

Agenda Item 16.

Development Management Ref No	No weeks on day of committee	Parish	Ward	Listed by:
161123	8/8	Wokingham	Norreys	N/A

Applicant Wokingham Borough Council
Location Cantley Sports Centre, Cantley Park, Twyford **Postcode** RG40 5QG Road, Wokingham, Berkshire
Proposal Full application for proposed construction of 3 new tennis courts and pavilion including associated court lighting, fencing, car park and access
Type Full Application
PS Category Minor all other developments
Officer Alex Thwaites

FOR CONSIDERATION BY Planning Committee on 22 June 2016
REPORT PREPARED BY Head of Development Management and Regulatory Services

SUMMARY

The application site is located in Cantley Park, North Wokingham, adjoining the North Wokingham Strategic Development Location (SDL) and is used for recreation and leisure purposes. Cantley Park is set within twenty nine hectares of parkland off Twyford Road. The existing facilities on the site include full size and junior football pitches, a floodlit artificial pitch, nine tennis courts, a play area, events field, and ancillary buildings such as changing facilities and public toilets.

The application is to provide three new courts and a pavilion immediately adjacent to the existing nine tennis courts. With regard to the tennis courts, these are proposed to be new 31.7m x 34.75m double tennis courts located side by side with a porous macadam surface to meet the LTA (Lawn Tennis Association) Facility Guidance. A three metre high fence and court lighting will be provided. With regard to the proposed pavilion this is required for ancillary functions to the tennis courts, so the single storey modular structure will provide a player's club room, a manager's office and a disabled WC.

The application is proposed due to the recent submission and approval of the re-development of Elms Field in Wokingham town centre (application number 153125). Following the approval of the application the re-development will require the relocation of the existing low quality tennis courts and this application represents an acceptable mitigation through the improvement of facilities through the construction of higher quality, LTA standard, tennis courts (and netball court) and facilities.

PLANNING STATUS

- North Wokingham Strategic Development Location
- Countryside
- Public Open Space
- Ground Water
- 7km linear distance of the SPA (*Officer Note: this is not an issue in this case as the proposal does not involve residential development*).

RECOMMENDATION

That the committee authorise the GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following:

Conditions and Reasons

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

Reason: *In pursuance of s.91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by s.51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).*

2. This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings numbered 'External Floodlighting', '2714/BT/A101', '2714/BT/A102', '2714/BT/A103' and '2714/BT/A104' received by the local planning authority on 25/04/16. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: *For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.*

3. Before the development hereby permitted is commenced, samples and details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building/s shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the so-approved details.

Reason: *To ensure that the external appearance of the building is satisfactory.*
Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3

4. Before the development hereby permitted is commenced details of all boundary treatment(s) and Tennis Court enclosure details shall first be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development or phased as agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be maintained in the approved form for so long as the development remains on the site.

Reason: *In the interests of amenity and safety.*
Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP6

5. The floodlighting hereby approved shall be designed and positioned so as to avoid the direct illumination of houses in the vicinity, with no more than 10 lux horizontal overspill at a distance 55m south of the proposed site.

Reason: *In the interests of visual amenity.* *Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP6*

6. The floodlights hereby permitted shall not operate other than between the hours of 08:00 to 22:00.

Reason: *In the interests of visual amenity.* *Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP6*

7. Prior to the commencement of the development, full details of both hard and soft landscape proposals shall be agreed in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include, as appropriate, proposed finished floor levels or contours, means of enclosure, car parking layouts, other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas, hard surfacing materials and minor artefacts and

structure (e.g. furniture, play equipment, refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting, external services, etc). Soft landscaping details shall include planting plan, specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, and implementation timetable.

