



PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

TO: Planning Committee North

BY: Head of Development

DATE: 6 October 2020

DEVELOPMENT: Retrospective application for 8 floodlight columns to the main pitch and 4 floodlight columns to the training pitch. Erection of x1 standing and x1 seated spectator stands on southern side. Erection of a portacabin, shed and container between main pitch and training pitch. Creation of hardstanding area between the grandstand and training pitch with the creation of a footpath around the training pitch. Installation of turnstiles, internal and external changes to the clubhouse, amendments to pond and addition of front gates.

SITE: Horsham Football Club The Camping World Community Stadium Worthing Road Horsham

WARD: Southwater North

APPLICATION: DC/19/1404

APPLICANT: **Name:** Horsham Football Club **Address:** Horsham Football Club The Camping World Community Stadium Worthing Road Horsham

REASON FOR INCLUSION ON THE AGENDA: More than eight persons in different households have made written representations raising material planning considerations that are inconsistent with the recommendation of the Head of Development.

RECOMMENDATION: To approve planning permission subject to appropriate conditions

1. THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.1 To consider the planning application.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

1.2 The football club facility to the south of Horsham was granted permission in 2017 and is now complete. This proposal is retrospective and covers alterations which are amendments to the original permission. The proposal comprises the following:

- Retention of 8 floodlight columns around the main football pitch (4 to the north side and 4 to the south side).
- Retention of 1 x standing and 1 x seated spectator stands on southern side of the main pitch.
- Retention of a portacabin (9.8m wide by 3.1m deep by 2.7m high), shed (4m wide by 3m deep x 2.7m high and container (6m wide by 2.4m deep by 2.6m high) between main pitch and training pitch.

- Creation of hardstanding area between the grandstand and training pitch with the creation of a footpath around the training pitch.
- Installation of turnstiles (2.7m wide by 2.5m deep by 2.4m high) to the north and south of clubhouse.
- Minor internal and external changes to the clubhouse.
- Amendments to the pond layout and addition of front gates.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

- 1.3 Horsham Football Club are in the Isthmanian Premier Division and successfully hosted a number of games last year before matches were postponed due to the pandemic. The site is officially known as The Camping World Community Stadium. The facility provides a senior 3G pitch with spectator stands and a three quarter size second pitch for coaching, training and youth facilities, both with floodlighting. The facility also includes a club house with changing facilities and car parking.
- 1.4 The site is located approximately 2km south of Horsham and 2km north of Southwater. Access to the facility is from Worthing Road, from an access road which is shared by Horsham Golf and Fitness Club. Golf courses are to the north and south of the site. The site is also adjacent to a golf driving range. Other development in the area includes a Civic Amenity Site and a Park and Ride facility for Horsham Town Centre to the west.
- 1.5 To the north west of the site lies land used for horses, in connection Gate Cottage. Gate Cottage is a grade II listed building fronting Worthing Road. Further listed buildings are located beyond the golf course to the north east of the site. These are part of residential properties at Denne Park, including Denne Park House. Denne Park House has been converted into apartments and many of the adjoining buildings are now converted to residential properties.
- 1.6 A residential property also lies to the south east of the proposed site. This property, along with two further dwellings to the east also share the access road from Worthing Road with the Golf Club. The boundary of the application site to the west is formed with ancient woodland and screens the site from Worthing Road. There is both woodland and a less dense tree screen to the north and east and further woodland to the south fronting the existing access road.

2. INTRODUCTION

STATUTORY BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

- 2.2 The following policies are considered to be relevant to the assessment of this application:

2.3 **The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):**

2.4 **Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):**

- Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
- Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
- Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
- Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
- Policy 33 - Development Principles

Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 - Parking
Policy 43 - Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

RELEVANT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2.5 The Examiner has published his report on the 15 May 2020 on the Southwater Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031 to Horsham District Council. The Examiner has recommended that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum on the basis that it has met all the relevant legal requirements. A decision statement was published 20 August 2020.

