

REPORT TO THE WESTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

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| Date of Meeting | 11.07.2012 | | |
| Application Number | W/12/00353/FUL | | |
| Site Address | Sports Ground Woodmarsh North Bradley Wiltshire | | |
| Proposal | Erect 6 no. 15m floodlights around football pitch | | |
| Applicant | Trowbridge Town FC | | |
| Town/Parish Council | North Bradley | | |
| Electoral Division | Southwick | Unitary Member: | Francis Morland |
| Grid Ref | 385444 155813 | | |
| Type of application | Full Plan | | |
| Case Officer | Mr Matthew Perks | 01225 770344 Ext 01225 770207 matthew.perks@wiltshire.gov.uk | |

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

Councillor Morland has requested that this item be determined by Committee due to:

- * Scale of development
- * Visual impact upon the surrounding area
- * Relationship to adjoining properties
- * Design - bulk, height, general appearance
- * Environmental/highway impact; and
- * Car parking

1. Purpose of Report

To consider the above application and to recommend that planning permission be granted.

Neighbourhood Responses

28 responses were received, 4 in objection and 24 in support.

Parish Council Response

The North Bradley Parish Council supports the proposal subject to conditions as outlined in the "Consultations" section below.

2. Report Summary

The main issues to consider are the potential impacts of the proposals on neighbouring amenity and on the adjacent highway.

3. Site Description

The Woodmarsh Playing Field is a designated "Recreation Space" in the West Wiltshire District Plan, currently in use by the Trowbridge Town Football Club.

4. Relevant Planning History

98/01794 FUL - Replacement changing facilities - Permission 08.04.1998
01/00827 FUL - Storage building - Permission 12.07.2001

04/00302/FUL - Two covered stands, hospitality unit and storage unit - Permission 14.05.2004
W/11/00164/FUL: Proposed replacement of existing temporary buildings with new temporary buildings for use as a refreshment and community room: Permission : 16.03.2011
W/12/00080/FUL : Replace existing gates with new and side fence : Permission : 27.02.2012

5. Proposal

The proposal is for the erection of six 15m floodlights around the existing football pitch. The supporting statement advises that the purpose is to enable the Club to:-

"- Deliver Youth Football through U17 and U18 Age Groups in the Wiltshire Youth Floodlit League. (Something that other local Clubs such as Westbury, Bradford and Melksham are able to do, and the lack of which seriously disadvantages the Clubs Youth player's progression from Youth to Adult football).

- Allow the Adult 1st team to offer the relevant League the facility to replay postponed Saturday afternoon games in the evening to prevent fixture backlogs.

- Enable the adult 1st team to enter the FA Vase Competition, this would boost Trowbridges Sporting profile.

- Enable the Club in future years to progress to a higher League standard of football, which is denied the Club presently through lack of facilities, but which other local Clubs enjoy.

The estimated usage of the lights given these aims is anticipated to be a maximum usage of 18 times per year and possibly less. Occasional additional usage (for example for events like the Annual Tournament), it is suggested could be subject to special request in terms of a condition that could be imposed on any approval.

Given normally scheduled kick-off times lights would be anticipated to be on between 18:30 and 21:30, including after-match clearing-up time under half-light conditions. The applicants would be satisfied with a condition along these lines.

Entrance to and egress from the site would remain as present, via Bradley Road into Axe and Cleaver Lane and vice versa.

6. Planning Policy

West Wiltshire District Plan, 1st Alteration 2004 :

Recreation Aims

Policy C35 - Light Pollution; Policy C38 - Nuisance.

West Wiltshire Leisure and Recreation Development Plan Document (Adopted 2009)

7. Consultations

Parish council

The North Bradley Parish Council support the proposal subject to conditions:-

- Floodlights not to be used after 9.00pm to give due consideration to neighbouring houses;

- Floodlights not to be used more than 18 times per year;

- That parking restrictions be put out into the road during floodlight use and the increase in traffic also be considered; and

- That noise pollution be considered for neighbouring residents i.e. children sleeping with cheering crowds.

Highways

The Highway Officer initially noted that the floodlights would be visible to westbound drivers approaching the adjacent Bradley Road/Woodmarsh roundabout. In order to ascertain whether or not there were issues with the potential for drivers to be dazzled the Officer requested further details.

More information was submitted by the applicant and highways consulted with the lighting specialist. The specialist concluded that the submitted design gave rise to the potential for glare affecting drivers on Woodmarsh, Bradley Road in a southerly direction and the A363 in westerly direction, especially near the roundabout area. It was also considered that there was the potential for obtrusive light to residential areas to the north and south. The specialist therefore recommended that an alternative type of unit with an Asymmetrical reflector is used within the design to enable low inclination angles required to minimise glare and light intrusion. The use of cowls and louvers is also recommended to minimise any light spill beyond the boundary of the pitch.

