

Application No: 23/2486C

Location: ALSAGER CRICKET CLUB, WILBRAHAMS WAY, ALSAGER, STOKE ON TRENT, CHESHIRE, ST7 2NR

Proposal: Extension of existing hard surface patio to the rear for Alsager Cricket Club

Applicant: Chris Hindle, Alsager Cricket Club

Expiry Date: 12-Sep-2023

### **SUMMARY**

The proposed development is acceptable in this instance and complies with the Development Plan and the NPPF.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

APPROVE subject to conditions

### **REASON FOR REFERRAL**

The application is referred to Southern Planning Committee on the grounds that the form has been submitted by Chris Hindle, the Head of Strategic Infrastructure at Cheshire East Council.

### **DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT**

The application site relates to the Alsager Cricket Club, located on Wilbrahams Way within the settlement boundary for Alsager. The club building is positioned at the north-eastern corner with associated playing fields making up the rest of the site. There is car parking adjacent to the building with mature trees sited around the boundary. Residential properties are present along the north, east and west perimeter of the site with Alsager Lawn Tennis Club and Highfields Primary School to the southern border.

The site is an area of protected open space which falls within the area covered by the Alsager Neighbourhood Plan.

### **DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

This application proposes an extension of the hard surface rear patio at the main club building.

### **RELEVANT HISTORY**

11/3178C – The erection of a new memorial scoreboard in the grounds (Approved 16th November 2011)

32737/3 – Renovation of existing pavilion/club house consisting of new tiled pitch roof & new masonry outer leaf (Approved 14th February 2001)

22440/3 – Alteration and extension to existing premises (Approved 10th July 1990)

18238/9 – Single sided illuminated box sign (Refused 2nd December 1986)

5982/3 – Demolition of existing implement shed (dilapidated) and erection of new implement shed (Approved 25th October 1977)

## **POLICIES**

### **Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)**

MP 1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

SD 1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East

SD 2 Sustainable Development Principles

SC 1 Leisure and Recreation

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SC 2 Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities

SC 3 Health and Well-Being

SE 1 Design

SE 2 Efficient Use of Land

SE 5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

SE 6 Green Infrastructure

SE 13 Flood Risk and Water Management

CO1 Sustainable Travel and Transport

PG 2 Settlement Hierarchy

### **Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD)**

PG9 – Settlement Boundaries

GEN1 – Design Principles

ENV5 – Landscaping

ENV6 – Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland Implementation

ENV7 – Climate Change

ENV16 – Surface Water Management and Flood Risk

HOU12 – Amenity

INF3 – Highway Safety and Access

REC1 – Open Space Protection

REC5 – Community Facilities

### **Alsager Neighbourhood Plan**

The Alsager Neighbourhood Plan was made on 15th April 2020

CW1 – Community Facilities

### **Other Material Considerations**

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Cheshire East Design Guide SPD

## **CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)**

N/A

## **VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL**

**Alsager Town Council:** No objection.

## **OTHER REPRESENTATIONS**

No representations received.

## **OFFICER APPRAISAL**

**Site Visit:** Site visit has been undertaken on the 23rd August 2023.

### **Principle of Development**

The principle of development within the settlement boundary is accepted provided that it accords with CELPS Policies SD1, SD2 and SE1 and SADPD Policies PG9 and GEN1. These policies seek to ensure, amongst other things, that proposals are not detrimental to neighbouring residential amenity and are appropriate in design and highway terms.

The site is also covered by the Alsager Neighbourhood Plan and it is necessary to consider whether the development complies with Policy CW1. This identifies that proposals that retain or enhance the provision, quality and accessibility of existing uses, buildings or land for public or community use will be supported. Proposals should also be of an appropriate scale and flexible design to enable multi-use throughout the day and be accessible by all members of the community. Furthermore, any new community facilities should not have any significant harmful impacts on the amenities of local residents or on other neighbouring uses.

### **Design & Character of the Area**

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Policy SD2 states that all development will be expected to contribute positively an area's character and identity, creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness in terms of:

- Height, scale, form and grouping
- Choice of materials
- External design features
- Massing of the development (the balance between built form and green/public spaces)
- Green infrastructure; and
- Relationship to neighbouring properties, street scene and the wider neighbourhood

Policy GEN1 of the SADPD refers to general design principles.

