

App.No: 131017	Decision Due Date: 26 April 2014	Ward: Langney
Officer: Hayley Cornford	Site visit date: 15 April 2014	Type: Planning Permission
Site Notice(s) Expiry date: 7 May 2014 Neighbour Con Expiry: 5 May 2014 Weekly list Expiry: 27 May 2014 Press Notice(s): 5 May 2014		
Over 8/13 week reason: Planning Committee cycle following referral from Delegated		
Location: Sports Ground, Shinewater Lane, Eastbourne		
Proposal: Erection of 4no. floodlights, measuring 18m in height, and a covered terrace, measuring 8m wide, 3m in depth and 2.8m high, to the football ground. Floodlights to be in operation on Saturday afternoons and for 1no. weekday fixture per week.		
Applicant: Mrs Tracey Saunders		
Recommendation: Refuse		

Executive Summary:

The application is being recommended for refusal on the grounds that the floodlights would have an adverse impact on the amenity of the adjacent neighbours.

As the application also includes the covered terrace, this will not be considered separately.

Relevant Planning Policies:

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Core Strategy Local Plan 2013 Policies

C9: Shinewater & North Langney Neighbourhood Policy

D7: Community, Sport and Health

Eastbourne Borough Plan Saved Policies 2007

NE28: Environmental Amenity

UHT4: Visual Amenity

NE18 Noise

UHT13: External Floodlighting

LCF6 Resisting the loss of Playing Field
LCF8 Small Scale Sport and Recreation Facilities
LCF20 Community Facilities
LCF21 Retention of Community Facilities
HO2: Predominantly Residential Areas
HO20: Residential Amenity

Site Description:

The application site is one of a pair of playing fields (known locally as 'Hankham and Stone Cross Playing Fields') located on the south-east side of Shinewater Lane and surrounded by a residential area, largely privately owned, and with a school to the west of the fields.

The are managed by 'Fields In Trust' and it is understood that they were willed to the residents of Hankham and Stone Cross.

One of the two areas of the playing field is left to meet the informal recreational needs of the community whilst the other (application site) is laid out for/as a playing field. The existing football pitch has previously (with planning permission) had railings fitted and is currently used by Langney Wanderers, who are currently playing in Division 3 of the Sussex County League.

The football pitch is located on part of the site that is bounded on the three sides by a complex of school buildings, mature tree/shrub planting and residential dwelling houses on on one side by the remaining part of the playing field.

Relevant Planning History:

There is an extensive planning history for this playing field, whilst there has been support for development over the years there remains little development on at the site. In short, the club changing room building, the street lamps and the railing around the pitch were all present at the time of the site visit.

EB/1955/0094 Sports pavilion
Approved Unconditional 1955-03-10

EB/1969/0510 Timber shed for use as changing room
Approved Conditional 1969-10-09

EB/1970/0041
Single storey concrete building for use as changing room
Approved Conditional 1970-02-05

EB/1973/0073 Single storey pavilion
Approved Conditional 1973-02-22

EB/1978/0445 Prefabricated replacement changing room
Approved Conditional 1978-10-17

EB/1981/0069 Single storey extension to sports pavilion
Approved Unconditional 1981-03-10

EB/1992/0222
Extension and minor alterations to pavilion and dugout
Approved Conditional 1992-07-07

EB/1993/0038 Rebuild Pavilion Approved Conditional 1993-03-16

(960093) EB/1996/0180 Erection of spectator stand.
Approved 1996-10-09

(970553) EB/1997/0019 Construction of access road from Lavender Close
and provision of car parking area for 30 cars.
Refused 1997-04-16

(080533) EB/2008/0552 Retrospective application for 8 street lights on
footpath and provision of one street post for connection of CCTV
APPROVED CONDITIONALLY 2008-09-30

(130158) EB/2013/0124 Erection of railings around football pitch
APPROVED CONDITIONALLY 2013-05-02

Proposed development:

The applicants have submitted a supporting statement outlining that for the Football Club to continue to progress up the league pyramid the the ground has to comply with a number of set infrastructure requirements.

Therefore in an attempt to comply with these requirements this application has two discrete elements to it.

1. To erect 4no. 18m high floodlights to the ground. The floodlights would be manually operated and would be used on a Saturday afternoon and for 1 game midweek (if scheduled) and as light requires. On a Saturday the game would commence at 2pm or 3pm weather dependant. No evening/night time use at the weekends.
2. To erect a covered terrace to the south-eastern end of the pitch, measuring 8m wide, 3m in depth and 2.8m high. The covered terrace would be set back from the existing railings by 1m and would be 9m to the east of the south-west corner of the railings.

Consultations:

Internal:
Estate Manager:

- No comment to make.

Specialist Advisor (Arboriculture):

- Recommends condition on tree protection and service trench details to be supplied and agreed.

Specialist Advisor (Environmental Health):

- No comment received at time of writing report.

