

PLANNING COMMITTEE

14th August 2019

Planning Application 19/00247/FUL

Provision of a floodlighting system to football pitch comprising 6 no. 15m high mounting columns with 12 floodlights

Mettis Sports & Social Club, Cherry Tree Walk, Batchley, Redditch, B97 6PB

Applicant: Mr Julian Workman
Ward: Batchley And Brockhill Ward

(see additional papers for site plan)

The author of this report is Steven Edden, Planning Officer (DM), who can be contacted on Tel: 01527 64252 Ext. 3206 Email: steve.edden@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk for more information.

Site Description

The site is within the Mettis Aerospace Sports and Social Club off Cherry Tree Walk, Batchley. The existing football pitch is sited immediately below (to the south) of a number of existing floodlit tennis courts. The pitch is sited to the north of Bromsgrove Road. To the west of the site lie dwellings, accessed via Woodland Road and to the east, dwellings accessed off Bromsgrove Road and Cherry Tree Walk.

The site comprises an area of Primarily Open Space as designated on the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4.

Proposal Description

Permission is sought for a floodlighting system to an existing football pitch. 6no. 15 metre high mounting columns would house a total of 12 floodlights (two floodlights for each column).

Relevant Policies :

Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4

Policy 1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy 13: Primarily Open Space

Policy 40: High Quality Design and Safer Communities

Policy 43: Leisure, Tourism and Abbey Stadium

Others

Redditch High Quality Design SPD

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

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Relevant Planning History

2005/537/FUL	Construction of two additional tennis courts, floodlighting to all courts, replacement pavilion	Granted	19.01.2006
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Consultations

Sport England

Comments summarised as follows:

Sport England has considered the application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (particularly Paragraph 97) and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy.

The applicant's statement comments that they wish to proceed on the basis of only using the lighting for matchplay and not for training.

Clubs wishing to compete in FA competitions and in the National League System must achieve the required standard relevant to the level of competition and must obtain an approved Floodlighting Survey Chart and a Floodlighting Inspection Report in order to be accepted for entry into a competition.

The football club do not currently play at a level that requires floodlights (they currently play at Step 7), although we appreciate that this is their ambition.

Technically, eight, six or four columns of between 15m to 18m in height are used for grass pitches suitable for FA competitions and the National League System – the design details are acceptable in this respect.

We note that from a technical perspective the proposed lighting scheme is acceptable, and we note that Worcestershire Regulatory Services have raised no objections from a residential amenity perspective.

Sport England wishes to confirm that this application accords with Exception E2 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy, and Paragraph 97 of the NPPF.

Worcestershire Highways

No objection

Worcestershire Regulatory Service: Light Pollution

Comments summarised as follows:

The revised floodlighting scheme is considered to be acceptable in terms of light spill impacting upon surrounding residential properties and complies with the E2 criteria of the Institute of Lighting Engineers (ILE) Guidance. The scheme should be implemented as proposed and I would recommend that a condition is imposed to restrict the operation of the floodlighting after 22:00hrs.

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Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

Comments summarised as follows:

No objections raised.

Having examined the proposals I do not consider that a bat survey is necessary.

The trees alongside Bromsgrove Road do not appear to be suitable for roosting bats and the road is partially lit already. Any main commuting and foraging areas for light-intolerant species are more likely to be alongside and within the woodland blocks to the south of the site rather than out in an open and already well-lit urban environment. Those species that are tolerant of light will not be significantly affected by the relatively modest change proposed here, especially in view of the seasonality of the proposed use.

Public Consultation Response

Three letters received objecting to the application for the following summarised reasons:

- Light pollution would lead to sleep deprivation
- The installation of floodlights would be a threat to bat habitats and would potentially affect their commuting and foraging routes and could lead to the bats abandoning their roosts
- During the winter months the pitch is often waterlogged and therefore not suitable as a playing surface. There is therefore insufficient justification for granting this planning application
- An increase in the number of parked cars along nearby residential streets would be a nuisance for residents
- Anti-social behaviour would increase

Other matters which are not material planning considerations have been raised but are not reported here as they cannot be considered in the determination of this application

Assessment of Proposal

Principle of development

The site is designated as Primarily Open Space in the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4. As such, Policy 13 would apply.

Policy 13 comments that: *“Open space will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced to improve quality, value, multifunctionality and accessibility. In order to maintain the levels of open space provision in the Borough, proposals which would result in the total or partial loss of Primarily Open Space will not normally be granted planning permission unless it can be demonstrated that the need for development outweighs the value of the land as an open area.”*

In this case, the open space would be protected as an area of POS. Further, the proposed development would allow the football pitch to be used more intensively for a sporting leisure use and therefore would be fully compliant with Policy 13.

