

WELWYNHATFIELD COUNCIL
PLANNING CONTROL BOARD
11 APRIL 2002
REPORT OF THE CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER

PCB 11.04.02
PART 1
ITEM NO
FOR DECISION
CPO

S6/2001/1564/FP
INSTALLATION OF FOUR 10M HIGH LIGHTING COLUMNS AND FLOODLIGHTS
TO SERVE MULTI – USE GAMES AREA FOR THE DEHAVILLAND SPORTS AND
SOCIAL CLUB, LAND OFF ST ALBAN’S ROAD WEST, HATFIELD.

APPLICANT: ARLINGTON PROPRTY DEVELOPMENTS LTD

(Hatfield West)

1.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 The application site relates to the multi-use games area to be provided as part of the outdoor recreational facilities associated with the new De Havilland sports and social club at the Hatfield aerodrome site.
- 1.2 The sports and social club have two outdoor facilities on the greenbelt land adjacent to the club, these are a bowling green and a multi-use games area (MUGA). The two facilities are sited at a right angle to St Alban’s Road West and the MUGA is some 65m away from St Alban’s Road, and 95m from the nearest housing.
- 1.3 The MUGA is a surfaced and fenced all weather type play area capable of being used for a number of team and individual activities eg volleyball, basketball etc. The MUGA is a square area of 40m x 40m with a total area of 1600m² .

2.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The MUGA and bowling green already have planning approval from the outline and reserved matters permissions covering the aerodrome site and the new sports and social club site. This application is for floodlighting the MUGA and covers the lighting and four 10m high lighting columns sited at each corner of the square MUGA area.
- 2.2 The lights are 600watt each and produce an average lighting level within the MUGA court of 125 LUX. The lighting level reduces outside of the MUGA to 2 LUX (less than street lighting levels) at distances of 15 - 20m from the MUGA boundaries.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 Hatfield Aerodrome Site Outline Permission – S6/1999/1064/OP, DeHavilland Sports and Social Club Reserved Matters Approval – S6/2000/1471/DE.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

4.1 Hatfield Aerospace Insert, Policy GB3 – WelwynHatfield District Plan Modifications Number 1 1998.

5.0 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

5.1 Publicity has been by way of individual letters of notification sent to 79 Addresses along St Alban's Road West and to the chair of the residents association.

5.2 Individual letters of representation have been received from 3 residents raising concerns about: noise and general disturbance from the use, adverse visual impact upon the greenbelt from the columns, light pollution into neighbouring houses, distraction to drivers and the introduction of light pollution into the greenbelt area.

5.3 The Ellenbrook Area Residents Association have written making the following comments:

- The lamps should be cowled and angled so as to avoid shining into windows of properties in St Alban's Road West.
- The loss of shrubbery along St Alban's Road West has made the site more exposed and drivers could be distracted by the lights.
- Ask that the use of the lights be restricted to not later than 8pm and two days per week not to be in use.
- Landscaping along St Alban's Road West needs to be improved/augmented to provide greater screening of the site.

5.4 Herts Biological Records Trust have been advising on the impact of floodlighting upon the wildlife and ecological interest of the greenbelt area. They do not raise objection to the proposals providing that the hours of floodlighting are limited and there are at least two evenings per week without lighting being in use.

5.5 Herts County Highways have raised no objections providing the lights do not distract motorists driving along St Alban's Road West.

6.0 ASSESSMENT

6.1 The issues to be considered in this case are: [1] the potential impact of the proposed development upon residential amenity, [2] the impact upon the appearance and setting of the greenbelt and [3] issues raised by the representations received.

6.2 The DHSSC MUGA already has planning approval so the principle of the use has already been established. The addition of floodlighting will enable use to be

made of the MUGA in the evenings when natural lighting levels would not otherwise permit this – i.e generally between September to March.

- 6.3 Although the MUGA has been deliberately sited away from housing – it is over 90m from the nearest property, the use of the MUGA has the potential for generating noise and disturbance – through raised voices from players using the court. I have discussed the impact of this noise and disturbance with the Environmental Health Officer and their advice is that the best control over this impact is through restricting the hours of use of the floodlights. They have not advised that the use will generate a level of noise that is unacceptable – clearly the facility can be used at night in summer without restriction, however they have suggested that planning conditions are used and I am recommending restriction of the use of the floodlights to 9pm at the latest.
- 6.4 In terms of lighting level the lights produce a level of light that is suitable for the MUGA use, which quickly dissipates beyond the immediate site area to a level that will be lower than typical street lighting. The lit area will be visible from outside the site but will be seen in context with the DHSS Club and University sports centre and pitches. The MUGA site will not be read wholly in isolation against the setting of the darker unlit greenbelt area.
- 6.5 Guidance on the purposes, appearance and setting of the greenbelt is found in PPG2 and in the policies of the District Plan. The erection of lighting columns could be described as small scale development which facilitates sport and recreation in the greenbelt – development which is not inappropriate in the greenbelt and consistent with policy GB3. In this case consideration has to be given to the impact that four 10m high lighting columns and floodlights will have upon the appearance and setting of the greenbelt area. Depending upon the angle of view the four 10m columns will be seen against the backdrop of the University sports pitches and the wider greenbelt area beyond. Given their location and with the extra planting around the University sports pitches, and along St Alban's Road West – which are being proposed as part of the planting of the greenbelt area, that the four columns are unlikely adversely affect the character and appearance of the greenbelt.
- 6.6 The lighting will alter the appearance of this part of the greenbelt at night however as noted above the lights will not be read in isolation from the adjacent buildings and the strategic transport route, the hours of lighting will be controlled so the degree of impact upon the appearance of this part of the greenbelt is considered to be an acceptable one, consistent with policy requirements.
- 6.7 The issues raised in the representations received have been largely addressed above and in the proposed planning conditions. The hours of use suggested by the residents association have been given careful consideration but are felt to be too restrictive and slightly longer hours are proposed in the recommended planning conditions.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

7.1 That the application be approved subject to the following conditions:

01. Standard time condition – 5 years

02. Prior to the installation of the floodlights hereby approved full details of the proposed cowls to be fitted to the lights, to reduce the opportunity for direct line of site of the lighting source from St Alban's Road, shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The approved cowls shall be fitted upon installation of the floodlight on site and shall thereafter be retained as installed.

