

## WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - PLANNING, PUBLIC PROTECTION AND GOVERNANCE

### **DELEGATED APPLICATION**

**Application No:** 6/2018/1200/FULL

Location: Vertigo Adventures Stanborough Park North Stanborough Road

Welwyn Garden City AL8 6DF

**Proposal:** Erection of a pagoda for use as a children's party tent

Officer: Ms Louise Sahlke

Recommendation: Refused

### 6/2018/1200/FULL

# Context Site and Application description

The site lies within Stanborough Park, to the north east edge of the north lake. The site is currently used as the high ropes adventure course facility on land which formed part of the former Splashlands Lido Site (part) and is within the approved Splashlands Complex redevelopment area (Phase 1). The site is entirely enclosed and secured by fencing.

The high ropes adventure course facility to which the tent would be located hosts the high ropes alongside a store and an office.

Stanborough Park has a number of facilities including a playground, reception area, wet-room changing facilities, toilets, café and a restaurant. The existing northern car park is accessed via a single track off Stanborough Road and has 293 parking spaces. There is a public right of way which travels along the vehicular access road.

To the west of the application site is the River Lea which borders the site and the A1 (M) further beyond, which is in an elevated position. To the south of the site lies Stanborough Road. The park continues to the north of the site and industrial and residential buildings lie to the east.

The proposal involves the erection of a tent/marquee for a temporary period (up to the lifetime of the Management Agreement between the Council and operator). The tent would be semi-permanent and would be erected between February and November every year.

The tent would be used for the purposes of children's parties and corporate briefings associated with the high ropes adventure course facility. Children's party food would be provided as pre-packed meals and music would be played during children's parties. There is an existing power source on site. The hours of use of the tent would be limited to normal operation hours for the high ropes adventure course facility.

The tent would measure 6 metres (depth) by 6 metres (width) with an eaves height of 2.5 metres and maximum ridge height of 5.9 metres. It would be constructed in white and/or clear UPVC with double wing glass and aluminium door. It would be erected on a permeable concrete block base.

Constraints (as defined within WHDP 2005)	The application site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt and Landscape Character Area. The site is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3 as it is adjacent to the River Lea. The site is also located within flood zone surface water 100 and 1000.  FLZ2 - Flood Zone 2 (Fluvial Models) - Distance: 0  FLZ2 - Flood Zone 2 (Fluvial Models and Fluvial Events) - Distance: 0  FLZ2 - Flood Zone 2 (Fluvial Events) - Distance: 0  FLZ3 - Flood Zone 3 (Fluvial Models) - Distance: 0  GB - Greenbelt - Distance: 0  LCA - Landscape Character Area (Welwyn Fringes) - Distance: 0				
	LCA - Landscape Character Area (Middle Lea Valley West) - Distance: 0 PAR - PARISH (HATFIELD) - Distance: 141.26 Wards - Handside - Distance: 0 FM10 - Flood Zone Surface Water 100mm (2715687) - Distance: 0				
	FM10 - Flood Zone Surface Water 100mm (2718530) - Distance: 0				
		ce Water 1000mm (74434) -			
	HEN - No known habitats present (medium priority for habitat creation) - Distance: 0				
	HEN - No known habitats present (high priority for habitat creation) - Dis 0 SAGB - Sand and Gravel Belt - Distance: 0				
Relevant planning history	Planning  Previous planning applications relate to use as lido.  Application Number: N6/2010/3120/DC3 Decision: Approval Subject to s106 Decision Date: 07 March 2013  Proposal: Redevelopment of former Splashlands Complex to include; Phase 1: construction of high ropes adventure course, supporting ticket kiosk and clearance of former lido area and; Phase 2: redevelopment of former lido site to				
	provide a wet play area, extension and refurbishment of existing toilet block provide a cafe, education room, ticket office, landscaping, associated car paaccess and highways improvements.				
Consultations	Cupport: C	Object: 0	Othor: 0		
Neighbour representations	Support: 0	Object: 0	Other: 0		
Publicity	None as no immediate residential properties, and surrounding land owned by WHDC.				
Summary of neighbour responses	None.				
Consultees and	WHBC - Client Services -	- No objection.			

