

App.No: 130557 (PPP)	Decision Due Date: 5 November 2013	Ward: Old Town
Officer: Jane Sabin	Site visit date: 7 October 2013	Type: Planning Permission
Site Notice(s) Expiry date: 4 October 2013 Neigh. Con Expiry: 4 October 2013 Weekly list Expiry: 11 October 2013 Press Notice(s): N/A		
Over 8/13 week reason: N/A		
Location: Summerdown Sports Field, Compton Drive, Eastbourne		
Proposal: Erection of timber sports pavilion and dugout shelter. New sportscourts with perimeter fencing.		
Applicant: Eastbourne College		
Recommendation: Approve		

Planning Status:

Open space

Within the Built Up Area Boundary

Relevant Planning Policies:

Eastbourne Core Strategy Policies

C10 Summerdown & Saffrons Neighbourhood Policy

Borough Plan Policies

LCF2 Resisting loss of playing fields

UHT1 Design of development

UHT4 Visual amenity

NE28 Environmental amenity

HO20 Residential amenity

TR11 Car parking

Site Description:

The application site comprises a playing field located on the south side of Compton Drive, between the dwellings in Paradise Close and Fairway Close; Paradise Drive and the Royal Eastbourne Golf Course adjoin the field to the rear.

An all weather pitch exists at the western end of the site, with the remainder laid to grass.

Relevant Planning History:

EB/2006/0297

Replacement of existing all-weather pitch with new astroturf pitch measuring 62m by 102m and erection of perimeter fencing 3m in height rising to 4.5m behind each goal area for a length of 30m.

Approved – conditional 20 June 2006

Proposed development:

Permission is sought to provide four hard courts (in porous macadam) in the middle of the field, which would be adjacent to the Astroturf pitch, together with a timber pavilion adjacent to and parallel with Compton Drive.

The courts would cover an area 44.6m by 73.2m and would be enclosed by a green weld-mesh fence 3m in height (to match the fence around the adjacent Astroturf pitch).

The pavilion would measure 21.9m by 74.6m, with a 2m wide fenced verandah on three sides, 2.2m to the eaves and 3m to the ridge. It would be constructed of timber with a horizontal, stained timber boarding finish under a low pitched felt shingle roof.

A third element of the scheme is the provision of a blue, powder coated metal and polycarbonate viewing dugout on the top of the bank adjacent to the western boundary; this would be 6m wide, 1.3m deep and 2.2m high; this would provide shelter to people watching matches on the existing Astroturf pitch.

Applicants points:

- The College previously used the courts and field at the DPB site, but this facility has been lost as a result of the opening of the Gildredge House school
- To compensate for the loss of the courts, it is proposed to provide replacements at Summerdown sports field. Initially only two courts will be provided, and these will be marked out for netball (the predominant use) but also for tennis
- The pavilion will be used to provide shelter, bag storage and toilet facilities for pupils and any visiting teams; it will also provide space for spectators/parents to gather, and for refreshments
- Currently the site is used for school fixtures and practice. It is not anticipated that there would be any increase in activity on the site, and no additional traffic or parking requirements are expected
- The courts have been positioned centrally on the site to allow for grassed pitches to be retained. The dugout will provide shelter for spectators and good views of the all weather pitch from its raised position on the bank, and

has been sited to avoid causing damage to trees on neighbouring properties. The pavilion is positioned to minimise its impact on the landscape whilst utilising the location of existing services (electricity/drainage) in Compton Drive; it is positioned behind a hedge, but with sufficient space to maintain the hedge and the pavilion, and is of a traditional design

- No lighting is proposed for the site
- In view of the representations made, a meeting for residents was held on 2 October 2013 to discuss the scheme; 13 residents attended. It was explained that the netball season is short, with fixtures on Saturdays from January to March; there are only 8 fixtures planned against visiting schools next term, and normally only one or two mid-week pre-season fixtures in January, although there is occasionally a touring team hosted. The number of spectators for netball matches is not high, and based on other matches 10-12 might be expected. Therefore only a limited increase in traffic is envisaged. Visiting schools will be contacted to advise the coach drivers to park safely away from Compton Drive after dropping off. There is no intention of running a bar in the pavilion, only the setting up and serving of light refreshments for pupils and visitors during matches. A calendar of fixtures can be sent to residents if desired. There are no plans to promote external evening usage; the facility at Beresford is used for this type of hire and has lighting and off street parking.

