

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

22nd June 2010

PLANNING APPLICATION 2010/030/FUL

DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW POOL HALL BUILDING WITH ASSOCIATED PARKING, NEW ACCESS ROADS, INDEPENDENT SUB-STATION BUILDING & LANDSCAPING. THE POOL HALL BUILDING WILL ACCOMMODATE A 25M SIX LANE POOL, A LEARNER POOL WITH ASSOCIATED CHANGING FACILITIES AND 300 SPECTATOR GALLERY.

ABBEY STADIUM, BIRMINGHAM ROAD, REDDITCH

APPLICANT: REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXPIRY DATE: 12TH MAY 2010

WARD: ABBEY

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(See additional papers for Site Plan)

Site Description

The site is a large leisure facility located to the northern end of Redditch. It is accessed by vehicles from Bordesley Lane, but can be accessed on foot and by bicycle from Birmingham Road and the adjacent bus stop/layby facility, as well as the underpass from the residential part of Birmingham Road, to the west of the A441.

The site is bounded by the A441 to the west, the river Arrow to the north and the cemetery to the south and east. There are several rows/belts of trees within the site that provide screening.

There is a two-storey building on the site housing sports hall and gymnasium facilities: outside this there are parking facilities, an athletics track, football pitches, tennis courts and other sports facilities including a disused bowling green.

Proposal Description

The application proposes several elements to form a comprehensive scheme. These comprise:

- The refurbishment of the existing facilities at the Abbey Stadium site
- The erection of an extension to the existing building, to form a pool hall with seating for 300 spectators and associated changing facilities, and an atrium running through the building providing access from front to rear,

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as well as re-arranged reception facilities and access to the existing building, and a small café area overlooking the pools

- Installation of dance studio above entrance lobby
- Re-arrangement of car parking and ingress/egress layout, including use of the area currently forming the bowling green, and provision of secure cycle parking. A drop off point would be located at the main entrance, with a coach drop off point nearby to maximise pedestrian safety
- Landscaping works

The building would extend the existing facilities eastward, with a light double height atrium running through from the car parking area at the front to the running track towards the rear. The extension to the building would have a gross floor area of 2326m². The pool hall would be located to the right of this on entering the building, with the existing facilities on the left.

The north wall would be glazed, to allow passive heat and light to enter the pool area.

The supporting information states that the site is served by a regular bus service. It also seeks to demonstrate the benefits of the proposed facilities for the local communities within Redditch, as well as to any visitors of the town. The facility would be large enough to hold school and county galas, and as such would be an improvement over current facilities located elsewhere in the town. Some public consultation has occurred, particularly with potential users of the facility, to ensure that it is fit for purpose. It is proposed that construction would occur in four phases.

The building would provide additional employment opportunities and has been designed to incorporate security features, following liaison with the police liaison Officer. It is the intention of the applicant to ensure that the building reaches the highest BREEAM rating (for sustainability) that can be achieved within the budget available. Features of the proposal have been designed with this in mind, including the orientation of the pool hall, the natural ventilation in the atrium, the external design and materials and the levels of the site, in order that cut and fill can occur using only the existing materials on the site. The bricks proposed to be used have also been locally sourced.

The application would increase the employment opportunities on site from 26 FTE to 30 FTE. Most opportunities are part time, and therefore there would be more than 4 additional posts available.

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The application is supported by a Design & Access Statement, a noise impact assessment statement, a mechanical and electrical services renewables report, a geophysical survey containing site investigation, geo-technical assessment and geo-environmental assessment, an extended phase I habitat survey, a flood risk assessment (FRA), a completed version of the West Midlands Sustainability Checklist, sequential site assessment (Oct 2008) and a statement of the structural, civil, geotechnical and design proposals (Jan 2010). On 6 May 2010, a bat survey, transport assessment and green travel plan were also submitted in support of the application. Information has also been provided to clarify that an additional pitch would be provided in Washford to replace the one that would be lost as a result of this development, adjacent to existing pitch provision.

It should be noted that the existing overflow parking area facing the A441 Birmingham Road is located outside the red line application site, as is the area of parking adjacent the crematorium, which is also shown as overflow parking and has its own access from Bordesley Lane.