### responses

No impact on domestic refuse services

### WHBC - Public Health and Protection - No objection

Noise from music and shouting

Noise from shouting is expected from this type of development, with excitable children in party atmosphere. However, the proposed development is unlikely to cause a significant increase in noise if at all from what is already on site in terms of the playground, general park area and high ropes course.

Noise from music will be more controllable, and from checking on our mapping system the closest properties are over 180m away with the A1M in between, the next closest properties are over 230m away which will enable a significant amount of attenuation.

### Food hygiene

The applicant is recommended to contact the Public Health and Protection department to discuss food hygiene requirements.

It is noted from the report that pre-packed meals will be provided for parties. Depending on whether food is prepared on site or is brought in from an external company, will depend on whether a food registration will be required. Storage of food and handwashing facilities to use prior to consumption at the party are other important aspects which will need to be considered.

### Environment Agency - No objection.

The proposed development appears to sit within Flood Zone 2 as defined in table 1 of the Technical Guide to the National Planning Policy Framework and is therefore at risk of flooding. Please note that there are areas of Flood Zone 3 and 3b within the red line boundary of the site.

Please refer the applicant to our standing advice. Applicants should follow the advice and submit a completed form as part of their planning application submission.

Please note that this advice states that a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) should be included in the application. While the Planning Statement dated April 2018 refers to a FRA, one has not been submitted in support of this application.

Advice to Applicant - Flood Risk Activity Permit

This development may require an Environmental Permit from the Environment Agency under the terms of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2016 for any proposed works or structures, in, under, over or within 8 metres of the top of the bank of designated 'main rivers'. This was formerly called a Flood Defence Consent. Some activities are also now excluded or exempt. An environmental permit is in addition to and a separate process from obtaining planning permission. Further details and guidance are available on the GOV.UK website

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-activities-environmental-permits.

<u>Hertfordshire County Council - Hertfordshire Transport Programmes & Strategy - No objection.</u>

The proposal is for Installation of children's party tent. The access to the application site is via a pedestrian gate near the ticket kiosk building and approached from a footpath which leads from the car park off Stanborough Road. The development is unlikely to have significant implications on the public highway.

### <u>Lead Local Flood Authority - No objection.</u>

The proposed development does not include residential dwellings, site area is less than 1 ha and non-residential floor space change is less than 1000m2. Would consider it as a minor application, and therefore the LLFA should not be a statutory consultee and can only offer advice to the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

The proposed development site lies within Flood Zone 2 and 3. Therefore, the applicant should contact the Environment Agency in relation to any requirements they may have regarding fluvial flood risk.

Would advise the LPA that the applicant should provide a Flood Risk Assessment for the proposed development site.

Would consider that the proposed development would not have a significant impact on surface water management on the site. Therefore, would advise the LPA have no objection to the proposed development on surface water management grounds.

Please note if the LPA decide to grant planning permission wish to be notified for our records should there be any subsequent surface water flooding that we may be required to investigate as a result of the new development.

<u>Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council - Estates Department</u> – No comments received.

WHBC - Corporate Property - No comments received.

Relevant Policies				
$oxed{\boxtimes}$ D1 $oxed{\boxtimes}$ D2 $oxed{\boxtimes}$ GBSP1 $oxed{\square}$ GBSP2 $oxed{\boxtimes}$ M14				
Supplementary Design Guidance Supplementary Parking Guidance Interim Policy for				
car parking and garage sizes				
Others				
Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005				
SD1: Sustainable Development				
R1: Previously Developed Land				
R2: Contaminated land				
R3: Energy efficiency				
R5: Waste management				
R6: River corridors				
R7: Protection of ground and surface water				
R11: Biodiversity and development				

