on what is a reasonable time for children to stop playing and go inside, to minimise noise that people are experiencing. Prepared to be flexible.
 - Car parking proposed is a direct response to those in the village who do not wish staff to park on roads.

PLANNING POLICIES

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

DETERMINING ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

The proposed astro turf will lie alongside the existing parking area, separated by the hedge. It would be green in colour and will therefore appear similar in appearance to the existing grass and is not therefore considered to change the appearance of the site significantly or harm the setting of the adjacent listed building. The site is very well screened from public viewpoint with a high wall on the roadside boundary. The proposal would not therefore be viewed from outside of the site and would have no adverse impact on the conservation area. The astro turf has been located to take account of the adjacent trees and the landscape officer is satisfied that the proposal would not result in an adverse impact on the long term health of the trees.

The proposed parking area would continue the existing parking area to the rear of the annex building. It would therefore be closely related to the existing building and being a reinforced grass surface is not considered to harm the semi-rural appearance of the property or conservation area. Being located to the rear of the annex, it is well within the site, away from public viewpoint and is screened from the listed building. The provision of the additional car parking area will involve the removal of the cycle shelter, which was a condition of the earlier consent. It is stated that it is intended to reposition this within the site to suit the schools requirements and a condition has been attached to ensure that this occurs, in order to encourage sustainable modes of transport.

In terms of the timber forest classroom, this would lie well within the site, amongst the trees. This has again been carefully positioned and the landscape officer is satisfied that the proposal would not harm the adjacent trees, subject to the proposed tree protection. The proposed structure would be of timber construction and would therefore appear in keeping with the woodland environment. The structure would not be visible

from public viewpoint nor result in any adverse impact upon the character of the conservation area and is a sufficient distance from the listed building to avoid any impact upon it's setting.

The County Highways Authority raise no objection to the proposal and in fact regard the increased parking facilities as betterment to the site. A number of objections have been received regarding noise from children playing within the site. It is understood that sports lessons have taken place and will continue to take place at the main Taunton School Campus. The requirement for the astro turf area is for recreational purposes after school hours. This is currently taking place in the same area of the garden but in wet weather, is damaging the lawn. It is acknowledged that neighbours are experiencing noise and disturbance from the existing situation, i.e children playing in the school grounds after hours, which is an activity associated with the existing use of the site, for which planning permission has already been granted. It is pertinent to note that it is generally customary to regard issues associated with noise and disturbance emanating from pupils as a matter for the headteacher of the school.

The main issue for consideration is therefore whether the proposed astro turf would exacerbate the situation, to the detriment of the living conditions of the occupiers of nearby properties. The children and staff playing in the garden area will no doubt result in some noise. This is however already taking place in a similar area to that proposed for the astro turf, the astro turf would simply avoid damage to the lawn.

Concerns have been raised that the provision of astro turf would increase the use of the garden area. The use of the garden for recreational purposes, which does emit some noise, is highly likely to continue to take place, whether or not the astro turf is permitted. An objector raises concern that lighting will enable the pitch to be used beyond the times that the garden is currently used. It is however important to note that no lighting is proposed, the proposal is simply the laying of an alternative surface. As such, it is not considered that the hours of use of the astro pitch would be significantly beyond that of the current situation. On this basis, the proposed astro pitch is not deemed to result in a significant increase in noise and disturbance to the occupiers of neighbouring properties that would lead to material harm to their living conditions. Accordingly, it is considered that these matters cannot be given sufficient weight to justify the refusal of planning permission.

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

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