All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a timetable approved in writing by the local planning authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years after planting, are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of species, size and number as originally approved and permanently retained.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21 (and TB06 for garden development)

8. a) No development or other operation shall commence on site until an Arboricultural Method Statement and Scheme of Works which provides for the retention and protection of trees, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent to the site in accordance with BS5837: 2012 has been agreed in writing by the local planning authority. No development or other operations shall take place except in complete accordance with the details as so-approved (hereinafter referred to as the Approved Scheme).

b) No operations shall commence on site in connection with development hereby approved (including any tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) until the tree protection works required by the Approved Scheme are in place on site.

c) No excavations for services, storage of materials or machinery, parking of vehicles, deposit or excavation of soil or rubble, lighting of fires or disposal of liquids shall take place within an area designated as being fenced off or otherwise protected in the Approved Scheme.

d) The fencing or other works which are part of the Approved Scheme shall not be moved or removed, temporarily or otherwise, until all works including external works have been completed and all equipment, machinery and surplus materials removed from the site, unless the prior approval in writing of the local planning authority has first been sought and obtained.

Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that the development is being carried out of trees shrubs or hedges growing within or adjacent to the site which are of amenity value to the area, and to allow for verification by the local planning authority that the necessary measures are in place before development and other works commence Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and [Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21

PLANNING HISTORY

05467

28/10/1976 – planning permission granted for the change of use of land to public playing fields.

Following subsequent applications for changing facilities, tennis

F/2007/2722	courts, all weather football and hockey pitches, ancillary facilities including storage and floodlighting of the tennis courts. Improvements to pedestrian access, provision for car parking overspill facility and siting of a football pitch with stand and floodlighting facilities.
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SUMMARY INFORMATION

Site Area	0.96
Previous land use(s) and floorspace(s)	Sport and recreation
Proposed floorspace of each use(s)	35 square metres of internal floorspace proposed as plus three 31.7m x 34.75m double tennis courts
Existing parking spaces	38 standard plus 1 disabled

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WBC Landscape and Trees	No objection in principle but recommend some additional planting
WBC Environmental Health	No Comment
WBC Biodiversity Officer	No objection subject to the lighting strategy being implemented
WBC Highways Officer	No objection
WBC Parks, Open Space and Green Issues	No Comment
WBC Property Services	No Comment
WBC Sports Development (Places and Neighbourhoods)	No Comment
Sports England	No objection
Wokingham Town Council	No objection providing the current hours of operation of court lighting are not exceeded.
Wokingham Society Planning Officer	No objection: however comments raised on a discrepancy between plans and design and access statement. Also comments regarding the existing wildflower planting area (<i>Officer note: the discrepancy was regarding the design of the proposed pavilion, confirmation that the proposal included pitched roof was received from the applicant</i>).

REPRESENTATIONS

Local Residents:
 One letter of objection with comments regarding:

- Use of the pavilion (*Officer note: the pavilion will be operated by a Tennis Operator which will be out to tender if permission is approved*)
- Floodlighting and relationship with All Saints Close (*Officer note: the proposal includes a lighting scheme which has been considered*)
- Loss of 'Kick about' goal posts (*Officer note: these will be relocated for continued use*)
- Need for the courts? (*Officer note: the proposal has been submitted by Wokingham Borough Council following the loss of tennis courts following the approval of the redevelopment of Elms Field in the town centre*)

Two letters received with comments regarding:

- Elms Field had four tennis courts but the proposal is for three (*Officer note: the tennis courts and facilities at Elms Field were considered to be substandard by Sports England (that was in WBC control so don't mention removal of nets), and the proposed three new courts (including netball court) and improved facilities are proposed to be LTA standard and of a much higher quality*)
- How will the Tennis Courts be controlled / be accessed? (*Officer note: the proposal includes parking, a club house with a manager's office and pathways to all courts*)
- Are new courts provided? (*Officer note: a net increase of three new courts are proposed above the existing nine courts*).