Relevant policies are:

- SNP1 – Core Principle
- SNP16 – Design
- SNP18 – A Treed Landscape

PLANNING HISTORY AND RELEVANT APPLICATIONS

2.6 The most recent and relevant planning history is as follows:

DC/16/2856	Proposed 3G Football Ground (including main pitch and training pitch), clubhouse, stands, access, parking and landscaping (to serve as the home ground for Horsham Football Club). 20m high netting and posts to adjacent golf driving range.	Application Permitted on 23.08.2017
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3. OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS

3.1 Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk

INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

3.2 **HDC Landscape Architect:** No objection.

3.3 **HDC Environmental Health:** No objection.

3.4 **HDC Leisure & Parks:** No objection.

OUTSIDE AGENCIES

3.5 **WSCC Highways:** No objection..

3.6 **Ecology Consultant:** No objection.

3.7 **Sussex Police:** No objection.
Advice given on crime prevention measures.

3.8 **Sport England:** No objection.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

- 3.9 **Southwater Parish Council:** No objection. objection to suitable ecology report.
- 3.10 **21** representations have been received (from 15 different households) objecting to the application on the following grounds:
- The floodlights result in a significant loss of amenity to nearby properties resulting in excessive glare.
 - The lights are used regularly for training matches and, when they were in use, they resulted in significant light pollution.
 - The existing and proposed screening is insufficient - evergreens should be used instead of deciduous trees and bushes to mitigate the impact of the facility during the winter months.
 - The facility results in excessive noise, including swearing from the players.
 - The proposal has a negative impact on the local wildlife and ancient woodland.
 - There has been a lack of dialogue between the football club and local residents since the facility has opened.

4. HOW THE PROPOSED COURSE OF ACTION WILL PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS

- 4.1 Article 8 (Right to respect of a Private and Family Life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (Protection of Property) of the Human Rights Act 1998 are relevant to this application, Consideration of Human rights forms part of the planning assessment below.

5. HOW THE PROPOSAL WILL HELP TO REDUCE CRIME AND DISORDER

- 5.1 It is not considered that the development would be likely to have any significant impact on crime and disorder. Sussex Police have offered further advice on crime prevention measures which has been forwarded for the attention of the football club.

6. PLANNING ASSESSMENTS

- 6.1 Planning permission is sought for various alterations implemented at to the Horsham Football Club facility. The main considerations in this application are whether the alterations are appropriate in relation to their impact on the amenity of adjacent properties, the design and visual impact of the changes, ecology, highway and landscape impacts.

Design and Visual Impact

- 6.2 The proposal includes the retention of 8 floodlight columns around the main pitch and 6 columns around the training pitch. The floodlights are all 15m high. As approved under the original application, planning permission was granted for 6 floodlights to the main pitch and 4 to the training pitch, which were also 15m high. The increase in floodlights around the main pitch has resulted in objections from residents. These objections relate to the glare from the floodlights, which is considered below. The floodlights themselves and the increase to 8 columns around the main pitch is considered to be visually appropriate in the context of the football facility. The football facility is mainly enclosed by woodland, especially to the west and south sides by existing ancient woodland, and the facility cannot be readily seen from the surrounding area.
- 6.3 The other alterations included in this proposal are also considered minor and appropriate in relation to their design and visual impact. The scheme includes the retention of 3 containers and a hardstanding area in between the main pitch and the training pitch. This comprises a

portacabin, shed and a container. The containers are required for storage of training equipment for the Horsham Football Club and other clubs who use the facility for training, including Crawley Town Football Club. The containers are of different sizes positioned in a group. None of them are more than 3m in height and, as a group, they are considered appropriate in this location between the two pitches.

- 6.4 The scheme also includes the retention of two turnstiles, new spectator stands to the main pitch, new gates and alterations to the appearance of the club house. The new stands are positioned to the south of the main pitch. These stands are minor additions (approximately 50 seats each) and are sympathetic to the appearance and use of the facility. The turnstiles are positioned to the north and south of the clubhouse and are box like structures required for the use of the club on match days. The new gates are black metal gates to the main entrance of the facility. The changes to the clubhouse comprise alterations to the position of windows and the main entrance gable. The scheme also includes minor alterations to the internal arrangement of the clubhouse. The changes do not significantly alter the appearance of the clubhouse as approved. Overall, these alterations are also considered appropriate in the context of the original approval and the existing facility.
- 6.5 The proposal includes revised landscaping for the facility. This includes relocating an approved pond area adjacent to the main car park underground. This forms a SUDs facility required to drain the car park. The applicant has stated that the pond facility could not be located safely in this area, as such it had to be relocated underground. The scheme also offers additional trees and planting around the site. As amended, the Landscape Officer has no objections to the landscaping proposed.

