

Case No: 0803212FUL (FULL PLANNING APPLICATION)
Proposal: RETENTION OF 6M HIGH POSTS AND SAFETY NETTING
Location: RECREATION GROUND DAIMLER AVENUE
Applicant: YAXLEY PARISH COUNCIL
Grid Ref: 518222 292644
Date of Registration: 27.11.2008
Parish: YAXLEY

RECOMMENDATION - APPROVAL

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

- 1.1 This application, which is retrospective, has been referred to Panel because it is a Parish Council proposal to which there have been objections from third parties.
- 1.2 The proposal is to retain two sections of 6m high post and netting near the boundaries of Queen's Park, the Parish Council recreation ground, off Daimler Avenue.
- 1.3 The posts are galvanised and 75mm square. The netting has a 0.14m mesh of black 2.5mm twine, with blue pulley ropes.
- 1.4 One section with 17 posts supports a 160m long net adjoining the western boundary fence of the recreation field. To the west of the fence is a strip of land approximately 5.8m wide comprising landscaping, scrub and a dyke, beyond which are a bowling green, the close-boarded fences for the gardens of 3 dwellings in Pooley Way and the adjoining Green Lane recreation area.
- 1.5 The other section with 5 posts is 40m long and lies near the southern boundary of the field, separated from the back gardens of residential properties at 168-176 Broadway by approximately 3.5-4.2m of shrub planting which is about 3-4m high. Some of the properties in Broadway have enclosures of varying heights on the back boundary and other rear gardens are open to the landscape strip.
- 1.6 The pitch is level and the levels of the base of the posts and pitch are similar to the level of Broadway's back gardens. However, the houses to the north and west are set on lower ground; a sloping grassed area separates the edge of the pitch from the surrounding gardens. Therefore, the north-western part of the pitch is elevated above the gardens of the properties to the north and west. The base of the northern part of the western net is therefore set at a lower level than the pitch.

- 1.7 The netting is capable of being raised and lowered but the Parish Council advise that it is likely that the southern netting near 168-176 Broadway will be retained in situ at all times and the western netting near Pooley Way may be dismantled in July and August when the pitches may not be used.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 **PPS1: “Delivering Sustainable Development” (2005)** contains advice on the operation of the plan-led system.
- 2.2 **PPG17: “Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation” (2002)** sets out the policies needed to be taken into account by regional planning bodies in the preparation of Regional Planning Guidance (or any successor) and by local planning authorities in the preparation of development plans (or their successors); they may also be material to decisions on individual planning applications.

For full details visit the government website <http://www.communities.gov.uk> and follow the links to planning, Building and Environment, Planning, Planning Policy.

3. PLANNING POLICIES

Further information on the role of planning policies in deciding planning applications can also be found at the following website: <http://www.communities.gov.uk> then follow links Planning, Building and Environment, Planning, Planning Information and Guidance, Planning Guidance and Advice and then Creating and Better Place to Live

- 3.1 East of England Plan - Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy (May 2008) Policies viewable at <http://www.go-east.gov.uk> then follow links to Planning, Regional Planning then Related Documents
- **ENV7: “Quality in the Built Environment”** - requires new development to be of high quality which complements the distinctive character and best qualities of the local area and promotes urban renaissance and regeneration.
- 3.2 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003) Saved policies from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 are relevant and viewable at <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk> follow the links to environment, planning, planning policy and Structure Plan 2003:
- None relevant
- 3.3 Huntingdonshire Local Plan (1995) Saved policies from the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 are relevant and viewable at www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/localplan95
- **R1: “Recreation and Leisure Provision”** – will directly promote district wide recreation and leisure projects and generally support leisure and recreation facilities commensurate with population levels, housing developments and identified need.

- **R2:** "Recreation and Leisure Provision" – applications for recreational facilities will be considered on their merits bearing in mind: advice from sporting recreation authorities on the need for further provision; the effect on residential amenity; the effect on landscape, visual amenity, nature conservation and archaeological interest; access, parking and traffic generation; the siting, design and materials of any building and structures.
 - **En22:** "Conservation" – wherever relevant, the determination of applications will take appropriate consideration of nature and wildlife conservation.
- 3.4 Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alterations (2002) Saved policies from the Huntingdon Local Plan Alterations 2002 are relevant and viewable at www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/localplan - Then click on "Local Plan Alteration (2002)
- None relevant.
- 3.5 Policies from the Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007 are relevant and viewable at <http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk> click on Environment and Planning, then Planning then Planning+Policy then Informal policy statements where there is a link to Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007
- **B1** – Design Quality - developments should demonstrate a high quality of design in terms of layout, form and contribution to the character of the area.
 - **B4** – Amenity - developments should not have an unacceptable impact upon amenity of existing or future occupiers.
 - **G1** – Open Space and Recreational Land – development proposals should not entail the whole or partial loss of open space within the settlements, or of outdoor recreation facilities or allotments.
 - **G2** – Landscape Character - development proposals should respect and respond appropriately to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape.
- 3.6 Policies from the Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework Submission Core Strategy 2008 are relevant and viewable at <http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk> click on Environment and Planning then click on Planning and then click on Planning Policy where there is a link to the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.
- **CS1:** "Sustainable development in Huntingdonshire" – all developments will contribute to the pursuit of sustainable development, having regard to social, environmental and economic issues. All aspects will be considered including design, implementation and function of development.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 89/01659OUT: Outline permission for residential, recreational, shopping and school development was granted for the Ferndale estate in 1998. The recreation field was funded by the Section 106 obligation together with funding from the Football Foundation. The field has been laid out to include 2 adult football pitches at the west end of the field, youth football pitches adjacent and mini football pitches near the centre of the site.