## *Overview*

The proposal is to formalise and extend the patio area with a hard surfacing towards the back of the main club building. The patio is to measure 15 metres in width with a depth of 6 metres from the rear elevation. A new pathway would then extend along the southern side elevation to provide formal access from the existing car park at the front. The scheme will utilise Indian stone paving slabs to be laid upon a MOT Type 1 sub-base and a layer of mortar. There would be a nominal fall away from the building. Treated timber sleepers are to be used for retention and facing of the building's lower rear elevation where block work is exposed. Along the rear and northern edges, there are to be multiple 0.9-metre composite posts with rope used for boundary treatment.

## *Scale*

Based on the plans, the proposed patio would establish a 90 metres<sup>2</sup> paved area with an additional 16 metres<sup>2</sup> to be formed by the adjoining path to its side (approximate). Whilst this proposed scheme would be a partial enlargement of the existing pathway, and includes for a more formalised hard surface, it is a modest development. When considered, it is to be an appropriate scale that would not constitute as a significant disruption or incongruous addition to the existing built form on site.

## *Design*

At present, the proposed site consists of a pathway and existing grass surface. For the proposed development, the scheme would introduce a new concrete paving surface along with timber edging. Given its intended use as a formalised seating area, the scheme proposes a flexible design that would enable use throughout the day and ensure there is an appropriate level of accessibility for all community members in the pursuit of watching cricket. The proposed materials are also acceptable and are appropriate for this purpose.

## *Street Scene*

In consideration of the setting for this development, the scheme will be located towards the back of the main building. Therefore, the patio would be restricted from direct lines of visibility from the adjacent public footpaths and highways as a result of its position. There is also an extensive boundary treatment which is present around the perimeter of the site. Given the nature of the building and its associated sports facility, this proposal would be in keeping with the existing site and would be an appropriate addition within the street scene and wider area.

Overall, the proposal is acceptable in design terms.

The proposed development would comply with Policy SE1, SD1 & SD2 of the CELPS and Policy GEN1 of the SADPD.

## **Sport & Playing Fields**

The site is classified as a protected area of open space within which Policy REC 1 of the SADPD advises that development proposals that involve the loss of open space, as defined in Criterion 2 below will not be permitted unless:

- i. an assessment has been undertaken that has clearly shown the open space is surplus to requirements; or
- ii. it would be replaced by equivalent or better open space in terms of quantity and quality and it is in a suitable location; or
- iii. the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss.

The proposed plans are to provide a more formalised patio area in service to the cricket pavilion. The scheme would develop the existing facility by providing an improved seating area and better access to the rear along the side of the building. This setup is intended to support the site by benefiting spectators from the local community when watching cricket matches when being carried out on the associated playing field.

It is acknowledged that whilst the proposed area of development is technically classed under the remit of an area of open space, the reality is that it is limited size. Furthermore, given its proximity to the main club house building, this would render the highlighted area unusable to serve its intended open space function. The proposal would provide a new seating area for spectators which would support the better running of an existing enterprise and for experience of its customers. These attributes are supported by the objectives of the Local Plan. These include policies REC5 and CW1, both of which provide support for the retention of community facilities. Additionally, this is reinforced by Policy SC3 (Health and Well-Being) which looks to safeguard opportunities provided by new developments for healthy living and improved health and well-being and protecting existing community infrastructure. On this basis the proposal is considered to meet criterion i above.

Given the proposed scheme would ensure the continued use of an important facility, thereby strengthening the playing fields contribution within the Alsager area, the development would be acceptable.

The proposed development would comply with CELPS Policies SC1, SC2 & SE 6, SADPD Policy REC1 and Alsager Neighbourhood Plan Policy CW1.

### **Community Facilities/Sport and Recreation**

Policy SC1 seeks to protect and enhance existing leisure and recreation facilities.

Policy SC2 also seeks to protect existing indoor and outdoor sports facilities.

Policy SC3 advises that the Council and its partners will create and safeguard opportunities for safe, healthy, fulfilling and active lifestyles.

Policy REC5 advises that development proposals should seek to retain, enhance and maintain community facilities that make a positive contribution to the social or cultural life of a community.

The current proposal seeks to provide better facilities for the existing community facility and thus would ensure its long-term retention, its sporting offer and would assist in providing opportunities for healthy lifestyles.

