

Application No: 09/2804M
Location: PECKFORTON PLAYING FIELD, PICTON DRIVE, WILMSLOW, CHESHIRE
Proposal: DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW GAMES FACILITY INCLUDING A MUGA, YOUTH SHELTER AND BMX TRAIL

For MS MARIANNE HODGKINSON, CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Registered 01-Oct-2009
Policy Item No
Grid Reference 386162 382537

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to conditions

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact on neighbouring amenity
- Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area
- Impact on existing trees and protected species

Date Report Prepared: 13th November 2009

REASON FOR REPORT

The applicant is Cheshire East Borough Council, the land is also owned by the Council and, due to the site area, it comprises a major planning application.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site comprises an existing playing field/park that is heavily screened by trees. Picton Drive bounds the site to the south, Colshaw Drive bounds the site to the west, 'The Black Path' bounds the site to the north, and the rear gardens of No's 51 & 53 Handforth Road bound the site to the east.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought to enhance/improve the existing facilities at the playing field/park by erecting a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) with floodlighting, creating a BMX track within the woodland to the west of the site, erecting dynamic play equipment, a meeting area/shelter, and new footpath links.

RELEVANT HISTORY

99/1138P Change of use of open land to sports recreation field
Approved with conditions 21/07/1999

POLICIES

Regional Spatial Strategy

DP1 Spatial Principles
DP2 Promote Sustainable Communities

L1 Health, Sport, Recreation, Cultural & Education Services Provision

Local Plan Policy

RT1 Recreation: Open Space
DC3 Amenity
DC6 Circulation & Access
DC9 Tree Protection
EM1(B) Integrated Enhancement & Protection of the Region's Environmental Assets: Historic Environment
EM1(D) Integrated Enhancement & Protection of the Region's Environmental Assets: Trees, Woodlands & Forests

Other Material Considerations

PPG 17 Planning for Open Space, Sport & Recreation

CONSIDERATIONS (External to Planning)

Highways: Comments awaited

Environmental Health: No objection

Estates: Comments awaited

Leisure: Comments awaited

Police: Comments awaited

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

None at the time of report preparation

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

A Design & Access Statement and a Tree Survey were submitted with the planning application. Full copies are available to view on the application file.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principal of Development

The principle issues surrounding the determination of this application are the impact of the proposed development on residential amenity, the character and appearance of the surrounding area, the existing trees, any impact on protected species, and any highway issues regarding access and parking.

Policy

Part 12, Class A of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) relates to developments that can be undertaken by Local Authorities without requiring planning permission. Members should note that planning permission is only required for the erection of the floodlights to the MUGA as they would exceed 4 metres in height. All other aspects of the development can be undertaken without requiring planning permission. This fact affects the weight Members can give to issues raised by this application.

Design

The application site slopes down from both Picton Drive and Colshaw Drive towards a level area at the centre of the site that is used as an existing grassed playing field. The site is heavily screened from all sides by mature trees. A footpath crosses the site.

The existing grassed playing field would be reduced in size and repositioned, the drainage would be improved and football goals would be erected. Adjacent to the grassed playing field would be a 'MUGA' (Multi Use Games Area - a tarmac area surrounded by fencing with goals and basket ball hoops positioned at either end). The MUGA would be lit by 4no. five metre high floodlights that would be positioned at each corner. Dynamic play equipment with a rubber ground surface and a meeting area/shelter would be positioned on or adjacent to an existing tarmac area to the northwest of the site. The proposed BMX trail would comprise an informal two metre wide route through the existing woodland to the west of the site that would be created with soil/dirt only. A new footpath would link the new games equipment to the existing footpaths and new lighting columns would be erected at intervals.

The applicant's agent has provided the following information regarding the use of the MUGA and the floodlights:

"The MUGA would be intended to be available to all members of the community at all times. A programme of activities to ensure regular future use, for instance basketball or football teams would be set up and led by the Cheshire East Council Sport's Officers and local schools would be run according to demand for different activities. We would also work with local people to support them to undertake coaching and training badges. The aim would be for the MUGA to be widely used by as many different residents as possible."

The proposed development is commensurate with a playing field/park and it would increase the vitality and viability of the existing area. The proposed development is not considered to affect the character or appearance of the surrounding area.