4.2 0201925FUL: A sports pavilion and car park, permitted in 2003, were constructed recently.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 **Yaxley Parish Council – NO OBJECTION** (copy attached).

5.2 **HDC Community and Health Development – NO OBJECTION**

5.3 **Beds and Cambs Wildlife Trust – NO OBJECTION**

6. REPRESENTATIONS

6.1 Twelve objections from 10 households have been received citing the following grounds:

- * Requirement for proposal only results from more intensive use of grounds with more pitches than was originally proposed.

- * Neighbours suggest an alternative pitch layout.

- * facilities in pavilion are below standard/extent for the number of pitches available

- * inadequate capacity of car park for number of pitches and consequent highway safety issues with on-street parking

- * concern that trespass is arising and threats to residents by spectators and players where nets are not provided

- * landscaping is low compared to the enclosure height

- * concern about precedent for more enclosures or higher enclosures (note northern part of western fence is set on lower ground than pitch)

- * pitch is on land higher than properties to the north, thus meaning that the poles appear higher when viewed from those properties

- * harm to enjoyment of garden being in direct view

- * use of pitches causes disturbance

- * balls are being kicked against neighbours fence

- *harm to wildlife such as bats and birds as nets adjoin wooded area

- *harm to occupiers of 23 Pooley Close: from strong reflection of light off the structure into property, noise of ropes against posts in windy conditions and feeling like 'living in a prison exercise yard'

- * concern about lack of site notices

- * query how 6m high posts were selected: can they be lower and are they appropriate since some posts are set at a lower level than the pitch.

6.2 One representation: no objection:

- * balls have previously come into garden and damaged property.

6.3 One representation: No objection in principle:

- * provided the nets are lowered when not in use because they are already being climbed by children using the playing field as a kickabout area.

- * New landscaping should be required.

7. SUMMARY OF ISSUES

- 7.1 The main issues are: the impact on the character and appearance of the area; residential amenities and wildlife.

Introduction:

- 7.2 Since the pitches were brought into use in September 2008, there have been a number of incidences of footballs being kicked into neighbouring gardens when games are played on 3 pitches that are close to the site boundaries. The nets are intended to reduce annoyance and hazards to residents and players and reduce the potential damage to property. The applicant advises that the western section, which is immediately adjacent to the palisade fence, was requested by the Health and Safety Executive in the interests of player safety.
- 7.3 The nets therefore help facilitate the use of the three football pitches. The Parish Council and District Council's Community and Health Development Services Officer confirm that there is a high demand for the pitches on this site and elsewhere in Yaxley and that the pitch arrangement maximises the use of the recreation ground. As the recreation use has been approved, the Local Planning Authority is unable to control the intensification of use, even though the density of pitches has resulted in a requirement for netting.

The impact on the character and appearance of the area and the neighbour amenities:

- 7.4 The upper parts of the posts and nets, which are above the adjoining boundary treatments, entail some visual clutter from surrounding properties and public areas. However, where seen, this is not considered to cause significant harm to visual amenity because,
* the net is a fine twine in a subdued colour with a relatively open mesh,
* the posts are evident in silhouette against the sky in views from outside the site but their slim profile, modest height and galvanised finish minimise the impact.
* the nets are separated from surrounding properties by planting and, in some cases, further enclosures of varying height.
- 7.5 The pitch is elevated above the ground level of the properties to the north, but although the enclosures therefore appear higher when viewed from those properties, the posts and nets are far enough away from them that no undue harm arises to the residents on the north side of the site.
- 7.6 The Parish Council has been asked to advise the Local Planning Authority about their intentions for the future height of the planting in the landscaping strips adjoining the development because if, as anticipated, the intention is to allow the planting to gain height, this may assist in softening the impact of the enclosures.
- 7.7 The concerns of the occupiers of 23 Pooley Way, where the main rear aspect faces the western nets are acknowledged. However, the position of the net is far enough away from their rear boundary to

avoid undue harm from an oppressive/overbearing effect and noise, and in time, the weathering of the galvanised posts is expected to reduce the impact of light reflection.

Impact on wildlife:

- 7.8 The Wildlife trust is not aware of any evidence to suggest that the netting would be a problem, most birds would fly around or over it. Bats could be affected if the netting was obstructing a flight line to a major roost but this does not appear to be the case here. The proposal is unlikely to harm wildlife and it does not therefore conflict with policy En22 which seeks to safeguard wildlife.
- 7.9 Having regard to applicable national and local policies and having taken all relevant material considerations into account, it is considered that planning permission should be granted in this instance.

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388388 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

- 8. RECOMMENDATION – APPROVE**, subject to conditions to include the following:

Nonstand net gauge and colour

Nonstand landscape management

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Planning Application File Reference: 0803199FUL
East of England Plan - Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy (May 2008)
Huntingdonshire Local Plan, 1995
Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration, 2002
Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007
Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework Submission Core Strategy 2008

CONTACT OFFICER:

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