External:

None.

Neighbour Representations:

8 objections have been received and cover the following points:

- Field for all to enjoy and not just the football club
- Potential anti-social behaviour and noise/disturbance from people using the covered terrace when football is not being played.
- Unacceptable light pollution to neighbouring properties.
- Changing the unspoilt look of the field by erecting floodlights, spoiling the natural habitat.
- Who will monitor the floodlights and how will the council ensure compliance?
- Would increase indiscriminate car parking at and within the vicinity of the site.
- Inappropriate location for football matches, better suited to Shinewater Park.
- Recall that previous application for floodlights was refused (Shinewater Football Club).

Support:

- 3no. comments in support of the application have been received and cover the points:
 - Improvements made to the field and club house has benefitted the community.
 - The applicant maintains the fields (mowing both pitches) and working with Langney Wanderers football club.
 - Anti-social behaviour has reduced and the fields are no longer covered in dog excrement.
 - Hold events on the field and allow use of the club house for wider community functions and thereby supports local community spirit

Appraisal:

Principle of development:

There is no objection in principle to community societies/clubs wishing to extend/adapt/alter their facilities to meet changing demands and responsibilities subject to their aspirations not resulting in any material harm to the interests of acknowledged importance. In short, where a proposal can

demonstrate that the development of a community asset can be achieved/delivered without giving rise to significant harm to either visual amenity or the amenities of the local residents then it should receive full support.

Impact of proposed development on amenity of adjoining occupiers and surrounding area:

Floodlights:-

The scheme proposes 4no. 18m high floodlights with a range of hooded lamps at the head of the pole. These are sizeable structures and of themselves and whilst slender in their form they will command both long and short range views. The impact upon these views will be more acute when the floodlights are in operation. The predominant pattern of development in the vicinity is two storey residential properties and as such these columns will be visible from a number of vantage points around this part of town.

It is accepted that the height of the proposed columns along with the hoods/shielding to the lamps assists in reducing the amount of light spillage around the perimeter of the pitch. Officers accept the supporting information supplied with the application, but remain concerned over the loss of amenity to the residents that would ensue from their use.

Currently the site is a very discreet playing field surrounded by mature vegetation and whilst it is not located within the open countryside and very much within the urban fabric of Langney, it is not an area that possesses the feel of many of the towns more urban parks. It is considered therefore that the impacts/change to the current environment by the use of these floodlights would be likely to be more acutely felt than in other parts of the town.

Covered Terrace:

Whilst the design is not considered inappropriate, there is potential for anti-social behaviour as the terrace is open and could encourage use at times when the football club are not present/using the facilities.

Members will note that support for this type of facility was given in the past (see planning history) and officers see no substantive reason for not to continue with this support.

Issues of antisocial behaviour are a material planning consideration however officers consider that subject to a management regimes these could be controlled to a level where the benefits of the community asset outweigh the concerns on this issue.

Design issues:

The size of the covered terrace is modest and suitable for the needs of the club.

The 4no. floodlights would incorporate 16no.(in total) 1500watt metal halide lights providing a constant light level of 180 lux average. The lighting assessment states that the lights are designed with reflectors and visors to control and direct light onto the pitch and reduce the impact on the surrounding area.

In design terms and in isolation there are no objections to the integral design of the light columns and or the covered terrace.

Impacts on trees:

See Specialist Advisor Trees response for conditions to be applied to protect the trees if permission were granted.

Impacts on highway network or access:

The proposed works will not impact on the highway network or access. The proposal is not changing the existing use of the field which has already been established.

It is accepted that the use of the equipment will permit the use of the field on a formal basis into parts of the day that do not currently exist; as a result the increase in indiscriminate on street parking in the locality may also increase. There has been no response from the County Highways Department and as such it is assumed that they have no comments to make.

Other matters:

Those that are supporting this proposal have identified the wider community benefits that may result from this initiative, however officers consider that the impacts of the proposal in terms of harm to residential amenity and also harm to the visual amenity of the site and surrounding area outweigh the potential wider community benefits.

Human Rights Implications:

The impacts of the proposal have been assessed as part of the application process. Consultation with the community has been undertaken and the impact on local people is set out above. The human rights considerations have been taken into account fully in balancing the planning issues; and furthermore the proposals will not result in any breach of the Equalities Act 2010.

Conclusion:

The creation of a floodlit sporting facility would be an asset to the town and also this part of the local community, however these benefits are outweighed by material harm caused by the floodlights.

Recommendation:

Refuse.

The proposal by reason of their height, degree of illumination and the proximity to the boundaries of the site are likely to give rise to material harm to the residential amenities currently enjoyed by the occupiers of the nearby properties and also would be visually harmful to the long and short range views of the site and would be contrary to the policies NE28 Environmental Amenity, UHT4 Visual Amenity, UHT13 External Floodlighting and HO20 Residential Amenity.