

Application No: 12/4016M

Location: LAND TO THE REAR OF ROYAL LONDON HOUSE, ALDERLEY ROAD, WILMSLOW, CHESHIRE, SK9 1PF

Proposal: Retrospective planning consent for temporary lights to illuminate existing temporary car park

Applicant: Royal London Group

Expiry Date: 25-Dec-2012

Date Report Prepared: 15.11.2012

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION	APPROVE, SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS
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MAIN ISSUES

- Green Belt policy and 'very special circumstances'
- Design
- Residential amenity
- Ecology

REASON FOR REPORT

The application has been referred to the Northern Planning Committee at the discretion of the Head of Planning & Policy. An associated application (12/2631M – use of land as temporary car park) related to the same site has also been referred to the committee, due to the sensitive nature of the application. It is considered appropriate to deal with both applications on the same agenda as the temporary floodlights applied for are directly related to the temporary car park applied for.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The Royal London House site is a major developed site in the Green Belt and comprises numerous buildings and car parking areas. The flood lights are used to illuminate the temporary car park (the subject of application 12/2631M), which is sited within a field to the north west of the developed site. The car park and lights are already in situ and have been for some time. The site is relatively well screened by existing mature vegetation, with more open aspects to the east towards the railway line

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The application seeks retrospective planning permission for temporary lights to illuminate the temporary car park applied for (12/2631M). There are 6 No. CE 70 Watt, 240v IP Rated floodlights affixed to 75mm diameter steels posts, 3.8m high, sited around the perimeter of the car park. The lights have been in situ for some time.

RELEVANT HISTORY

- 97/1417P Temporary car parking for 104 cars. Approved with conditions 21.08.1997
- 98/1532P Retention of temporary car park for further 2 year period. Approved with conditions 16.09.1998
- 00/1738P Renewal of 97/1417P for temporary car park. Approved with conditions 13.09.2000
- 02/2043P Renewal of 00/1738P for a temporary car park. Approved with conditions 04.12.2002
- 04/1066P Use of land for temporary car park. Approved with conditions 08.07.2004
- 09/0571M Use of land for temporary car park. Approved with conditions, 1
3.05.2009

POLICIES

Macclesfield Borough Local Plan – saved policies

DC1 Design
DC3 Amenity
DC64 – Floodlighting

North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021

DP1 (Spatial Principles)
DP2 (Promote Sustainable Communities)
DP5 (Manage Travel Demand; Reduce the Need to Travel, and Increase Accessibility)
DP7 (Promote Environmental Quality)
RDF4 (Green Belts)
RT2 (Managing Travel Demand)

National Planning Policy Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

CONSULTATIONS

Highways:

No comments received to date. However, it is anticipated that there will be no highways reasons to object.

Heritage & Design – Nature Conservation:

No comments received to date. However, it is anticipated that there will be no ecological reasons to object.

Heritage & Design – Forestry:

No comments received to date. However, it is anticipated that there will be no Arboricultural reasons to object.

Environmental Health:

No objections to the floodlighting proposed.

It is also noted that the Environmental Health Officer was contacted to enquire if the Council has received any complaints regarding either the floodlights that have been in place for some time or the car park. No complaints appear to have been received regarding either.

VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL

Wilmslow Town Council:

No comments received to date

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

1 No. representation has been received to date. The objections expressed are: Lights not necessary; light pollution; impact on Green Belt. The author also suggests that the lights applied for are **additional** to the ones that are there. However, it needs to be made clear that the application is for the lights that already exist. No additional lights are proposed.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

In principle, the proposed is contrary to National Planning Policy/Guidance in respect of Green Belt policy as outlined in the NPPF. The proposed constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt and therefore very special circumstances have to be demonstrated to overcome the harm caused by inappropriateness (and any other identified harm).

Design

The design of the lights (basically a 3.8m high steel pole with 2 No. lights of the top) is considered to be acceptable.

Impact on residential amenity

As the nearest residential properties are over 70m away from the site it is considered that there are no residential amenity issues arising from the application. As noted above, the Environmental Health Officer has noted that the Council does not appear to have received any complaints about the lights.

Arboricultural and nature conservation issues

As noted above, no issues arising from the application.

Green Belt and very special circumstances

A detailed discussion regarding the NPPF and protection of Green Belt is presented in the report for the temporary car park (12/2631M). Suffice to state here that the proposed lights are considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt (as they do not preserve openness). The lights also impact on visual amenity and constitute encroachment into the Green Belt. For these reasons the application should be refused, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated that clearly outweigh the harm caused by inappropriateness and the other harm identified.

As noted in the report for the temporary car park, in weighing up the competing issues of protecting the Green Belt, supporting economic growth and promoting sustainable modes of transport, it is considered that Royal London, through the comprehensive Travel Plan, are committed to achieving a reduction in car usage and an increase in sustainable modes of transport. It is also considered that the operational needs of the company require the flexibility of having a temporary car park in order to achieve growth. The flood lights that are the subject of this application are considered to be a reasonable requirement to illuminate the car park area, particularly for safety reasons. Hence, in the same way that the temporary car park has been recommended for approval, it is considered that as the application is for a temporary period the long term impact on the Green Belt is protected. Hence, on balance, it is considered that very special circumstances exist that outweigh the harm caused to the Green Belt by inappropriateness and the other harm identified.

It is noted that the temporary period recommended for the car park is 3 years. As such it is recommended that the temporary consent for the lighting should also be for a 3 year period to coincide with this.

Recommended conditions

It is recommended that the lights be removed from the site at the end of the temporary 3 year period. It is also recommended that the lights shall not be used between the hours of 2200 and 0600 on any day (to minimise light pollution).

CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION

The proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt. However the specific circumstances regarding the short-term use of the car park and the floodlights and the interests of economic sustainability, promotion of sustainable modes of transport and long term protection of the Green Belt are considered to amount to very special circumstances that

would outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by virtue of inappropriateness, visual impact and encroachment in this instance. As such, a temporary consent of 3 years is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to following conditions

1. Removal of floodlights
2. Hours of use

