

REGULATORY COMMITTEE

6th FEBRUARY 2002

**LANDFORD: CHANGE OF USE OF LAND FROM
AGRICULTURAL TO RECREATIONAL AT
LANDFORD CE PRIMARY SCHOOL, MANOR FARM,
LYNDHURST ROAD
(Application S.01.2210.CP)**

Purpose of Report

1. To comment on the application and to propose that, subject to reference to the Secretary of State, permission be granted subject to conditions.

The Application

2. The application is submitted by the County Council under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 and seeks planning permission for the change of use from agricultural to recreational of some 0.4 hectares of land adjoining Landford CE Primary School, Manor Farm, Lyndhurst Road, Landford, Salisbury.
3. The land is located within the designated New Forest Heritage Area and Special Landscape Area, as shown in the adopted Salisbury District Local Plan 1996.
4. The proposal therefore represents a departure from the approved Development Plan and this Authority must notify the Secretary of State of the proposal and await his determination before a decision notice can be issued.
5. A site plan is attached at **Appendix 1**.

Background

6. The Chief Education Officer has submitted the following statement in support of the application:-

"The proposed leased playing field will enhance the school's ability to deliver the PE curriculum. By being immediately adjacent to the school site, the new field will minimise lost teaching time so benefiting other curriculum areas. From a health and safety perspective, the parish field currently being used involves taking the children approximately half a mile along a fairly busy road with a 40 mph speed limit each time they do organised games. The Manor Farm field, being immediately adjacent to the school, will eliminate this danger."

Consultations

7. **Salisbury District Council** - no objection subject to the new boundary being appropriate to the character and visual quality of the area and adequate screening being provided for the rear gardens of dwellings adjacent to the proposal. The maintenance vehicle access must have minimal impact on the hedge/tree line at the rear of the hall.
8. **Landford Parish Council** - no objection.
9. **New Forest Committee** - no objection but concerns are expressed regarding the loss of grassland which forms part of back-up and grazing land to support commoning. There should be some way to secure reversion of the land to agricultural use should the need for the land for the school playing field change.

Publicity

10. The application has been advertised on site and in the local press and a neighbour notification exercise has been carried out. Three letters have been received, one a petition from 15 residents of Brookside, a close, the rear gardens of which adjoin the proposed recreational area. The second letter is from a resident of Shoreham By Sea, West Sussex, who is co-owner of a property in Brookside.
11. The queries raised in the two letters include:-
 - (i) Why does the school need the land? Current facilities are adequate.
 - (ii) Is the land suitably drained for recreational use?
 - (iii) What recreational uses are envisaged?
 - (iv) Will any structures be erected on the land?
 - (v) Will it be used outside normal school hours?
 - (vi) There could be possible parking problems arising from any non-school use.
 - (vii) Brookside residents could experience noise/trespass problems from use of the new facility.
 - (viii) What type of fence/screen will be erected between Brookside's rear gardens and the new recreational area?
 - (ix) An alternative piece of land behind the village hall should be used.
12. The third letter is from a Brookside resident and Parish Councillor, disassociating himself from the petition and supporting the proposal, whilst maintaining that school-related parking is only a minor problem for Brookside and that greater inconvenience is caused by commercial vehicle parking at Brookside by some of the residents.

Relevant Planning Policies

13. The relevant planning policies of the adopted Salisbury District Local Plan are considered to be PS4, C7, HA2 and HA9, dealing respectively with new education facilities, development in (i) Special Landscape Areas and (ii) the New Forest Heritage Area (NFHA), and outdoor recreation facilities in the NFHA. The basic intent of these policies is replicated in the Salisbury District Local Plan Replacement Draft for Deposit 1998.

Planning Considerations

14. The development is low-key and does not involve the erection of structures and no hard surfaced play areas are contemplated. New fences around the area and a gated access for ground maintenance vehicles from the village hall will be erected. A condition attached to any planning permission granted will require the design and materials of the fences and gate to be agreed with the County Planning Authority before erection, to ensure suitability for this environmentally sensitive area. The existing boundary at the rear of the Brookside properties and the proposed recreation area is a sparsely planted hedge, interspersed with trees and shrubs varying in height from 4 to 10 metres. On the field side of this hedge line is a post and chain link stockproof fence approximately 1.3 metres in height. The trees and shrubs would provide a visual screen if a taller ball-catching fence should be required to replace the existing fence. The County Council's Forester is satisfied that the proposed maintenance vehicle access will have a minimal impact on the tree/hedge line at the rear of the village hall.
15. Given the minimal visual impact and the nature of the school recreational use envisaged, the development is considered to be acceptable in relation to the relevant planning policies.
16. In respect of the New Forest Committee's observations, it should be noted that the County Council is only a tenant of this land. As such, this Authority has no power to condition the afteruse of the land should the educational need cease and the land return to the owner. However, should the owner then wish to use the land for other than agricultural purposes, planning permission would be required from Salisbury District Council.
17. As some of the points raised in the letters of representation are not within the planning remit, the views of the Chief Education Officer were sought. His comments are set out below in the same order as the queries in paragraph 11 above:-
 - (i) Landford school currently uses the Parish Council playing field which is remote from the school and necessitates children walking along a road with fast-moving traffic. The current arrangement results in significant loss of teaching time and requires a large amount of staff supervision to ensure pupil safety.
 - (ii) The school has agreed to fund any necessary upgrading of the new land.

- (iii) The land will be used for delivery of elements of the Physical Education National Curriculum and for break times.
- (iv) There are no plans to build on this site.
- (v) Local management arrangements for schools allow Governors to decide out-of-school hours use.
- (vi) If any after-school hours use were to take place, the whole of the existing school parking area would be available, there being no concurrent school activity. Parking problems in Brookside are not therefore envisaged as a result of this development.
- (vii) Pupils using the facility will be supervised and excessive noise and/or trespass problems should not arise.
- (viii) A condition will be attached to any planning permission granted for this proposal which will require details of fence/gate designs and materials to be submitted for this Authority's agreement before work begins on site. This is to ensure that the functional and aesthetic standards are safeguarded.
- (ix) After consideration of other areas, including land behind the village hall, the school is fully satisfied that this area is in the best functional and practical location.

Conclusion: Options Considered

- 18. An area at the rear and to the south of the village hall, and in the same field, was examined. However, it was considered by the school that functionally, and by the landowner from a land management viewpoint, the area selected represents the most satisfactory location for this proposal.

Recommendation

- 19. That, subject to reference to the Secretary of State, planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:-
 - 1. Unless otherwise agreed in writing with the County Planning Authority or required by conditions attached to this permission, the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted planning application S.01.2210.CP and Drawing Number TLB01.
 - 2. No development shall take place until the design and samples of materials to be used in the construction of the fences and access gate hereby permitted have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the County Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason for Recommendation

20. To provide teachers and pupils with the facilities for the National Curriculum's Physical Education requirements and general recreational needs in much greater safety and convenience than afforded by those currently available.

RICHARD J. LANDER

Director of Environmental Services

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

Consultation replies and correspondence.

Environmental impact of the Recommendations contained in this Report:

See paragraphs 14 to 16 of the report.