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Policy 43 (A): Leisure, tourism and culture, comments under 43.2 that Leisure, tourism and culture proposals, including new build, extensions or additions to existing facilities will be promoted and supported where:

- i. the proposal is located in places that are sustainable and accessible by a choice of transport modes, principally Redditch Town Centre and/or where additional visitor numbers can be accommodated without detriment to the local economy and environment; and
- ii. they support sustainable tourism or leisure developments and benefit the economy of the Borough and enhance community facilities.

Worcestershire County Highways have raised no objection to the application and the proposal would enhance an existing community facility. As such your officers consider that the application proposal would comply with Policy 43.

Impact upon residential amenity

It is important to ensure that the impact arising from the development, particularly in terms of light pollution does not materially impact upon the residential amenities currently enjoyed by occupiers of nearby dwellings.

The Borough Councils adopted High Quality Design SPD under 4.2.54 states that:

‘Artificial light sources may cause significant harm to residential developments and wildlife. New street lights and security lighting within developments should be positioned in locations where they do not shine directly in dwelling windows, but provide sufficient lighting for safety and security on the street’

Under 4.2.55, it comments that *‘the type of lighting selected should be relevant to the local context, character and use of the area and minimise the impact of light pollution as well as being as energy efficient as possible’*

Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) have been consulted as part of this application and have raised no objections to the application based on amended plans which have recently been submitted in order to overcome original concerns regarding lux levels at surrounding residential properties. The submitted amended plans comfortably meet the required standards (max brightness levels) set out within the Institute of Lighting Engineers (ILE) guidance for Environmental Zone E3 (an area of medium ambient brightness: Urban residential areas) and the proposed lighting now meets the requirements of Environmental Zone E2 (an area of low ambient brightness: Outer urban or rural residential areas).

In terms of Para 4.2.55 of the SPD, your officers are satisfied that the lighting would be relevant to its local context and use of the area, and has minimised the impact of light pollution. Further, the applicant would be using energy efficient LED bulbs rather than less efficient Halogen type bulbs and therefore making the development as energy efficient as possible.

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The proposed floodlighting would only be used for match days and not during football training sessions. The football season runs from August through till early May and match days generally have kick off times at 2pm or 3pm on a Saturday with matches finishing at either 4 or 5pm. As such, the floodlighting would be in use for only a small part of the day. Evening kick offs are understood to be at approximately 7:30 pm with matches finishing at 9:30pm, typically on a Tuesday and / or on a Thursday evening (maximum two nights a week). The applicant is agreeable to the imposition of a planning condition (as recommended by WRS) which would mean that the floodlights could not be in use beyond 10pm.

Impact on Wildlife

It is noted that artificial light sources have the potential to cause harm to wildlife and the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust have been consulted on the application. They have raised no objection in this case. The proposed floodlighting is likely to be operational primarily for evening matches during the football season. Your officers have noted that bats are only active between the months of April and September, hibernating in the winter months when the floodlights will be in operation, albeit for a relatively short (approximately) 2 hour period. It is also noted that surrounding area is well-lit urban environment with street lights in existence along both sides of Bromsgrove Road and Woodland Road. Further, it should be noted that six tennis courts within the Mettis Sports & Social Club which are located to the immediate north of the football pitch are already floodlit with planning permission being granted for floodlighting under reference 2005/537/FUL in January 2006.

Conclusion

Your officers have concluded that this application to provide floodlighting to allow greater use of the existing football pitch is acceptable subject to the development complying with relevant submitted plans and providing the use of the floodlights are restricted in the interests of protecting the residential amenities enjoyed by the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings.

RECOMMENDATION:

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

Conditions:

- 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.

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- 2) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans and drawings:

Site Location Plan dated 22nd March 2019
15BHFSL Sports Pole Column Drg KL 4065-1 dated 22nd March 2019
Kingfisher Lighting plan D36043C: AMENDED 22nd Jul 2019

Reason: To provide certainty to the extent of the development hereby approved in the interests of proper planning.

- 3) The floodlights shall be switched off daily between 22:00 hours and 09:00 hours

Reason: In the interests of the safeguarding the residential amenities enjoyed by the occupiers of neighbouring properties

- 4) The floodlights shall be in operation only on match days and shall not use used for training purposes

Reason: In the interests of the safeguarding the residential amenities enjoyed by the occupiers of neighbouring properties

Informatives

- 1) The local planning authority have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner to seek solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with this planning application through negotiation and amendment.

Procedural matters

This application is being reported to the Planning Committee because two (or more) objections have been received. As such the application falls outside the scheme of delegation to Officers.