Consultations:

The Arboricultural Officer notes that the tree report included in the application indicates that the proposed dugout is of sufficient distance away from the large Cupressus macrocarpa tree adjacent to the boundary, and that it will have little to no impact on the health of the tree. The applicant has not submitted details of foundations for the dugout and footpath, nor is any information submitted in respect of the root protection area, which makes an informed decision on the impact on the tree difficult to make. Locating the dugout underneath the canopy of a Cupressus macrocarpa is not recommended. This species of tree has been well documented for branch failure. Whilst at present this tree poses little risk due to the target area, a seating area underneath the tree increases the target risk significantly. The relocation of the dugout outside the canopy and root protection area of the neighbouring Cupressus macrocarpa is therefore recommended. Conditions to secure the future health of the tree are suggested.

At the time of writing this report, no formal response had been received from the Highway Authority; any comments will be reported verbally.

Neighbour Representations:

11 objections have been received from nearby residents, which cover the following points:

- The field should have been included in the National Park boundary; too late to change it now, but there is no need to over-develop and commercialise the site
- The College promised to be a "good neighbour" when the first pitch was developed, but residents have been seriously disappointed; the usage of the site has increased significantly, and the lack of consideration shown by users has been deplorable at times; the nuisance and danger that has arisen comes directly from the earlier approval
- The inconsiderate parking of cars and coaches is a real problem for residents, blocking drives, parking both sides of the road and parking on pavements, making the junction with Summerdown Road particularly hazardous; the addition of more courts will lead to more congestion, which would be a severe hindrance to emergency vehicles on match days
- No development should go ahead without the guarantee of lines being painted at the junction and across residents drives (at least 1m either side); double yellow lines should be painted on the north side of Compton Drive; the carriageway has insufficient width (7.3m) to allow parking on both sides of the road
- Residents should be provided with schedules of match times, to ensure that no cars are parked on the south side of the road; Eastbourne College should police parking by spectators/parents
- The size of the pavilion is out of all proportion to any building in the vicinity and is too large; it has too many changing rooms
- Concern that the pavilion may be used for social events involving alcohol or late night music; written confirmation is requested that no events will occur after sunset; how will the College prevent homeless people using the gap between the pavilion and the hedge? A timber structure is a fire risk
- The pavilion should be sited on the south side of the site, using the access from Paradise Drive, to reduce noise close to residents and so that the view of the field is not obscured, including enjoyment of watching the sports; the cost of providing a footpath and services across the field is not prohibitive as the field is being dug up anyway
- The hedge must be maintained to screen the pavilion, particularly the windows
- Concerns regarding drainage; when it rains waters pours off the all weather pitches, bringing soil which makes the pavement very slippery
- The large unsightly fencing has become a means to display large unsightly notices and advertising; all notices within sight of the road should be banned
- Will attract more trespassers; the opening up of the gate next to the substation surely suggests that a dramatic increase in the number of people using the site is predicted; there are already hard surfaces and changing facilities at Beresford sports field which could be used
- Concern about increased usage of the site; it serves the whole country not just Eastbourne; there are even teams from Europe. The College has

extensive sports facilities to pupils, but to extend them to others in a residential area is unacceptable and are beyond the college parochial needs

- Concern that the College will try to recoup the cost of the development through even more commercial activity, such as introducing lighting and hiring out the venue. Compton Drive is zoned as a residential area, and whilst youngsters should be encouraged to participate in sport, further development on the site is not appropriate
- Lighting/security/after hours use – possible future applications for floodlighting
- The development would be detrimental to the standard of living in an exclusive residential area (Compton Drive), warranting a reduction in rates
- The macadam finish should be green

Appraisal:

The main issues to take into consideration in determining this application are the impact on the visual amenities of the area, the impact on residential amenity and parking/highway safety.