R15: Wildlife sites

R17: Trees, woodland and hedgerows

R19: Noise and vibration pollution

M1: Integrating transport and land use

M2: Transport assessments

M5: Pedestrian facilities

M6: Cycle routes and facilities

M8: Powered two wheelers

M14: Parking standards for new development

D7: Safety by design

D8: Landscaping

D9: Access and design for people with disabilities

RA10: Landscape Character Areas

RA21: Leisure and Tourism in the Countryside

RA25: Public Rights of Way

CLT2: New and Expanded Leisure Facilities

CLT3: Stanborough Park

### <u>Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission 2016</u>

SP1 Sustainable development

SP4 Transport and travel

SADM2 Highway network and safety

SADM3 Sustainable transport for all

SP6 Community services and facilities

SADM7 New community services and facilities and losses of community services and facilities

SP9 Place making and high quality design

SADM11 Amenity and layout

SADM12 Parking, servicing and refuse

SP10 Sustainable design and construction

SADM14 Flood risk and surface water management

SP11 Protection and enhancement of critical environmental assets

SADM16 Ecology and landscape

SADM18 Environmental pollution

SP25 Rural development

SADM34 Development within the green belt

### Main Issues

### Planning history

In March 2013, the redevelopment of the former Splashlands Complex to include: Phase 1: construction of high ropes adventure course, supporting ticket kiosk and clearance of former lido area and; Phase 2: redevelopment of former lido site to provide a wet play area, extension and refurbishment of existing toilet block to provide a cafe, education room, ticket office, landscaping, associated car park access and highways improvements was approved.

Phase 1 of the redevelopment to construct the high ropes adventure course facility did not include a party tent type facility. Therefore it is considered that the tent should be assessed on its own merits but with reference made to the planning history.

# Wider planning history for Stanborough Park

In September 2015, temporary permission for five years for a semi-permanent marquee in association with the watersports facilities, to include the levelling and resurfacing of the dinghy park was refused.

The proposed development was considered to represent an inappropriate form of development within the green belt by virtue of its impact on openness. Applicable 'very special circumstances' fail to clearly outweigh the substantial weight given to harm to the green belt by reason of inappropriateness, openness and any other harm. The proposed development as also considered to be of poor quality design which fails to respect the character of the surrounding area.

This refused application is similar to that proposed under this current planning application. Therefore reference has been made to it however it is understood that every application is assessed on its own merits.

## Principle of development

Sustainable development

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) refers to the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Decision-makers should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

### **Policy**

The application site is located on land that is designated as Green Belt where the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is applicable. Paragraph 145 of the NPPF states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt.

Exception to this include;

• the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries, and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

Policy CLT2 of the District Plan 2005 is also applicable which refers to new and expanded leisure facilities. This policy outlines that the preferred location for new leisure facilities is in the district's two town centres. It outlines that where there are no suitable sites in the town centres, but there is a clear need for the facility, the council may consider proposals in edge of centre locations, at district or neighbourhood centres or in other areas with high accessibility by public transport. In all cases the council will only permit proposals for new or expanded leisure facilities where all of the following criteria are met;

- i. The facility would not adversely affect the vitality and viability of the two town centres;
- ii. There is no harmful impact on the amenities of nearby residential properties and other uses;
- iii. It will not cause unacceptable traffic nuisances in terms of noise or traffic generation:
- iv. The development is in keeping with the scale and character of the surrounding building and area; and
- v. The site is easily accessible by passenger transport, walking and cycling.

Policies SP6 and SADM7 of the Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission 2016 are similar in their aims.

Policy CLT3 of the District Plan 2005 also seeks to ensure that development should have no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including this land within it than the development which existed on the site at the time of closure of the swimming complex.

In addition to the above, Policy RA21 of the District Plan 2005 is applicable which refers to Leisure and Tourism in the Countryside. This policy allows proposals for recreational development subject to the;

- i. The proposed use is in accordance with Green Belt polices;
- ii. The proposed uses would not have an adverse effect on the amenity of neighbouring properties, nor the character and other environmental assets of the countryside;
- iii. The proposal would be accessible be means of passenger transport, cycleway, footpaths and bridleway;
- iv. Existing buildings are re-used if possible;
- v. New buildings that are permitted in accordance with (i) should reflect the local rural character in terms of design, massing and materials; and vi. Any new development must be acceptable in terms of its impact on the highway network, including highway safety.

