

**PLANNING  
COMMITTEE**

**13<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

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**Planning Application 20/01340/FUL**

**4.7m play tower to form part of replacement play area**

**Morton Stanley Park, Windmill Drive, Redditch, Worcestershire.**

**Applicant: Mrs Jackie Boreham**  
**Ward: West Ward**

**(see additional papers for site plan)**

The case officer of this application is Charlotte Wood, Planning Officer (DM), who can be contacted on Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3412 Email: Charlotte.Wood@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk for more information.

**Site Description**

The application site forms part of Morton Stanley Park, which is comprised of 95 acres of open space. The park was once a farm owned by William Morton Stanley who left the land in his will to the inhabitants of Redditch, to be used as a park. The park, however, was not opened until 1986, over 60 years after the death of William Morton Stanley.

The park lies to the north of Callow Hill and is accessed off Windmill Drive to the east and Green Lane to the west.

**Proposal Description**

The planning application relates to a 4.7 metre tall "play tower" which forms part of the replacement play area design proposed at Morton Stanley Park. The new play area will have a larger footprint than the existing play area, and will comprise toddler and junior areas which will host a large number of pieces of new play equipment, including sensory play. This park improvement scheme follows a successful tender bid from playground designers "Kompan" who put forward the successful playground design and have therefore been commissioned by Redditch Borough Council to build the play area.

Whilst Schedule 2, Part 12, Class A of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) allows for development comprising small buildings, works or equipment on land belonging to a local authority, this is subject to limitations. One such limitation is that the height of development cannot exceed 4 metres and therefore this planning application solely relates to the 4.7 metre tall play tower, which would exceed the relevant height limitation by 700mm. The remainder of the scheme is considered to benefit from planning permission by virtue of the GPDO.

The play tower subject to this application comprises a coloured steel structure formed of two levels, which includes a slide from the upper level, a vertical rope climb, curly climber, viewing platforms, and a number of tactile play panels.

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## **Relevant Policies :**

### **Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4**

Policy 1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy 13: Primarily Open Space

Policy 39: Built Environment

Policy 40: High Quality Design and Safer Communities

Policy 43: Leisure, Tourism and Abbey Stadium

### **Others**

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

NPPG National Planning Practice Guidance

## **Relevant Planning History**

No relevant planning history

## **Consultations**

### **Cllr Dormer**

No comments received to date

### **Cllr Thain**

No comments received to date

### **Community Safety Officer**

No objections provided the development complies with BS EN 1176.

### **West Mercia Constabulary**

No objections or comments regarding this application.

## **Public Consultation Response**

Two site notices were erected on site. No representations have been received to date.

## **Assessment of Proposal**

Morton Stanley Park is designated as Primarily Open Space (POS) on the proposals map and therefore Policy 13 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan no. 4 (BoRLP4) is most relevant when considering the principle of new development. The main aim of this policy is to ensure that designated POS is protected, and where appropriate, enhanced to improve its quality, value, multifunctionality and accessibility. Loss of POS is resisted unless a number of considerations are met.

With regards to the current proposal, the play tower forms part of an improvement scheme which is being undertaken in order to provide a more inclusive and higher quality play provision at the park, which would provide for children of a wide age range and would also include pieces of equipment for wheelchair users and autistic visitors. The play tower itself is multi-functional and would appeal to a wide range of visitors.

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Given that this development contributes towards an enhanced and improved area of POS which would increase its value, functionality and accessibility to more users, the proposal clearly meets the aims of Policy 13 of the BoRLP4, and therefore the principle of development is supported. Furthermore Policy 43 of the BoRLP4 supports proposals relating to leisure facilities provided they are located within a sustainable location, which is accessible by a choice of transport. In view of this, Morton Stanley Park is an established leisure facility which is located in an accessible and sustainable location, within walking distance of many residents.

Whilst the principle of development is considered acceptable it is still considered necessary to consider other material planning considerations.

Policy 39 of the BoRLP4 requires development to contribute positively to the local character of the area. Paragraph 39.5 states that areas should be designed to ensure they make places better for people, and that community views should be taken into account in the design of development. Having regards to this, it is noted that Leisure Services have carried out public consultation which informed the choice of the chosen play area design.

Further to the above policy, Policy 40 of the BoRLP seeks development of a good design including that which contributes to both public and private spaces. In order to achieve this, Policy 40 expects proposals to be of a high quality design which reflects or complements the local surroundings, is of an appropriate siting and layout, is accessible, and encourages community safety.

With regards to the above, the proposed play tower would be one of the central pieces of equipment forming the new farmyard themed play area. The powder coated steel would be finished in bright colours which would integrate into the wider theme of the play area, and the various elements making up the play tower would result in a visually interesting structure. The play tower would be towards the western side of the new play area and would be seen in the context of the other play equipment. It is noted that the land forming the play area is relatively flat in topography. Notwithstanding this, as the tower would only be 700mm taller than a structure not requiring planning permission, its visual impact above this would be minimal. In view of this, the siting and appearance of the development is considered acceptable.

Community Safety and West Mercia Police have been consulted in relation to the proposal. The Community Safety Officer has raised no concerns subject to the equipment complying with European Standards. This has been confirmed to be the case. West Mercia Police have also raised no objections to the proposal.

In view of location of the site, approximately 100 metres from any neighbouring dwellings, the development is not considered to cause any adverse impact to residential amenity.

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There have been no third party representations received as a result of public consultation.

## **Conclusion**

The play tower subject to this application would enhance and improve an existing area of POS, which provides a valued leisure facility for the community. Given that the equipment would expect to attract a wide range of users to this community facility, the proposal scores highly in relation to the social aspect of sustainable development. The siting, design and appearance of the development is considered acceptable, and given that no technical concerns have been raised by consultees, it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with the Development Plan and therefore it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

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

### **Conditions:/Reasons for Refusal**

- 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.

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

Location Plan - drawing no. CAS-71818-L6W8Q4 at scale 1:2500

Site Plan - drawing no. CAS-71818-L6W8Q4 at scale 1:1250

Morton Stanley Park Toddler & Junior Play Area - drawing no. CAS-71818-L6W8Q4 at scale 1:90

Kompan Technical Drawings - Identification: PCM111003 at scale 1:50 & 1:100

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

## **Procedural matters**

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