Amenity

The application site is heavily screened to the boundaries with mature trees and therefore the site and the proposed equipment would not be highly visible from the surrounding area. Two dwellinghouses share a boundary with the application site, No's 51 & 53 Handforth Road, however these properties have very long rear gardens and the proposed equipment would be positioned centrally or on the opposite side of the site from these properties (120 metres would separate the residential properties from the nearest piece of play equipment). The proposed floodlights would be positioned at a lower level than the surrounding houses, would be set on a timer so they would go out at a specific time that could be conditioned and would be highly screened/filtered by the existing trees.

The applicant's agent has stated that *"the lighting would illuminate particular areas only and not cause a nuisance/glare to residents. The lighting would go no further than the grassed area so the trees planted along Picton Drive would further obscure the lighting. The inclusion of lighting is a direct result of feedback gathered during the consultation. It is widely felt that lighting will 'make or break' the scheme as users have expressed serious doubt that they would use an unlit facility. The police in particular are very supportive of the lighting as it would give them additional control and consider that the lighting would directly reduce antisocial behaviour, resulting in a positive benefit for local residents. The lights would be controlled by a timer. The idea is that the surface is usable up to a certain time each day in which the lights would be timed to go on and off according to this. The lights would only be used during the winter months and would not be required in summer. For example, in November they might come on at 4.30pm and run until 8.30pm, but in spring they might only be needed for an hour and in summer they wouldn't be needed at all."*

The Environmental Health Officer raised no objection to the proposed development. For these reasons and subject to a condition restricting the timing of the floodlights, it is not considered that the proposed development would be detrimental to neighbouring amenity.

Highways

The application site is accessible by pedestrians only. The application proposes to create new footpath links between the proposed equipment. The comments of the Highway Engineer are currently awaited.

Ecology

The installation of the new multi-use games pitch will have no adverse impacts on nature conservation.

The application involves the removal of a number of trees, at least one of which has the potential to support roosting bats. The Nature Conservation Officer notes from the submitted plans that Groundwork intend to undertake a bat survey prior to the removal of the trees. As the works to the BMX trail do not require planning permission and therefore the trees can be removed without consent from the Local Planning Authority, it is considered that an informative be attached should permission be granted advising the applicant of their duties to European Protected Species.

The clearance of scrub, bramble and trees from the site will result in the loss of some breeding bird habitat. Given the small size of the site and its location it is unlikely that any uncommon or priority species will be present in significant numbers, however the Nature Conservation Officer recommends that conditions are attached to any permission granted in respect of breeding birds and the incorporation of features for roosting bats.

There will be some loss of trees and disturbance to the small areas of plantation woodland on site to accommodate the proposed BMX track. Whilst the woodland does not appear to be obviously important for nature

conservation it is difficult to assess woodlands at this time of year and no ecological survey has been submitted with the application. The Nature Conservation Officer recommends that the trees/woodland lost to facilitate this development be compensated for through additional planting at appropriate parts of the site.

To avoid any potential disturbance to foraging bats the lighting of the games area should be directed and excessive illumination of the surrounding trees and woodland edge should be avoided. This matter may be dealt with by means of a condition.

Subject to conditions and an informative, no objection is raised on nature conservation grounds.

Trees

A number of trees surround the application site's boundaries and the proposed BMX track would utilise the woodland area to the west of the site. A Tree Survey was submitted with the planning application. The comments of the Forestry Officer are currently awaited.