Visual amenity

The provision of a hard surface would have little impact on visual amenity as the site is well screened by a hedge on the Summerdown Road frontage and the steep slope of the road from Paradise Drive through the golf course. The proposed weldmesh fence around the courts would be identical to that around the Astroturf pitch, but being on significantly lower ground – by approximately 1.8m – would appear much lower. The site would still retain its open nature, and therefore the visual impact of this part of the scheme is considered acceptable. The proposed pavilion has a traditional appearance which would sit well on a playing field; the precise location is considered appropriate, as it would occupy a relatively short section (26m) of the frontage to Compton Drive (170m), and would be largely screened by a mature hedge, so that the most visible part would be the roof. Whilst the suggestion by some residents to site it on the other side of the field would also be acceptable, as it would have the benefit of a substantial backdrop of a sizeable bank adjoining the golf course, it is acknowledged that it would be easier for connections to the utilities (though this is not an overriding factor), but it would also provide easy access from Summerdown Road without having to cross the playing field. Provided that the hedge is maintained at its current height (varying between 1.5 -1.8m), it is considered that the impact of the pavilion on the visual amenities of the area is acceptable. The dugout would be in a discreet location adjacent to the west boundary, and is of a modest size, therefore the impact is considered to negligible.

Residential amenity

The principle use of the site for the playing of sport will not change, although the provision of a hard surface may alter the type of noise generated; this is not considered to be a particular issue on such a large site, and indeed, this has not been raised by nearby residents. The main issue for residents appears to be a

potential increase in activity associated with the new courts, based on the problems raised in connection with the existing facilities. It is considered that the provision of four netball courts on the site is unlikely to lead to an unacceptable increase in activity that would give rise to an adverse impact on residential amenity. It is also considered that the proposed pavilion is unlikely to result in detriment to residential amenity.

Parking/highway safety

Parking appears to be the major issue for the objectors. The field is of insufficient size to accommodate on site parking spaces without the loss of playing space. Verbal representations have been made to the case officer that no development should take place without parking being provided, and similarly, some residents have sought assurances that there will be no parking on the field at all. The objectors have cited existing problems experienced on match days. No details of the frequency of the problems, or of any assistance sought from the Highway Authority to address the matter have been provided, however the college only operates for 34 weeks per year, and most matches occur on Saturday afternoons between 2pm and 4.30pm. The site is not hired out, however the LTA are allowed to use the Astroturf for one week in July. Whilst the inconsiderate parking by some spectators may be an annoyance for residents, it seems that it is not a major problem, as the Highway Authority has confirmed verbally that it is not aware of it. It is concluded that the provision of four netball courts is unlikely to make any significant difference to on-street parking, as it attracts only low levels of spectators, and, in any case, would be mostly used during the school day.

Other matters

The position of the dugout is considered acceptable in principle, however its precise location will need to be carefully controlled by condition to ensure that it is not directly underneath the neighbours tree, for the reasons given by the Council's Arboriculturist. The applicant is happy to accept such a condition.

Human Rights Implications:

It is considered that the impact of the proposed development would be within acceptable limits.

Conclusion:

The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact on visual and residential amenity, and highway safety.

Recommendation: Approve

Conditions:

- 1) Standard Time Condition
- 2) Development in accordance with approved plans
- 3) Retention of hedge fronting Compton Drive

- 4) Fence to be permanently coloured green
- 5) Submission of samples of finish of timber stain and felt shingles
- 6) Submission of details of position and foundations of dugout, and protection of root plate during construction

Informative

Submission of discharge of conditions application

Appeal: Should the applicant appeal the decision the appropriate followed, taking into account the criteria set by the Planning Inspectorate, is considered to be **written representations.**