Therefore, the proposal complies with Policies SC1, SC2 & SC3 of the CELPS and Policy REC5 of the SADPD.

## **Amenity**

Policy HOU 12 of the SADPD states that development proposals must not cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of adjoining or nearby occupiers of residential properties, sensitive uses, or future occupiers of the proposed development due to:

- loss of privacy
- loss of sunlight and daylight
- the overbearing and dominating effect of new buildings
- environmental disturbance or pollution
- traffic generation, access and parking

Based on the proposed scheme, it is determined the closest neighbouring properties are located to the east of the site along Fairview Avenue. In particular, consideration would need to be given to No. 1, 2 and 3.

For the dwelling at No. 2 Fairview Avenue, this property is to be positioned 35 metres from the main patio area (approximately). Whilst this is to be the closest neighbour, the property would be separated by a highway and public footpath. Furthermore, there is existing mature hedging which is present along the boundary to the applicant site. Given the use of this site is restricted to the approved opening times for the club, there is to be no further impact on residential amenity for this neighbour above and beyond the existing experience.

When considering No. 1 and 3 Fairview Avenue, the proposal would not project any closer than the existing footpath and leisure area towards the back of the building. Given that both properties would sit at over 37 metres away from the proposed site, there would be no direct impact on any disturbance of these neighbouring properties.

The intention of the development is to preserve this community facility and the scheme would help to ensure its continued use. It is not anticipated there would be any significant impact beyond the existing conditions experienced by the neighbouring occupants in relation to local residential amenity.

Therefore, it is considered the proposal would not cause any harm to residential amenity.

The development complies with the SPG and SADPD Policy HOU12.

## **Trees**

Policy SE5 of the CELPS states that development which would result in the loss of trees and hedgerows that provide a significant contribution to the amenity, or landscape character of an area will not be permitted except where there are overriding reasons for allowing the development and there are no suitable alternatives.

The site benefits from a level of established tree and hedgerow cover which provides screening around the site and existing buildings. It is noted that a Sycamore and Oak tree adjacent to the club building at the north-eastern corner of the site are protected by a preservation order.

Based on formal assessment by a Forestry and Arboricultural Officer for Cheshire East Council, it has been determined that there would be no significant impact on trees. Given the scale, siting and nature of the proposed development, these trees would not have any impact on the proposal.

The development complies with CELPS Policy SE 5 and SADPD Policy ENV6.

## **Highways**

Based on the plans, the proposal is to enlarge the existing patio which is used as a seating area for families and spectators whilst watching cricket. In consideration of the proposal, it is determined the scheme would not have an impact on the safe access of highway users to and from the site. In addition, no existing parking spaces would be lost as part of this development.

The scheme would have no further impact on the existing level of traffic to the site given the proposal would formalise the existing area for continued use. Furthermore, it is noted the site is located adjacent to the Donkey Path, a well-used public footpath which is part of a wider network within Alsager. Given its proximity to this designated Local Green Space, the scheme would benefit from this maintained access to the site.

The proposed development would comply with Policy CO1 of the CELPS and Policy INF3 of the SADPD.

## **Drainage**

Policy SE13 (Flood Risk and Water Management) of the CELPS and Policy ENV16 (Surface Water Management and Flood Risk) of the SADPD both seek to manage flood risk and surface water.

The proposed scheme would result in the loss of a grassed area. As part of the application form, it has been advised the development would rely on soakaway as the form of drainage to dispose of surface water. It is noted the site is not within an area at risk of flooding and is not within 20 metres of a watercourse. Given the modest scale of the proposed patio area, is to be situated within a large, mainly grassed area, and the site falls away at the edge of the patio, it is not anticipated the proposal will increase the flood risk on site.

The proposed development would comply with Policy SE13 of the CELPS and Policy ENV16 of the SADPD.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION**

The proposed development is acceptable in this instance and complies with the Development Plan and the NPPF.

**Approve subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. Standard Time**
- 2. Materials as application**
- 3. Approved Plans**

**In order to give proper effect to the Board`s/Committee`s intent and without changing the substance of its decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning (Regulation) in consultation with the Chair (or in their absence the Vice Chair) to correct any technical slip or omission in the resolution, before issue of the decision notice.**