Relevant Key Policies:

All planning applications must be considered in terms of the planning policy framework and all other relevant material considerations (as set out in the legislative framework). The planning policies noted below can be found on the following websites:

www.communities.gov.uk

www.wmra.gov.uk

www.worcestershire.gov.uk

www.redditchbc.gov.uk

National Planning Policy

PPS1 (& accompanying documents) Delivering sustainable development

PPS4 Planning for sustainable economic growth

PPS9 Biodiversity and geological conservation

PPG17 Planning for open space, sport and recreation

Regional Spatial Strategy

SR2 Creating sustainable communities

SR3 Sustainable design and construction

UR4 Social infrastructure

CF8 Delivering mixed communities

QE1 Conserving and enhancing the environment

T2 Reducing the need to travel

T4 Promoting travel awareness

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Worcestershire County Structure Plan

- SD1 Prudent use of natural resources
- SD2 Care for the environment
- SD4 Minimising the need to travel
- CTC15 Biodiversity action plan
- T3 Managing car use
- T4 Car parking
- RST1 Criteria for the development of recreation and sports facilities

Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3

- CS1 Prudent use of natural resources
- CS2 Care for the environment
- CS6 Implementation of development
- CS7 The sustainable location of development
- S1 Designing out crime
- B(BE)13 Qualities of good design
- B(BE)14 Alterations and extensions
- B(BE)19 Green architecture
- B(NE)1a Trees, woodland and hedgerows
- (E(EMP)6 North west Redditch master plan – employment)
- E(TCR)4 Need and the sequential approach
- C(CF)1 Community facilities
- C(CF)2 Cemeteries
- C(T)12 Parking standards
- R5 Playing pitch provision
- R7 North west Redditch master plan – Abbey Stadium

Under the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3, the site is designated as falling within the North West Redditch Master Plan area, and has the river Arrow running through it.

Supplementary Planning Guidance / Supplementary Planning Documents

None relevant

Other relevant corporate plans and strategies

- Worcestershire Community Strategy (WCS)
- Worcestershire Local Area Agreement (WLAA)
- Worcestershire Local Transport Plan (WLTP)
- Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)
- RBC Corporate and performance plan

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Relevant site planning history

Appn. no	Proposal	Decision	Date
2003/398/OUT	Abbey Stadium Redevelopment	Refused	1 Feb 2006

Public Consultation responses

Responses in favour

One comment received raising the following points:

- Support the principle of development
- Support the implementation of the habitat survey proposals

Responses against

Three comments received raising the following points:

- Increase in traffic on A441 will make residential ingress/egress more difficult
- Seeking certainty that there would be no additional vehicle flow on Birmingham Road (residential end accessed from junction by fire station)
- Noise pollution
- Visual impact on residents of car park opposite
- Request reduction in council tax

The final issue is not a material planning consideration and therefore should not be considered further when determining this application.

Consultee responses

Planning Policy team

Three main issues for consideration have been raised; the loss of a playing pitch facility, the need or otherwise for an Impact Assessment, and the sustainability of the proposed development. The team have confirmed that the proposal complies with the current regional policy framework.

- a) Policy requires the consideration of whether the benefits of the proposed facility would outweigh the loss of the playing field, and no details have been provided on this point in the supporting information.
- b) The National Planning Policy framework changed at end of December 2009, during compilation of planning application. PPS4 now supersedes PPS6. Application documentation refers to PPS6 requirements, which are now irrelevant, and not those of PPS4 which now applies (Policy EC15 specifically). Most of the tests in PPS4 were previously in PPS6 and have been addressed satisfactorily. However, an additional test has been introduced in PPS4 – an Impact Assessment. This is only required on proposals with a larger floor area than that proposed here, or where

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the development does not comply with the current Development Plan or has been shown likely to have a significant impact on other centres. Policy R7 of the Local Plan seeks facilities such as those proposed, and the supporting information suggests that there would be no significant impact on other centres, therefore an Impact Assessment is not considered necessary in this case.

- c) Policies seek sustainable design solutions. Whilst it is recognised that some are incorporated within this proposal, it is also acknowledged that there would be scope for further measures/details to be included in the proposal.

Economic Development Unit

No comment to make

Environmental Health

The noise impact assessment did not include consideration of construction noise, only noise from the development once complete and in operation. Due to the sensitive adjacent land use at the crematorium/cemetery, further information in this regard should be sought.

Otherwise, no objections subject to conditions regarding construction times and operation hours of external tannoy systems, and informatives regarding light and odour.