Other non material comments;

- Unable to view plans / lack of information online. (*Officer note: while not a planning issue the plans are available on the internet for viewing and the all documents are public*)

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework 2012

South East Plan 2009

Saved policy NRM6 - Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

Wokingham Borough Core Strategy policies:

CP1 - Sustainable Development

CP2 - Inclusive Communities

CP3 - General Development Principles

CP4 - Infrastructure Requirements

CP6 - Managing Travel Demand

CP7 - Biodiversity

CP8 - Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

CP9 - Scale and Location of Development Proposals

CP10 - Improvements to the Strategic Transport Network

CP11 - Proposals outside Development Limits (including countryside)

CP20 – North Wokingham Strategic Development Location

Appendix 7 – Additional Guidance for the Development of Strategic Development Locations

Managing Development Delivery Document (Local Plan) (adopted February 2014)

CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC02 – Development Limits

CC03 - Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping

CC04 - Sustainable Design and Construction

CC05 - Renewable energy and decentralised energy networks

CC06 - Noise

CC07 - Parking

CC09 - Development and Flood Risk (from all sources)

CC10 - Sustainable Drainage

TB21 - Landscape Character
TB23 - Biodiversity and Development
SAL05 - Delivery of Avoidance Measures for the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Areas

Supplementary Planning Documents

North Wokingham Borough Council Strategic Development Location Supplementary Planning Document (October 2011)

The Council's parking standards as set out within appendix 2 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan and referred to in para 4.38 of the Core Strategy

PLANNING ISSUES

Principle of Development

1. The application site is located within Wokingham on the existing sports facility immediately adjacent to the boundary of the North Wokingham Strategic Development Location. Core Strategy policy CP11, Proposals outside Development Limits, establishes the principle for outdoor sport or countryside recreation providing the scale, form, design and character are appropriate to the location. As discussed, the site is already in recreational use and therefore the principle of the development is considered acceptable in this case.

Site Description

2. The site application site is located within the existing Cantley Park, located in north Wokingham. The site is accessed via vehicles off Twyford Road (A321) and by foot or cycle paths off various surrounding roads such as Bell Foundry Lane, Wiltshire Road and Milton Road. The existing facilities in Cantley Park consist of a theatre, a hockey club, pavilion including changing facilities and toilets, a hotel and various different pitches or areas for leisure recreation and activities. The actual site is centrally located within the park and includes the existing nine tennis courts and access immediately adjacent the existing car park and is relatively flat, gently sloping upwards to the south. To the south of the site is open space, while to the north and north-west are the existing facilities (pitches etc).
3. The Strategic Development Location (SDL) of North Wokingham's boundary sits to the north of the site above the access to the tennis courts, therefore the proposal must be considered in the wider context.

Background of the Application:

4. Following the approval of application ref: 153125, which relates to the re-development of Elms Field within the town centre of Wokingham, the works include the removal of the existing tennis courts. This application relates to mitigation of the loss of those courts with the proposed three new courts, including netball court and facilities.
5. The existing courts that are to be removed within the approved application in the town centre were of low quality and didn't include such facilities as flood lighting .

Impact on the Character of the Area:

6. It is proposed to construct three new 31 .7m x 34.75m double tennis courts located side by side to and orientated North to South as recommended by the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA). The proposed tennis courts would be

constructed with a porous macadam surface with an acrylic surface coating to meet the LTA Facility Guidance. Additionally a 3m high fence will be provided to the full perimeter of the new courts to LTA specification and the introduction of flood lights to both the existing courts and proposed.

7. Additionally the proposal includes the erection of a single storey modular building adjacent to the existing courts and parking area. The proposal would include a player's club room, a manager's office, a disabled WC and a covered shelter. In total the proposal would be 10.3 metres by 7.6 metres with 29.2m² indoor area. The proposal will include fenestration on the east and south facing side of the unit, and include a pitch roof. The proposal also includes the pavilion being clad in wood and therefore giving it a more sympathetic design, this can be secured via condition to allow a quality finish to the structure.
8. As discussed previously, the proposal is located immediately adjacent to the existing tennis courts, as well as the soft play area and car park. While the proposal increases to the amount of built form within the open environment, the courts and building structure are located within the existing development area in the park and are well screened by the existing boundary landscaping. The established use of recreation and leisure allows for the extent of built form to be extended as proposed in an acceptable manner. The clubhouse is a low profile building and the size of it is acceptable for its intended use. In addition the proposal is not considered to cause significant detriment to the area.
9. The proposal also includes the provision of floodlights to both the existing courts and the proposed courts. The proposed floodlights are 10 metres in height and are inward facing onto the court surface. Cantley Park has an existing use as a recreational facility and there are existing floodlights used on the all-weather playing surface, which are 15 metres in height. Therefore the proposal is not considered to be something that is considerably harmful to the existing area and the use of the floodlights (hours of operation) is subject to condition.