Environmental Health

Officers considered that the floodlights would allow increased use of the football pitch during weekday evenings and therefore recommended restricting times the floodlights are operated in order to protect the amenity of neighbouring residential properties. It was further recommended that a condition is imposed to the effect that a lighting scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development and shall be so designed as to overcome glare, spillage and intrusion. All schemes should comply with guidance issued by the Institution of Lighting Engineers specifically category E2.

Ecologist

The Ecologist notes that the lights would be in close proximity to hedgerows along the northern and western boundaries of the site, which are potentially used by foraging/commuting bats. However, the floodlights will only be used when the pitch is in use, so any impact from the artificial lights will be restricted. A condition is recommended to ensure that measures are used to direct the lighting and minimise light spill, i.e. by fitting hoods.

8. Publicity

The application was advertised by site notice and neighbour notification. Expiry date: 6 April 2012

Four letters of objection on grounds of:

- nuisance from litter, bad language and noise;
- loss of comfort and privacy;
- the original consent of 01/00827/FUL specified no lighting and was temporary, not permanent;
- the facility is not needed and the ground should be located in a more suitable place, this was farmland until "relatively recently".
- impact on wildlife.

Twenty four letters of support for reasons in relation to:

- the provision of improved facilities, in particular for youth;
- Trowbridge should be supporting this type of facility;
- no adverse effects likely, as seen in other towns in the area where this type of provision has been made;
- would meet with Government promotion of outdoor activities for children and adults;
- vital to the further development of the Club;
- supports the volunteers involved in the Club;
- the land has within memory always been used for sports activities; and
- the use proposed is limited and will be unlikely to unacceptably affect neighbours.

9. Planning Considerations

Improvements to sporting and recreational facilities are supported by the recreational aims of the West Wiltshire District Plan and by the Leisure and Recreation Development Plan Document.

The site is fairly long-established as a sports field and the football ground is complimented by a number of existing temporary structures on site, including a refreshment and community room providing a basic meeting space, a basic tea and refreshment (pre-prepared) facility and a store room. Temporary structures/uses have been granted in various forms since the 1990's, the most

recent permission being for temporary accommodation for a refreshment and community room (11/00164/FUL). This temporary permission expires in 2016

The proposal would enable the club to hold evening matches and clearly represents a change in currently exclusively day-time activity on the site. Consideration therefore must be given to impacts on neighbouring amenity and, as noted by highway officers, the issue of light spillage affecting road safety.

The supporting documentation indicates that limited usage of the grounds is proposed under lights. The applicants themselves suggest that conditions in relation to the number of games as well as time limits on those occasions could be imposed.

Environmental Health Officers raise no objection but recommend that time limits are made applicable, and that a lighting scheme is submitted and approved prior to the lights being brought into use. This recommendation accords with that of the Parish Council on this aspect. A lighting scheme as submitted was found not to be satisfactory by the specialist consulted by highways, but it is clear from the comment received that a design solution using cowling, specific types of lighting and louvers could be achieved. Such a scheme would also address the recommendation of the ecologist.

Comments by the public are split, with a majority supporting the proposals in the interests of the football club. Some nearby neighbours object on grounds of potential nuisance, privacy, desirability of having the ground in this locality and the site history where lights have been excluded by condition on previous applications. The exclusion of lighting from previous proposals has related specifically to exterior lighting to the temporary buildings that have been permitted, rather than to the overall use of the site. It is considered that neighbour concerns would be addressed by appropriate conditions in relation to the design of the lights and time limits, whilst enabling the club to progress as outlined in the supporting documentation. The proposals would extend the time usage of the ground to a limited degree given the proposed conditions thus not increasing nuisance potential to an unacceptable degree (it being further noted that issues of statutory nuisance are matters considered by Environmental Health legislation).

The additional comments of the North Bradley Parish on parking restrictions and traffic are noted. Highways Officers have not raised any objections in this regard, nor recommended any conditions in relation to traffic surveys or parking. With regard to the recommendation by the Parish that lighting times are limited to 21:00, it is considered that the request by the applicants that this be extended to 21:30 hours in order to allow for packing-up is reasonable.

10. Recommendation

Permission is recommended, subject to conditions.

Recommendation: Permission

For the following reason(s):

The proposed development would not materially affect the amenities of the neighbours and any planning objections have been overcome by conditions.

Subject to the following condition(s):

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 No development shall commence on site until details of external cowls, louvers or other shields to be fitted to the floodlights to reduce light pollution, have been submitted to and approved in

writing by the Local Planning Authority. The lighting scheme shall comply with guidance issued by the Institution of Lighting Engineers specifically category E2. Approved measures shall be put in place before the floodlights are first brought into use and shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To minimise light pollution and in the interests of the amenities of the area and of highway safety.

West Wiltshire District Plan 1st Alteration 2004 - POLICY: C35 and C38

- 3 The lighting hereby permitted shall only be used between the hours of 12pm and 9:30pm. The lighting shall be utilised for no more than 20 occasions per annum.

REASON: In order to minimise nuisance to neighbours.

POLICY: West Wiltshire District Plan - 1st Alteration - Policies C35 and C38.

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| Appendices: | |
| Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report: | |