Arboricultural Officer

No comments received

Urban Design Adviser

Comments awaited – to be reported on Update paper

County Highway Network Control

No objection subject to conditions

County Archaeology team

No objections – little scope exists for any significant deposits on site, and thus no protection is required

County Public Rights of Way Officer

No comments received

Crime Risk Manager

No objection subject to informative noting that lock and CCTV details should be to standards agreed with the police for security purposes.

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Severn Trent Water

No objection subject to a condition regarding drainage details

Environment Agency

Have acknowledged that their records regarding flood zones are incorrect, and accepted the conclusions of the FRA submitted in support of this application. They therefore raise no objections, as they anticipate no flooding issues as a result of the river or the base level proposed for the building.

English Heritage

Do not consider it necessary to comment specifically in this case

Natural England

No objection subject to a condition and an informative relating to the implementation of the additional information received

Sport England

No objection raised subject to conditions requiring adequate replacement playing pitch provision (to compensate for pitches to be lost as part of this proposed development) to be agreed in order to comply with Sport England policy.

Fire Officer

No comments received

Bromsgrove District Council

Principle of development supported, however concern raised over location which could be unsustainable or inaccessible, and seeks clarification of sequentially preferable sites and the reasons for them being discounted (PPS4 test).

Stratford on Avon District Council

No objection – no comments to make

Council for British Archaeology

No comments received

First Midland Red

No comments received

Ramblers Association

No comments received

Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

No objection subject to conditions, following receipt of additional information

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Procedural matters

Some consultees initially provided holding comments until further information was provided by the applicant's agent. The additional information received has now been passed on, and further comments have been received and reported here.

Members should be aware that since the new government administration took over in May 2010, various changes to the planning system have already been announced and introduced, along with the promise of a new bill and new changes next year.

The Regional Spatial Strategy which is referred to in the relevant policy section above is to be abolished rapidly, in order to return decision making to a local level. The following quote comes from a letter to Council leaders on 27th May has been received from Eric Pickles MP which should be taken into consideration when determining planning applications at this meeting:

'I am writing to you today to highlight our commitment in the coalition agreements where we very clearly set out our intention to rapidly abolish Regional Strategies and return decision making powers on housing and planning to local councils. Consequently, decisions on housing supply (including the provision of travellers sites) will rest with Local Planning Authorities without the framework of regional numbers and plans.

I will make a formal announcement on this matter soon. However, I expect Local Planning Authorities and the Planning Inspectorate to have regard to this letter as a material planning consideration in any decisions they are currently taking.'

Therefore, when determining this application, Officers respectfully recommend that less weight be afforded to the regional planning policies than others due to the impending cancellation of these policies. However, it is clear that currently they do still form part of the development plan to which consideration should be given in determining applications in line with the planning legislation and policy.

Assessment of proposal

The key issues for consideration in this case are the principle of development, its design/layout, its impact on neighbouring land uses, its landscaping/trees and biodiversity impacts, its highway/access/sustainability impacts, and any other material considerations.

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Principle

The proposed use of the site for continued and improved leisure facilities and activities is in accordance with the site designation within the local plan, and as such is considered to be acceptable, subject to the detailed considerations set out below, and the remaining matters of principle. It is considered that the uses proposed here would have a significant positive benefit on the Borough and its residents, and meet the objectives of the various local policy documents which identify a need for facilities to replace and enhance those that exist across the town.

Whilst it is accepted that PPS4 requires an Impact Assessment in some cases, for the reasons referred to in the summary of the comments made by the development plans team, it is considered in this case that such an assessment is not necessary. Whilst it is unhelpful that the supporting documentation all refers to national policy that has now been superseded, the tests are largely similar to those in the new PPS4, although the impact assessment is an addition. It is considered that due to the proposed floor area being less than 2500m², the use being in compliance with the local plan designation, and the demonstration that the proposed development would not have a significant impact on other town centres or leisure facilities, that in this case an Impact Assessment in the terms required by PPS4 is not applicable.

Whilst the loss of the playing field on the site in order to provide the additional built form is unfortunate, when set against the positive community benefits identified it is considered that this is to be accepted in this case. It is also considered likely that alternative provision could be made elsewhere in the Borough if necessary, although details have not been included within the proposal. Therefore, on balance, the benefit of the proposed development, in principle, is considered to outweigh the harm caused through the loss of a playing field at the stadium site.

Design and layout

The design of the proposed development is considered to be appropriate to the site and surroundings, as well as the existing built form on this site. It would not be of sufficient bulk to be visually intrusive, however it would form a bold statement and announce its presence on site in a positive way, especially to those viewing it as they enter Redditch from the north. It is not considered likely that it would cause any visual intrusion or harm to the outlook of residential properties on Birmingham Road, due to its location and the distance and separation between the two.