Impact on Amenity

- 6.6 The main concern raised by adjacent residents is the impact of the light spill and glare from the floodlights. The original planning permission for the football club required the 6 column floodlighting system to meet the spill contours shown on the approved lighting design.
- 6.7 Submitted with the current application is technical data on the floodlighting, which includes predicated light levels from the two designs. The Halliday Lighting letter (4 June 2019) sets out the changes between the approved 6 column layout and the installed 8 column layout. The installation of the 8 column flood lights is predicated to result in less light spill than the 6 column layout due to the de-elevation and ability to more precisely aim the lighting over the pitches. Light spill testing carried out by Neil Johnson (Lighting Spill Testing Report dated 29/10/2019) show that the light spill levels are lower than the predicted lighting for both the 6 and the 8 column plans.
- 6.8 The Council's Environmental Health Officer has confirmed that the lighting assessment has been reviewed and found to be satisfactory in regard to the expected levels of light emitted and the effect of light spill and glare. Following negotiations with the football club and the Council's Landscape Architect, the current scheme has secured an appropriate revised soft and hard landscaping scheme that includes additional tree planting across the site to provide future screening. This includes two Oak trees some 4.5 metres in height, on the north side of the training pitch.
- 6.9 The objections from residents highlight that small deciduous trees would be of little use in the winter months when the majority trees lose their leaves. Residents have also raised objections to the noise and pointed out the lack of communication with the football club to discuss their concerns.
- 6.10 To address these concerns, the Planning Department arranged a meeting between residents and the football club. This is the first of regular Resident Liaison Meetings, which will be held between the football club and local residents. The first meeting was considered successful (with Covid restrictions in place) and several actions have been agreed. The main action

agreed was to meet again in late October or November, when the trees are starting to lose their leaves. It would then be easier to assess where additional evergreen trees could be placed to reduce any glare from the lights. The trees would be leylandii or similar trees and would be to the north and southern boundaries where there are gaps in the tree coverage of the site.

- 6.11 Horsham Football Club also agreed, with immediate effect, to dim lights or turn lights off when the pitches are not in use subject to Health and Safety concerns for participant's whilst exiting the ground. In relation to noise impact, the club has also agreed to use best endeavours to point out to all teams and participants to be mindful that the club is a family club and foul and abusive language whilst on the premises is not acceptable. Posters are already installed on the surrounds of the pitches and additional signs are to be placed in the changing rooms. Notwithstanding that the current proposal is considered appropriate in terms of its impact on residential amenity, the discussions between the football club and residents will help ensure additional measures will be put in place to help further mitigate the impact of the facility on nearby residents.
- 6.12 The continued cooperation between residents and the football club through these meetings will also help the facility become a good neighbour and facilitate good relations. These meetings are in conjunction with regular Transport Forum Meetings that were also taking place (prior to Covid restrictions). Prior to the club closing, these transport meetings assessed the impact of opening and use of the club in relation to highway and transport matters. Overall, with the suitable measures in place, such as traffic monitors to Worthing Road on match days, the use of the club was considered a success and did not raise any noteworthy issues.
- 6.13 The current schemes also includes other minor changes such as new stands, turnstiles and alterations to the appearance of the clubhouse. These alterations do not result in an increased use of the facility and are considered appropriate in relation to their impact on adjacent properties.

Highways

- 6.14 As outlined above, when the club was in full use last use, its use had not resulted in any highway issues as highlighted at the Transport Forum Meetings. Once back in full use, these meetings will continue to monitor the use of the club going forward. The current scheme does not result in any changes to the access or parking arrangement for the club. As such, the Highways Authority has raised no objections to the proposal.