Impact on Residential Amenity:

10. The proposal is located within Cantley Park and therefore sited away from immediate neighbouring dwellings. The nearest neighbouring properties to the site are the dwellings located at the end of Deacon Close and All Saints Close to the east of the proposal. These are screened somewhat by existing landscaping and are approximately 150 to 160m away from the proposal. In terms of built form impact, the separation distances are such that the proposal is not considered to cause a detrimental impact on these properties.
11. With regard to the floodlighting for the proposal, a lighting scheme has been submitted with the application. The scheme shows the floodlighting level reducing relatively rapidly from its source; lux levels at the boundary of the site are shown to be 2 lux and therefore is not considered to cause significant light impacts to residents. Equally, the hours of use of the floodlights would be conditioned to reduce harm in the evenings/night. This would be in line with the previous application on the site for the all-weather pitch and associated floodlighting. On this basis the proposals are considered acceptable.

Access and Movement:

12. Cantley Park is accessed off Twyford Road (A321) in north Wokingham. The site

is located at the end of the existing access road, immediately adjacent to the existing car park for the tennis courts. For clarity the proposal does not seek to provide any additional car parking facilities, the Highways Officer is satisfied that the existing provision is adequate for both the existing situation and proposed development.

Trees and Landscape Issues:

13. The site is located just outside the Wokingham settlement boundary in the countryside and in Landscape Character Area J1 ' Wokingham and Winnersh Settled and Farmed Clay' , features of this landscape type include;

- An agricultural landscape greatly influenced by urban development.
- Abrupt rural-urban interface due the contrast of open arable fields abutting suburban style estates with important areas of agricultural land preventing amalgamation of Winnersh- Wokingham.
- Urbanisation of rural land due to landscape detailing such as street lighting, roadside kerbing, municipal character of street furniture and ornamental garden planting such as coniferous hedges.
- Pylons and posts carrying overhead wires are striking vertical elements across the arable fields.

14. The overall strategy is to enhance the existing character and condition of the landscape – improving the interface between urban edges and open field by renewing /creating landscape character whilst respecting the sensitivities and qualities of the existing landscape. The landscape strategy is to continue the increase the extent of native deciduous woodland using natural regeneration or locally occurring native species, and provide areas of coppice sympathetic to landscape character which should also seek to integrate other uses such as recreation and nature conservation to enhance landscape value.

15. Sympathetic integration of new recreational features in areas of low tranquillity close to major built up areas where this landscape could be an ideal location to develop the recreation potential. The proposed development does not include landscaping, it is noted that the landscaping officer has recommended additional planting as part of the scheme. However this landscaping can be secured by condition.

Biodiversity Issues:

16. The proposal includes the use of floodlighting within an area of open space however the lux level plan shows the light spillage reduces quickly from the courts. As such impacts to ecology will be limited and the lights will be turned off by 22:00hrs. As such there are no significant impacts to ecology within the local area.

CONCLUSION

The proposal will provide enhanced facilities at Cantley, namely three floodlit tennis courts, netball court and changing / w/c facilities which will benefit the residents of Wokingham. It will also mitigate the loss of the courts from the town centre and will aid the Council's aspiration to improve Cantley sports facilities. There are no significant impacts to neighbouring resident's amenities or to local ecology. For these reasons the proposals is considered acceptable.

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