The layout of the site is considered to be acceptable, in that the new car parking facility would allow for safe ingress and egress of vehicles, separation for those being dropped off and safe pedestrian routes to and through the site.

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Impact on neighbouring land uses

The noise assessment demonstrates that once the facility has been completed and is in use, it would not cause any detrimental impacts on the adjacent and surrounding land uses, and especially would not cause any disturbance to the cemetery/crematorium site beyond the boundary.

However, given the sensitive nature of this adjacent land use, it is considered that details should also be provided to demonstrate that the construction phase would not cause any detrimental impacts. Information has been requested to address this point and further details will be included in the update report.

Landscaping, trees and biodiversity

The landscaping proposals are largely to retain and continue to maintain as previously the soft landscape form of the site, and as such these are considered to be appropriate to the site and surrounding uses, as well as in compliance with local planning policies.

Highways, access and sustainability

The site is in a sustainable location, and the proposed development provides for access to the site by non-car modes of travel in accordance with current planning policy objectives. It provides less than the maximum parking standards, however there are also two overflow car parks adjacent to the site which could be used when events took place. It is therefore considered that the provision proposed is acceptable:

Type of parking space	<i>Policy maximum requirement for existing facility</i>	Existing parking provision	<i>Maximum additional provision required by policy</i>	Proposed additional provision	<i>Total combined policy requirement for existing and proposed development</i>	Total proposed provision for combined development
Car parking	83	90	83	55	166	145
Disabled parking	5	7	5	1	10	8
Cycle parking	14	0	14	36	28	36
Motorcycle parking	5	0	5	0	10	0
Lorry parking	1	0	1	0	2	0
Coach parking	1	0	1	1	2	1

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30 overflow spaces exist adjacent Birmingham Road and the drop-off access lane as proposed. Approximately 53 spaces exist adjacent to the cemetery/crematorium site which are shared as overflow for both these facilities and accessed direct from Bordesley Lane, and from which there is a footpath link proposed to the Abbey Stadium site. Therefore, when considering the overall availability of provision at and adjacent to the stadium, it is considered that there is ample supply.

The overprovision of cycle parking spaces is considered to be acceptable because there are currently none provided on site, and it will assist in encouraging sustainable travel patterns in line with policy objectives.

Other issues

Some details of proposed external lighting have been provided, however it is considered appropriate to seek further details and approve them prior to them being implemented, in order to ensure that light pollution is kept to a minimum, and that areas where it would be preferable to retain darkness for wildlife benefits do remain dark.

Whilst the elevations show signage on the building, this should be discounted at this stage, as this will need to be the subject of a separate, future application for advertisement consent. Therefore, the signage can be disregarded for the purposes of determining this application. It is recommended that an informative be added to indicate this.

The Environment Agency have accepted that their definition of the site as flood zone 3 is incorrect and that it should be zone 1. Further, they have agreed with the findings of the FRA submitted, and state that they believe that the proposed building and facilities would not be at risk from flooding as they would be located 2m above the highest possible flooding level, even accounting for climate change. It is therefore recommended that a condition be imposed requiring that the floor levels be implemented as shown on the plans, in order to ensure that the facilities remain free from flood risk in the future for as long as possible.

Conclusion

It is considered that the benefit of the proposed development to the wider community and its visitors complies with relevant local and national planning policies, subject to the various requirements noted above which can be controlled through the imposition of conditions. It is not considered that the proposal would result in significant harm to amenity or safety, and it is considered to be an acceptable form of development.

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Recommendation

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

1. Time limit for commencement of development
2. Replacement pitch to be provided and useable prior to occupation/use of this development
3. Limit to hours of construction
4. Limit to hours of opening
5. Limit to hours of operation of external tannoy system
6. Drainage details
7. Materials types and finishes to be agreed
8. Lighting details to be agreed
9. Levels as shown to avoid flooding
10. Implement in accordance with bat survey
11. Car park to be provided prior to commencement of use of pool facility
12. Landscape plan to be agreed and implemented
13. Highways conditions as requested
14. As per approved plans

Informatives

1. Light nuisance
2. Odour
3. Locks/CCTV to police standards
4. Signage will require separate application for advertisement consent
5. Natural England informative
6. Highways informatives