Policies SP25 of the Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission 2016 is similar in its aim.

### Green Belt assessment

The high ropes adventure course facility was considered under the Splashlands re-development planning application to provide appropriate outdoor recreational facilities on land which forms the Splashland Complex. The high ropes adventure course facility was predominately located on previously outdoor recreational developed land. It's associated store and office was considered a small single storey building (floorspace of 115sqm) to be essential to the high ropes facilities providing a ticket office and storage space for the equipment. Therefore the high ropes adventure course facility was not considered to conflict with the wording of the NPPF subject to the caveats that the openness of the Green Belt was preserved and the proposal did not conflict with the purposes of including land in it.

The proposed tent would provide facilities for a children's party room and space for corporate briefing. The agent has not provided explanation to why these uses can't be undertaken within the confines of the existing building or within the grounds of the high ropes adventure course facility which is enclosed by fencing. Therefore it is considered that the agent has not provided suitable explanation to why the provision of a tent is an appropriate facility in connection with the existing use of the land.

The existing high ropes adventure course facility comprises an open area facility which incorporates timber posts arranged around the site together with the erection of a small building. It was not considered to have a greater impact upon the openness of or harm the purposes of the Green Belt than what was previously on the site. These previous structures have now been removed and the high ropes adventure course facility erected. No details have been provided of the original buildings on site and therefore the Case Officer has reviewed that within application, N/2010/3120/DC3.

The original floorspace of the Splashlands development was considered to be 1170sqm and the highest structure was 4 metres.

The tent would be located to the north west of the high ropes adventure course facility. It is shown 10.5 metres in from the application boundary line. It would be 6 metres (width) by 6 metres (deep) with an eaves height of 2.5 metres and maximum ridge height of 5.9 metres.

Due to its position, bulk, increased height above the original structures, massing, materials and level of permanence against a backdrop of predominantly light weight structures, it is considered that the proposed tent would appear prominent within its immediate setting to the high ropes adventure course facility and from wider views when viewed with the existing mature trees surrounding the site. Therefore the proposed tent would have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including this land within it contrary to the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018, and local plan policies.

### Vitality and viability

The proposed tent is a suitable outdoors use but given its use in relation to the high ropes adventure course facility would not be more suited to a location inside the two town centres of the Borough. Notwithstanding this it is located in close proximity to Welwyn Garden City, where it is not considered that it would adversely affect the vitality and viability of the centre given the nature of the use and that there are no other facilities similar to this within close proximity of the site. With regard to the remaining criteria of this policy, these are assessed in the sections below.

### Conclusion

The tent would harm the openness of the Green Belt. As a result, the development fails to fall within an exception to Green Belt Policy representing an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt, and substantial weight should be afforded to the harm to the green belt by virtue of inappropriateness, openness, as well as any other harm.

The proposals impact upon the character and appearance of the locality and openness of the Green Belt

The application site's designation as the former Splashland Complex, which is outlined in Policy CLT3 of the District Plan 2005, recognises that previously there was development which had been built within the boundaries which was an important built leisure facility for the district. Therefore this policy allows for future leisure facilities on this site subject to it being well planned and not having a greater impact than the existing uses previously on the site at the time of the closure of the swimming pool complex.

No details of the original buildings and structures has been provided as part of this planning application. Therefore the Case Officer has referred to the planning history.

Policy CLT3 of the District Plan 2005 allows for the redevelopment of the Splashland complex subject to the following criteria;

It should have no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including this land within it than the development which existed on the site at the time of the closure of the swimming complex

This has been discussed under the principle section of the delegated report and is considered contrary to planning policy.

