

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

12th November 2014

Planning Application 2014/226/COU

Change of use of vacant Market Area to a play area for children and ancillary adult exercise area.

Covered Market Area, Market Place, Redditch, Worcestershire, B98 8AA

**Applicant: Redditch Town Centre Partnership
Expiry Date: 12th November 2014
Ward: ABBEY**

(see additional papers for Site Plan)

The author of this report is Ailith Rutt, Planning Officer (DM), who can be contacted on Tel: 01527 534064 Email: ailith.rutt@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk for more information.

Site Description

The site lies in the heart of the town centre, and is hard surfaced with block paving and semi covered with a canopy roof supported on metal vertical risers. It is known as the former covered market area. To the west are some small retail units, some of which are vacant, set below the Debenhams store within the Kingfisher Shopping Centre. To the south are the external steps and lift that lead into the shopping centre. The site can be accessed from the north between the library and the post office, from the east through Fountain Passage from Walter Stranz Square, from the south from the market traders car park under car park 2, or from the shopping centre to the west.

Proposal description

The application proposes the change of use of this area of the town centre to provide play and exercise facilities. The proposed play equipment under the larger canopy roof area would be surfaced and marked out into two areas, one of play equipment for 5-12 year olds and one for younger children and toddlers. Also proposed is an adult exercise area with equipment similar to that found on 'trim trails' to the south end of the site south of the entrance to Fountain Passage, between it and the gates that lead out to the car park.

Relevant Policies

Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3:

CS02 Care for the Environment
ETCR01 Vitality and Viability of the Town Centre
ETCR05 Protection of the Retail Core
R01 Primarily Open Space
S01 Designing Out Crime

Emerging Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4

Policy 13: Primarily Open Space

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Policy 30: Town Centre and Retail Hierarchy
Policy 31: Regeneration for Town Centre
Policy 32: Protection of the Retail Core
Policy 43: Leisure, Tourism and Abbey Stadium

Others:

NPPG National Planning Practice Guidance
NPPF National Planning Policy Framework

Relevant Planning History

None

Consultations

Community Safety Officer

This looks like an excellent use of an otherwise vacant space. Matters of access, surveillance, separation between proposed use and pedestrians passing through, robustness, maintenance and management and the provision of litter bins will be important.

Development Plans

This proposal complies with both adopted and emerging local planning policy and has the potential to make a great contribution to enhancing the vitality and viability of the Town Centre. Furthermore, the proposal contributes to the NPPF's aim to promote healthy communities.

Area Environmental Health Officer

I have no adverse comments to make in relation to this application, I have reviewed the above application for any potential contaminated land concerns and can confirm we have no adverse comments.

North Worcestershire Water Management

As the site is already covered over, it is not envisaged that this application would increase the risk of surface water flooding. NWWM would therefore have no objection to this application.

Leisure Services Manager

No Comments Received To Date

Town Centre Co-ordinator

No comments to make

Waste Management

No Comments Received To Date

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Public Consultation Response

No responses received

Assessment of Proposal

The site is designated as being located within the town centre, as Civic Open Space and as being within the retail core of the town. As such, the proposal should be considered against the policies that relate to these designations in the local plans, both current and emerging.

It is considered that the proposed development would contribute to the leisure opportunities within the town centre, re-use under-utilised land, contribute to a mix of uses within the town centre and result in environmental enhancements, such that it is considered to be acceptable in principle.

The change from civic open space to play area open space, whilst of different types, retains the open space in this location and as such is also considered to be acceptable in principle.

The proposal is considered likely to result in improvements to the overall appearance of the site which is to be welcomed, and would lead to an increase in footfall which would aid the security and vitality of this part of the town centre.

There are no residential properties in close proximity to the site and the type of use is unlikely to be carried on at antisocial hours and therefore it is not considered necessary to restrict hours of operation through the imposition of a condition.

It is not considered necessary to restrict or seek to control the type, quantity, size, colour or finish of the equipment to be provided, as the use is considered acceptable and the space, in terms of its extent and height, will be self-regulating to a large extent and other legislation would deal with matters such as safety and safeguarding.

The community safety officer has worked closely with the applicants to ensure that the operational arrangements are acceptable and would not result in a likely increase in crime or disorder in the town centre.

The proposal is considered compliant with local planning policy and unlikely to raise any concerns of amenity.

RECOMMENDATION:

That having regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

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- 1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of the grant of this permission.

Reason :- In accordance with the requirements of Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Procedural matters

This application is being reported to the Planning Committee because the site falls within the ownership of Redditch Borough Council. As such the application falls outside the scheme of delegation to Officers.