Landscape

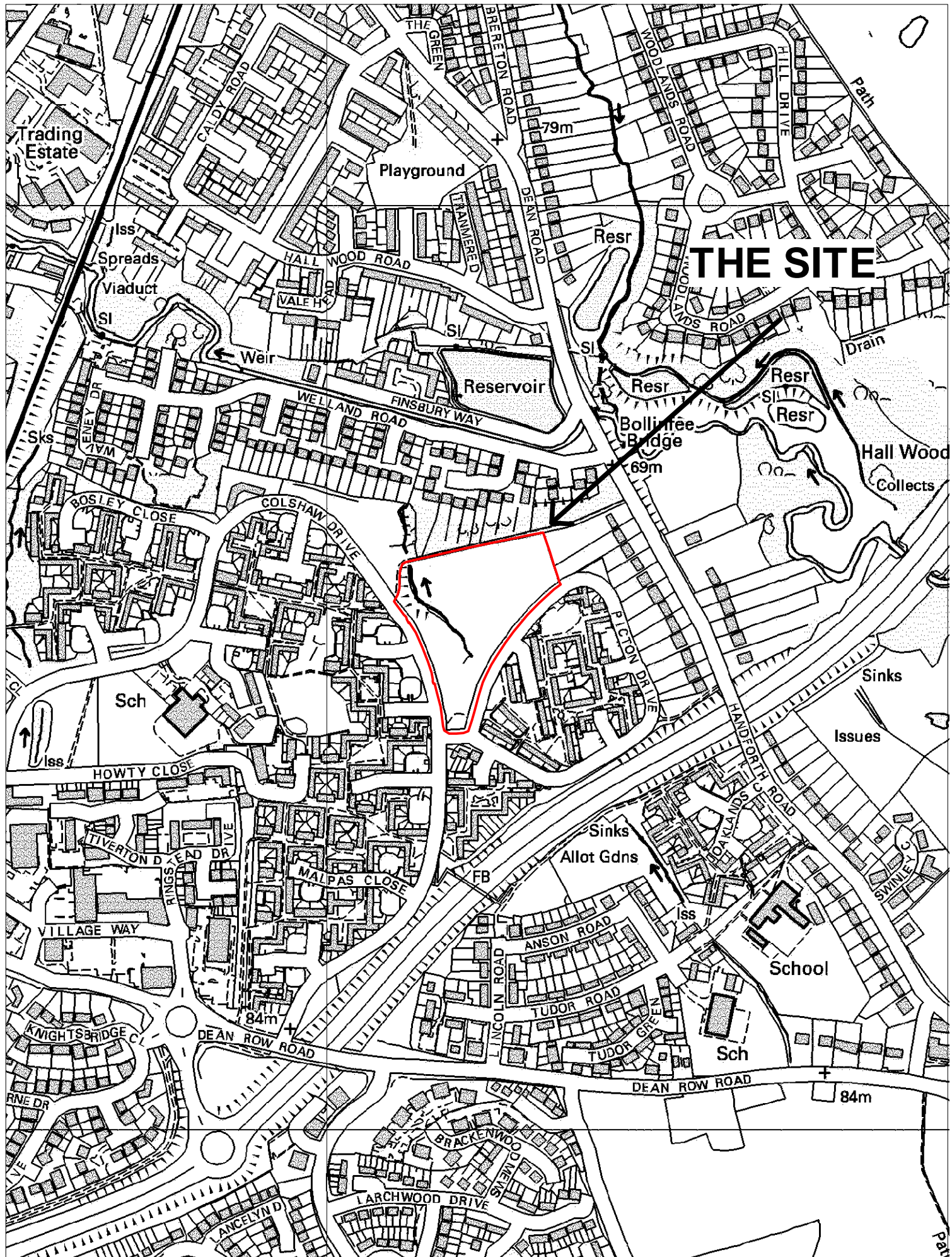
The application site is predominantly grassed with large areas of trees and some areas of shrub planting. It is proposed to improve the existing planting. As detailed pre-application discussions were undertaken between the agent and the Landscape Officer, no objection is raised to the proposed planting.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION

The proposed works are considered to enhance an existing underused playing field/park and provide facilities that can be enjoyed by children/teenagers. Due to the existing screening and sloping nature of the site and the operation of the proposed floodlights, it is not considered that they would cause a significant disruption to the amenity of neighbouring properties. For these reasons, the application is recommended for approval.

SUBJECT TO

The comments of the Highway Engineer, Forestry Officer, Estates, Leisure and the Police.



09/2804M - PECKFORTON PLAYING FIELD PICTON DRIVE WILMSLOW

N.G.R: 386.160 - 382.560

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of HMSO.

© Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to legal or civil proceedings. Cheshire East Council, licence no. 100049045 2009.



Application for **Full Planning**

RECOMMENDATION : Approve subject to following conditions

1. A03FP - Commencement of development (3 years)
2. A01AP - Development in accord with approved plans
3. Timing of Floodlights
4. Incorporation of features for roosting bats
5. Nesting Birds
6. Replacement Tree Planting
7. Prevention of illumination to adjacent trees/woodland