Reason: To ensure that the light source is screened from view as much as possible in the interests of residential amenity and highway safety.

03. The floodlights hereby approved may only be used on 5 nights per week which shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in advance, and only in accordance with the following – the lights may not to be used after 9.00 pm at night on Monday to Friday, not after 8.00pm on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays, Bank or Public holidays unless agreed otherwise in writing with the local planning authority.

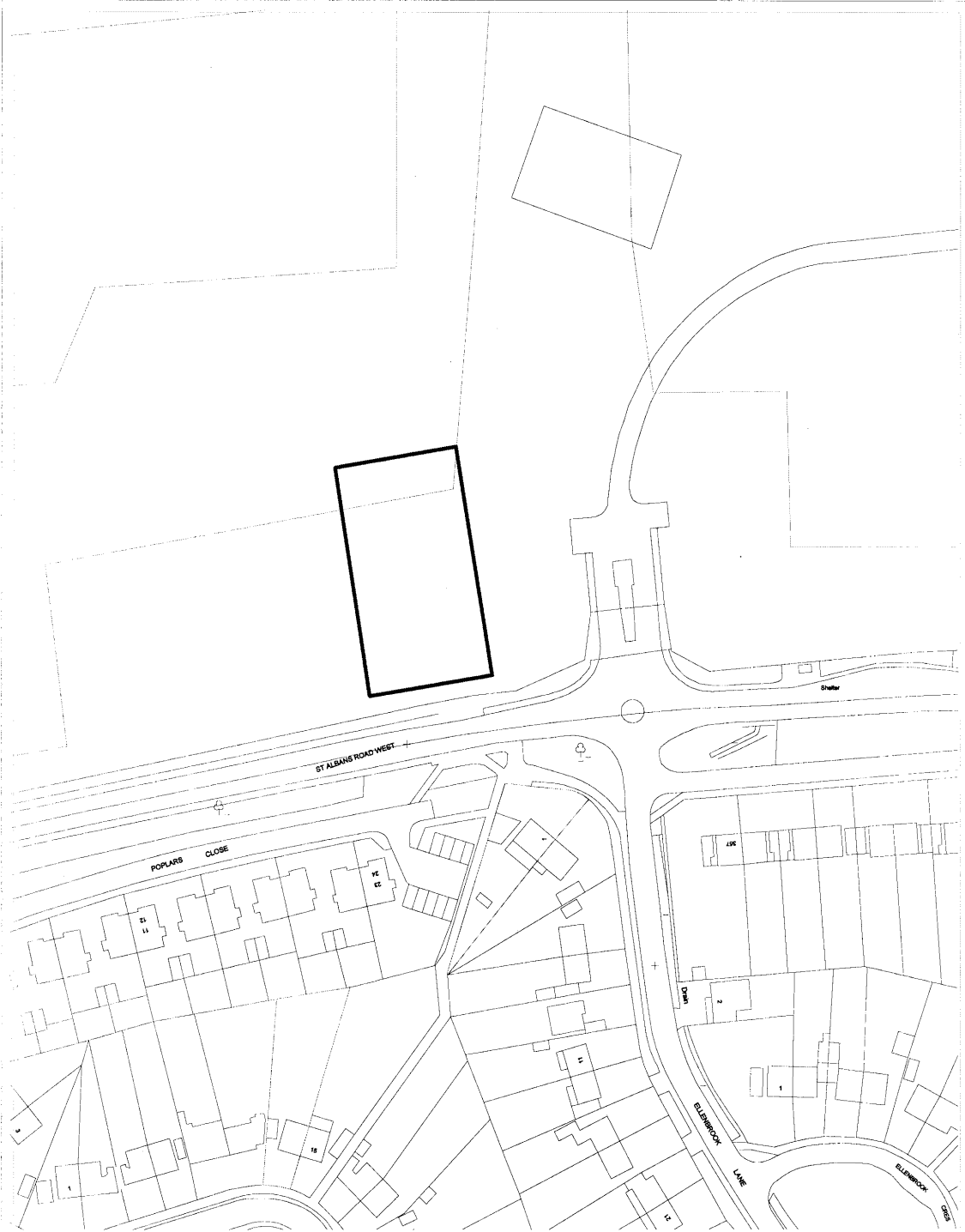
Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and to avoid adverse impact on wildlife habitats in the adjoining area.

04. The floodlights and columns hereby approved shall be installed only in accordance with the submitted details unless agreed otherwise in writing with the local planning authority in advance.

Reason: To ensure that the agreed details are implemented.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Application file - S6/2001/1564/FP



**WELWYN
HATFIELD
COUNCIL**

LAND OFF ST ALBANS ROAD WEST

SCALE: 1:1250

DRAWN BY: LIZA WREN

DATE 28th March 2002

Drawing No.

2001/1564

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