

11 DCSW2004/2703/F - CHANGE OF USE FROM GRAZING LAND TO SPORTS FIELD, PROVISION FOR FAIRFIELD HIGH SCHOOL, FIELD ADJACENT TO THE CROSSING BUNGALOW, PETERCHURCH, HEREFORDSHIRE

**For: Herefordshire Council per Property Services,
Herefordshire Council, Franklin House, 4 Commercial
Road, Hereford, HR1 2BB**

Date Received: 21st July, 2004

**Ward: Golden Valley
North**

Grid Ref: 34656, 38019

Expiry Date: 15th September, 2004

Local Member: Councillor N.J.J. Davies

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The site is an area of grazing land on the south-eastern side of the Class III road (C1209) that leads north eastward joining the B4348 road, some 230 metres to the north-east. The north western corner of the application site is in close proximity to the junction of the C1209 road and the C1207 road. New House is on the opposite side of the C1209 road. Horsepool Crossing Cottage is to the north-east of the application, it is on the same side of the C1209 road as the playing field. It is the closest dwelling to the proposed playing field. Fairfield School would be 70 metres walk from the main entrance proposed to the playing field.
- 1.2 The proposal entails creating a new entrance that will not entail associated car parking facilities, but will be solely used by users and maintenance staff. The playing field will be aligned approximately north-west to south-east. The access will entail the removal of roadside hedgerow in order to achieve the required visibility, the creation of a footpath leading south-westward for the benefit of Fairfield School pupils and teachers.
- 1.3 There is a public footpath (PR18) that crosses the site, this is proposed to be diverted around the 70 metres wide and 99.9 metres long pitch area behind a 2 metre high security fence that runs along the eastern, southern and the western sides of the playing field for a distance of 326 metres. Details of the security fence are to be agreed with the local planning authority, in the event that planning permission is granted.

2. Policies

2.1 South Herefordshire District Local Plan

Policy GD.1	-	General Development Criteria
Policy C.1	-	Development within Open Countryside
Policy C.2	-	Settlement Boundaries
Policy C.3	-	Criteria for Exceptional Development Outside Settlement Boundaries
Policy C.11	-	Protection of Best Agricultural Land
Policy R.1	-	Provision of New Recreational Facilities

- Policy R.11 - Diversions to Public Rights of Way
- Policy CF.1 - Retention & Provision of New Community Facilities

2.2 Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft)

- Policy S.8 - Recreation, Sport & Tourism
- Policy DR.3 - Movement
- Policy H.4 - Settlement Boundaries
- Policy T.14 - School Travel
- Policy RST.1 - Criteria for Recreation, Sport & Tourism Development
- Policy CF.5 - New Community Facilities

3. Planning History

- 3.1 SW2003/1697/F Change of use from grazing land to sports field. Provision for Fairfield High School - Withdrawn 19.08.03

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 The Environment Agency's response is awaited.
- 4.2 Sport England is generally supportive of proposals for new playing fields, as for the previous application. However, note that public footpath crosses the site, this will need to be diverted otherwise issues of security may arise.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.3 Head of Engineering and Transportation recommends that conditions relating to the means of access be attached to any grant of planning permission. The public footpath (PR18) crosses the field and therefore a public path diversion order under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 will be required. Public bridleway (PR19A) runs along the track outside the western boundary of site and would not appear to be affected by the development.

5. Representations

- 5.1 The applicant states that sectional plans or flooding reports are as submitted with the previous application and the revised plan has been agreed with the Open Space Society.
- 5.2 Peterchurch Parish Council make the following observations:

"Council supports this application and hopes the local community will be able to use this facility."
- 5.3 The Ramblers Association "has no objection to change of use of land. Concerns relating to future maintenance of line of conifers, in order to keep the path clear. Could path follow the boundary fence so that proposed conservation area acts as a screen between the path and the playing field? Walking along a 2 metres high security fence not very picturesque."

5.4 One letter of representation has been received from:

J. Bland and H. McNamara, Horsepool Crossing Cottage, Peterchurch, HR2 0SG

The following main points are made:

- bought property for peace and privacy. Enjoy our time outside facing the site. Have a large patio area for the purpose. Proximity of football pitch will impact upon our amenity/quality of life
- seen from plans playing level to be raised, what account will this have on drainage patterns
- our garden floods two to four times a year and drains off into field, increased frequency and depth of flood water a major concern
- what processes are there for different facilities besides football?
- what will the 2 metre fence comprise
- what is in place for dealing with inconvenience to us whilst work is carried out and field is in use?
- intrusive during school hours. Other times potential for unsupervised use. What provisions will be made for unofficial use of the field?
- how will increased litter, noise and use of road be managed?
- how can we challenge plans for altering our hedge?
- what plans are there to deal with our access to the field and footpath?
- place the field the other side of the conifers, although we would still suffer
- not possible to communicate ideas for area, i.e. wildlife and educative possibilities
- if there are other implications will gladly talk them through.