Ecology

- 6.15 Planning condition 26 of permission DC/16/2856 states the Biodiversity Monitoring Strategy (Corylus 2017) shall be implemented as approved. The monitoring strategy requires additional lighting surveys to be carried out in March and August each year for five years post construction to look at light levels in relation to the pond and the nearby mature trees. In the event that the lighting in these areas remains 1 lux above the ambient light levels, adjustments would need to be made to the lighting. This monitoring is commencing in 2020. The applicant has stated that this retrospective application for the changes in the lighting columns can maintain this same condition to ensure continuity.
- 6.16 The Council's Ecologist has commented that subject to the Monitoring Strategy, no objections are raised to this proposal.

Other Considerations

- 6.17 Policies 35, 36 and 37 of the HDPF require that development mitigates to the impacts of climate change through measures including improved energy efficiency, reducing flood risk,

reducing water consumption, improving biodiversity and promoting sustainable transport modes. These policies reflect the requirements of Chapter 14 of the NPPF that local plans and decisions seek to reduce the impact of development on climate change. The current scheme and football facility are in accordance with the above as follows:

- Orientating the clubhouse to maximise the opportunity for solar glare with significant elevations to the south west.
- The clubhouse is fully compliant with the latest building regulations, encompassing the 'fabric first' approach.
- All toilets will dual flush and baths will be tapered in length to reduce water capacity. Water use will be limited to 110 litres per person / per day in accordance with the Local Plan.
- The clubhouse will be supplied by a main provider from a green tariff, typically using hydro and off-shore wind turbines.
- All appliances to be 'A' rated for energy consumption.
- Water harvesting will utilise rainwater butts to save on water for landscaping.
- Dedicated low energy light fittings.
- The original scheme included the submission of a drainage strategy for the facility. The additional hardstanding included in this application does not affect this strategy.
- The football club are keen to encourage supporters and visitors to the facility to use sustainable means of transport. This was explored during the application process and include improvements to pedestrian and cycle access to the site. The applicant also reached an agreement with the bus operator to provide additional match day services. An obligation was secured in s106 agreement to secure the sustainable infrastructure improvements and the provision of an additional weekday evening bus service for midweek games.
- The football club has also committed to a Travel Plan, which requires regular Transport Forum meetings with local stakeholders. At these meetings, we discuss how the transport arrangements can be improved.

6.18 Given the scale and positioning of the current amendments in relation to the listed buildings nearby, this proposal would not impact upon the setting, character or appearance of these heritage assets.

Conclusion

6.19 Following the granting of planning permission in 2017, the football facility is now complete. A number of amendments have been undertaken which now require retrospective permission. The main alteration is the addition of 2 extra floodlight columns to the main pitch. The lighting for these columns has been shown to be of a lower glare than the original 6 floodlights approved. As such, no objection is raised to these floodlights. Notwithstanding this, the football club has entered into regular meetings with nearby residents to agree how they could better the existing situation and harbour good relations.

6.20 Overall, the alterations are considered appropriate in relation to their appearance, impact on residential amenity, highway impact, ecology and sustainability.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

Conditions:

1. **Regulatory Condition:** The approved landscaping scheme shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details within the first planting season following the date of this approval. Unless otherwise agreed as part of the approved landscaping, no trees or hedges on the site shall be wilfully damaged or uprooted, felled/removed, topped or

lopped without the previous written consent of the Local Planning Authority until 5 years after completion of the development. Any proposed planting, which within a period of 5 years, dies, is removed, or becomes seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory development that is sympathetic to the landscape and townscape character and built form of the surroundings, and in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

2. **Regulatory Condition:** The floodlighting columns shall be implemented in accordance with the lighting details, including the Light Spill Testing and Containment document from Neil Johnson Sports Lighting Consultants.

Reason: To protect the amenities of adjoining residential properties in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

3. **Regulatory Condition:** The Club House shall not be open for public use except between the hours of 07:00 - 23:00 Monday to Saturday and 08:00 - 18:00 on Sundays.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of adjacent properties in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

4. **Regulatory Condition:** The floodlighting shall not be utilised beyond 10.30pm in the evening Monday to Friday and 6pm on a Saturday and Sunday, unless written approval of the District Council has been obtained beforehand.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of adjacent properties in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

5. **Regulatory Condition:** All mitigation and enhancement measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the Ecology Letter by Corylus Ecology dated 17th December 2019.

Reason: To safeguard the ecology and biodiversity of the area in accordance with Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Background Papers: DC/16/2856, DC/19/1404.