Notwithstanding this, the proposed tent would as a result of its siting, form and height be visible from the surrounding area. It is considered an obtrusive form of development which would fail to integrate within the existing landscape and would fail to preserve the openness and purposes of the Green Belt.

With regard to the impact of the development on the visual amenities and character of the Green Belt, policies D1 and D2 of the District Plan 2005 are also relevant which aim to ensure a high quality of design and to ensure that development respects and relates to the character and context of the locality, maintaining and where possible enhancing the character of the existing area.

The proposed development would be visible from a number of locations around the site which are publicly accessible, including public rights of way and the mound to the north of the application site where views down onto the development will be available. The proposed tent would be located on the lower land levels and would be adjacent to the landscape along the River Lea. This stretch of the park has several tall trees which range from 12m to 18m in height. The tent would be 4 metres which is lower in height than the abseiling tower at 13m which is broadly the same height as the surrounding trees. Based on height alone, the tent could integrate appropriately with the surrounding trees and landscape. However the tent does not blend into the landscape due to the use of inappropriate materials, which are not in keeping with other buildings and structures on site.

The tent would not be of the quality of design that the District Plan strives for in its policies. The tent does not reflect the nature of or the character of the area. Considering that there are no immediate plans to replace the tent with a better quality structure, and the need for the tent is not detailed as temporary, it is considered that the poor quality design is not overcome by the temporary time period of the permission sought. Whilst the siting of the tent is such that it is only discernible from spaces within the wider site (Stanborough Park), it is maintained that the tent would be an incongruous addition to the area which would detract from the character of the site.

In conclusion, the proposed development would fail to comply with the NPPF 2018 and Policies CLT2, D1, D2, RA10 and RA21 of the District Plan 2005.

Would the development maintain the amenity of adjoining occupiers?

The application site is located approximately 290m from the nearest residential property, which is within Amethysts Walk to the east of the application site. Given this distance, the proposed development would not impact on the residential amenity of the occupiers of this property or any other neighbouring property in terms of an overbearing impact, loss of privacy or loss of light.

However, the nature of the development could give rise to noise and disturbance where the predominant noise source would be from children and people shouting and enjoying themselves whilst using the proposed equipment. The proposed development is unlikely to cause a significant increase in noise if at all from what is already on site in terms of the playground, general park area and high ropes course.

Noise from music will be more controllable, the closest properties are over

	180m away with the A1M in between, and with the next closest properties are over 230m away which will enable a significant amount of attenuation.		
	Therefore, whilst there would be likely to an increase in noise as a result of the proposal, the noise arising from the proposed development would be unlikely to have a detrimental impact on the surrounding and properties. In addition, given the opening hours of the proposed development, it is considered that any noise from the scheme would not cause a detrimental impact, in terms of noise and disturbance, to the nearby residential properties to warrant the refusal of the application.  Therefore no objections are raised with regard to the NPPF 2018 and local planning policies.		
	promining periodos.		
Would the development	The proposed development would not intensify the existing use, thereby not warranting any further parking provision.		
provide / retain sufficient parking/access?	No changes would be made to the existing pedestrian or vehicular access of the site.		
Landscaping Issues	The proposed development would not impact on any trees. However if permission is granted, it is expected that details of protective fencing and construction details are provided.		
	The site is located within the Mimshall Valley Landscape Character Area where policy RA10 of the District Plan 2005 seeks an 'improve and conserve' approach. It is not considered that the proposal would improve and conserve the landscape character area as there are no improvements being made. Should planning permission be granted, it is considered that a condition could be utilised to ensure that the impact of the tent albeit contrary to other planning policy such as the Green Belt could be softened through the use of indigenous planting.		
	Therefore subject to a suitably worded landscape condition, the proposal would be acceptable in regards to the NPPF 208 and policies RA10 and D8 of the District Plan 2005.		
Ecology	The proposed tent due to the nature of the development is not considered to impact on local ecology.		
Flood Risk Asessment	The proposed development appears to sit within Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 and 3b within the red line boundary of the site.		
	The Local Planning Authority have viewed the Environment Agency's standing advice before making a decision on this application.		
	This advice states that a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) should be included in the application. While the Planning Statement dated April 2018 refers to a FRA, one has not been submitted in support of this application.		
	The applicant considers that a full FRA has been undertaken as part of the Splashlands Development. Therefore is not required for this planning application. However the tent was not included as part of this application and therefore it is considered that a FRA should be included to determine the flood risk. Therefore the proposal is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework 2018, Policy R7 of the District Plan 2005.		

