

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2008/2115/FP
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NOTATION:

The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

King George V Playing Fields are situated on the eastern side of Northaw Road East, which is the main road leading out of Cuffley. This particular section of Northaw Road East is progressively rural in character, due to the location wholly within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

The application is adjacent to an extensive sports ground, which also contains a children's playground, several tennis courts, bowling green and several small outbuildings (namely used for storage facilities) and an existing clubhouse (pavilion). The existing sports site is irregular shaped and approximately 15.5 hectares. There is parking provision to the front of the site.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The application applies for the change of use on an area of existing agricultural land for the use as recreational land by the existing sports facility. The application has not included any details of alterations that would be made to the land and therefore has only applied to agree the principle of this change of use.

The application site is adjacent to the western access onto Northaw Road East. The site has a width of approximately 14m by a depth of 60m.

PLANNING HISTORY:

S6/1979/706 – Extension to bowling club pavilion – Approved.

S6/1982/230 – Sports pavilion – Approved.

S6/1990/612 – Single storey extension to clubhouse – Approved.

S6/2000/514 – Erection of a storage building – Approved.

S6/2003/008 – Erection of new bowls pavilion – Approved.

S6/2005/598 – Erection of new bowls clubhouse – Approved.

S6/2006/0279/FP – Erection of side extension to existing bowls club – Approved.

S6/2007/1249/AD – Erection of 4 non-illuminated signs – Approved

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

National Policy

PPS1: Delivering sustainable development

PPG2: Green Belts

East of England Plan 2008

SS1: Achieving Sustainable Development

T14: Parking

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:

None

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

SD1: Sustainable Development

GBSP1: Definition of Green Belt

R3: Energy Efficiency

M14: Parking standards for new developments

D1: Quality of design

D2: Character and context

D8: Landscaping

D9: Access and Design for people with disabilities

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parking

Standards, January 2004

CONSULTATIONS

NORTHAW & CUFFLEY PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

No comments received as the applicant is the Parish Council.

REPRESENTATIONS

This application has been advertised by site notice and no representations have been received. Period expired 22 December 2008.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

- 1. The proposals appropriateness when considered against Green Belt policy and the proposal's impact upon the openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt**
- 2. Other Material Planning Considerations**

1. The application site and King George V Playing Fields are located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. Central Government Guidance in the form of Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (PPG2) "Green Belts", states that within the Metropolitan Green Belt there is a presumption against development except for certain purposes, which include essential facilities for outdoor sport.

“essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, for cemeteries, and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it”

PPG2 goes on to stipulate, essential facilities should be genuinely required for uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it. Possible examples of such facilities include small changing rooms or unobtrusive spectator accommodation for outdoor sport, or small stables for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation.

The application site is adjacent to an existing, well serviced sports and recreation facility. The grounds are accessible and provide a range of sport facilities for different ages within the community. The proposal would accommodate a relatively modest area, which would be flanked by the existing sports grounds to the north and east. The proposed change of use would not appear visually out of place and no alterations have been proposed that would affect the openness of the Green Belt. There is an existing hedge along the boundary with Northaw Road East, which would screen the site and ensure that it does not appear more noticeable than the existing fields and sports grounds. The applicant has indicated that the hedge would be retained and this is considered to be acceptable.

The existing site is considered to form an essential sports facility within the Green Belt and provides a recreational area that would have numerous benefits for the surrounding community. Although it has been acknowledged that any further proposals within the land would have to be assessed on their own merits. The proposed change of use of the land would not conflict with Green Belt Policy and is considered to be acceptable.

In summary, the proposed change of use would form an essential facility for outdoor sport and recreation and meets the requirements of PPG2.

2. The application as applied solely for the change of use of the land and this would not result in an adverse impact upon the character and context of the surrounding area.

The site is opposite a farm house and some barns that are used for commercial purposes. These would not suffer any loss of amenity and the proposed change of use is not likely to be noticeable from the current arrangements.

Any other properties are sited a sufficient distance from the application site to ensure that the proposed change of use would not result in a loss of residential amenity.

The application has only applied for a change of use and a sustainability checklist has not been included. Although in this case it is considered to be acceptable, any further alterations to land may need to demonstrate how the criteria of the checklist have been taken into account.

The existing site has a relatively large off road car parking area. The proposed change of use would be to a relatively small area of land, when compared to the wider site. Due to the proposal not creating a significantly larger site, the proposed works would not require the provision of further off road parking space.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed change of use would comply with Green Belt policy and would not have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The proposal would not affect residential amenity and would not have an adverse impact on the character an appearance of the locality. The application is considered to be acceptable and to comply with the relevant requirements of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS:

1. C.2.1: 3 Year Standard Time Limit
2. C.13.1: Development in accordance with approved plans/details Site Location Plan 1:1250 received and dated 10 November 2008.

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

Reason for Grant of Full Planning Consent:

The proposal has been considered against Planning Policy Statement/Guidance PPS1, PPG2, East of England Plan 2008 and development plan policies SD1, GBSP1, R3, D9, D1, D2, D8, M14 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, in addition to the Human Rights Act 1998, which indicate that the proposal should be approved. Material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the Development Plan (see Officer’s report which can be inspected at these offices).

INFORMATIVES: None.

DRAWING NUMBERS:

Site Location Plan 1:1250 and date stamped 10 November 2008.

Signature of author..... Date.....