The full text of this letter can be inspected at Southern Planning Services, Blueschool House, Blueschool Street, Hereford and prior to the Sub-Committee meeting.

6. Officers Appraisal

- 6.1 The main issues are considered to be the principle of the use in this location, the impact on residents in the vicinity of the site, the need for a footpath diversion, the suitability of the site and the means of access available to it.
- 6.2 The playing field will, when in use, give rise to more noise than at present, although it should be noted that a public footpath crosses the site at present and a bridleway runs along the western side of the application site. The noise generated by children playing football will though be regulated by factors such as term time, day-time hours and not every day and all day long. The type of noise generated will not, it is considered, be unduly intrusive given that spectators will be few if indeed present for many of the games. This issue has to be placed in the context of the benefits that would accrue for children from the school in terms of less travelling than previously, i.e. to Dorstone playing fields, but also more time available for sport and recreation and possibly more time for other types of lesson in the curriculum.
- 6.3 A further issue raised is one of flooding, which is a matter raised by the Environment Agency and was one of the reasons why the previous application was withdrawn, as further information was required. The Environment Agency's formal response is awaited but it is understood that they will not object. The Environment Agency were concerned, amongst other things, that the development should not impede flood flows or result in a net loss of flood storage. Clearly, with the information provided the Environment Agency appears satisfied that the development meets the requirements

of Government advice contained in PPG.25 'Development and Flood Risk'. Therefore, the concern raised about flooding by local residents is considered to have been addressed.

- 6.4 The public footpath crossing the site needs to be diverted, this diversion will not have a detrimental impact on ramblers. It will though entail the delineation of a new boundary around part of the southern half of the application site with a 2 metre high security fence. The fence is needed for safety reasons for both walkers and sports participants alike. Concern has been raised that the diverted footpath could be impeded by existing conifers. These issues will be resolved by the formal diversion process. Therefore, diversion can be made as required by the provisions of Policy R.11 contained in the South Herefordshire District Local Plan.
- 6.5 This site is in open countryside and is considered to be reasonably sited to the settlement boundary and more crucially to the school to which it will serve. It will not result in a loss of trees on the site that make an important contribution to the landscape. Roadside hedgerow will be removed in order to provide for visibility needed and in turn a refuge for pedestrians by way of a surfaced footpath. This means that the site can be reasonably safely reached by foot. This site reduces the need to use motor vehicles which is a requirement of Policy GD.1 contained in the South Herefordshire District Local Plan and Government advice contained in PPG.13 'Transport'.
- 6.6 The land could revert back to use for agricultural purposes which is a requirement for Policy C.11 contained in the South Herefordshire District Local Plan. This policy is concerned with the irreversible loss of high grade agricultural land.
- 6.7 The final issue is one of access that is addressed in this proposal with the provision of a new entrance onto the C1209 road; the provision of a footpath and visibility splays which is a matter that needs to be addressed by both current Development Plan policy, in particular Policy GD.1 in the South Herefordshire District Local Plan and Policy RST.1 in the emerging policy, i.e. in the Unitary Development Plan. The removal of the hedgerow will have an environmental impact, this needs though to be weighed against the need for a safe and secure access across this unlit country road.
- 6.8 This site meets an identifiable need and is relatively well sited in relation to the school and the settlement. It will also entail a reduction in motorised journeys. It will have an impact on the amenity of local residents particularly those on the same side, i.e. southern side of the C1209 road, however this has to be weighed against the times of use, duration of that use, the fact that floodlighting is not proposed nor a car park.

RECOMMENDATION

That subject to the formal response of the Environment Agency, the officers named in the Scheme of Delegation to Officers be authorised to issue planning permission subject to the following conditions and any additional conditions considered necessary by officers:

1. **A01 (Time limit for commencement (full permission))**

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. A07 (Development in accordance with approved plans)

Reason: To ensure adherence to the approved plans in the interests of a satisfactory form of development.

3. Details of the boundary fence shall be the subject of the prior written approval of the local planning authority before the use is first brought into use.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of this part of the designated Area of Great Landscape Value.

4. G04 (Landscaping scheme (general))

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.

5. G05 (Implementation of landscaping scheme (general))

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.

6. H03 (Visibility splays)

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

7. H05 (Access gates)

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

8. H06 (Vehicular access construction)

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

9. H21 (Wheel washing)

Reason: To ensure that the wheels of vehicles are cleaned before leaving the site in the interests of highway safety.

10. H27 (Parking for site operatives)

Reason: To prevent indiscriminate parking in the interests of highway safety.

Informative(s):

- 1. HN01 - Mud on highway
- 2. HN04 - Private apparatus within highway
- 3. HN05 - Works within the highway
- 4. N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of Planning Permission

Decision:

Notes:

Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.