	The Environment Agency have stated that this development may require an Environmental Permit from the Environment Agency under the terms of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2016 for any proposed works or structures, in, under, over or within 8 metres of the top of the bank of designated 'main rivers'. This was formerly called a Flood Defence Consent. Some activities are also now excluded or exempt. An environmental permit is in addition to and a separate process from obtaining planning permission. Further details and guidance are available on the GOV.UK website https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-activities-environmental-permits.  Therefore should planning permission be granted, this advice will be included as part of an informative.
Waste and recycling	No changes would be made to the existing waste and recycling facilities on site. Therefore no objection is raised.
Equalities and diversity	The Equality Act 2010 came into force in April 2011. Section 149 of the Act introduced the public sector equality duty, which requires public authorities to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of the relevant protected characteristics listed within this Act and to advance equality of opportunity. In relation to this specific application due regard has been made to the protected characteristics and it is considered that there would be no adverse impact caused to this development.

#### Conclusion

The proposed tent/marquee would harm the openness of the Green Belt. As a result, the development fails to fall within an exception to Green Belt Policy representing an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt, and substantial weight should be afforded to the harm to the green belt by virtue of inappropriateness, openness, as well as any other harm.

In regards to any other harm, the proposed tent would be of poor quality design harming the character of the site that would not be made more acceptable by the request for its temporary siting only. The substantial weight afforded to these harmful elements is not clearly outweighed by the cumulative 'very special circumstances' applicable. The proposal therefore fails to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework 2018, policies D1, D2, RA10, RA21 CLT2, CLT3, and GBSP1 of the District Plan 2005, and the Supplementary Design Guidance Statement of Council Policy 2005.

The proposed development does not provide a Flood Risk Assessment and therefore is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework 2018 and Policy R7 of the District Plan 2005.

### **Reasons for Refusal:**

The proposed tent would harm the openness of the Green Belt. As a result, the
development fails to fall within an exception to Green Belt Policy representing an
inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt, and substantial weight should
be afforded to the harm to the green belt by virtue of inappropriateness, openness,
as well as any other harm.

Accordingly, the proposal fails to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework 2018, policies RA21 CLT2, CLT3, and GBSP1 of the District Plan 2005, and the Supplementary Design Guidance Statement of Council Policy 2005.

- 2. In regards to any other harm, the proposed tent would be of poor quality design harming the character and the appearance of the site that would not be made more acceptable by the request for its temporary siting only. The substantial weight afforded to these harmful elements is not clearly outweighed by the cumulative 'very special circumstances' applicable. The proposal therefore fails to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework 2018, policies D1, D2, RA10, RA21 CLT2, CLT3, and GBSP1 of the District Plan 2005, and the Supplementary Design Guidance Statement of Council Policy 2005.
- 3. The planning application is not supported by a Flood Risk Assessment that demonstrates the developments suitability for its location within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and therefore is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework 2018 and Policy R7 of the District Plan 2005.

### REFUSED DRAWING NUMBERS

4.

Plan Number	Revision Number	Details	Received Date
VA1(A3)		Elevations	31 May 2018
Site Plan		Site Plan	8 May 2018
Location Plan		Location Plan	31 May 2018
Proposed Block Plan		Proposed Block Plan	31 May 2018

### POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

The decision has been made taking into account, where practicable and appropriate the requirements of paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework and material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the development plan (see Officer's report which can be viewed on the Council's website or inspected at these offices).

### **Determined By:**

Mr Michael Robinson 31 July 2018

