

Item No. 9

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/12/02845/FULL
LOCATION	The Pastures, Lower Stondon, Bedford, SG16 6QB
PROPOSAL	Erection of a multi-use games area (MUGA) and associated works.
PARISH	Stondon
WARD	Arlesey
WARD COUNCILLORS	Cllrs Dalgarno, Drinkwater & Wenham
CASE OFFICER	Nikolas Smith
DATE REGISTERED	15 August 2012
EXPIRY DATE	10 October 2012
APPLICANT	Bovis Homes Limited
AGENT	
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE	This application was called to committee by Cllr Drinkwater because of its association with an application for housing in Stondon.
RECOMMENDED DECISION	Full Application - Granted

Planning Context:

If planning permission is granted for this development, it is proposed that it would be delivered through a s106 agreement attached to an application for housing in Lower Stondon (12/2929). That application has not yet been determined. Notwithstanding the potential relationship between the two developments, this application should be determined on its individual merits.

Site Location:

The Pastures Recreation Ground is an area of land accessed from The Pastures, a cul-de-sac off of Hillside Road. It contains play equipment and a football pitch and is served by a parking area and a pavilion at the southwest of the site.

To the south and southwest are rear gardens serving houses on Hillside Road and the Pastures and Stondon Lower School and the Village Hall are to the southeast. To the north is open countryside.

The Application:

It is proposed to erect a Multi-use Games Area (MUGA) towards the northeast corner of the site. Facilities like these are marked in such a way so as to allow for their use for various games and activities.

It would be 40m long and 20m wide and would be enclosed by fencing that would be between 1.8m and 3m tall. There would be a tarmac path running along the perimeter of the facility and it would be served by floodlighting.

Relevant Policies:

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2009)

DM3 High Quality Development

Relevant Planning History:

MB/93/00586/FA ERECTION OF 6 NO. DETACHED BUNGALOWS AND GARAGES, SPORTS PAVILION AND CAR PARKING AREA, PROVISION OF A RECREATIONAL AREA INCLUDING A FOOTBALL PITCH, AND FLOODLIT MULTI-PURPOSE SPORTS SURFACE AREA

Approved: November 1995

A Multi-use Games Area was proposed to be delivered at the current application site through the s106 agreement attached to this application but it did not come forward.

Representations:

Town Council Support the application subject to a management plan relating to sustainability and viability. Concern over potential Perspex screening to mitigate noise.

Neighbours Support

Site and press notices were displayed in additional to letters being sent. A petition of 74 signatures was submitted that read '*as the younger generation of Stondon there is very little for us to do in our free time, therefore we feel that a multi-use games area with flood lights would be very beneficial to us and the whole community and we ask you, the Parish Council to help make it possible*'.

In addition, one letter of support was received stressing, though, that security should be improved at the site.

Objection

42 letters of objection were received, commenting as follows:

- Facilities in Stondon are disproportionately located.
- This application is linked to the Stondon housing application.
- There should be a security camera but it should not invade privacy for existing occupiers.

- Traffic is already problematic at The Pastures.
- Noise should be addressed.
- Light should not be directed towards existing occupiers.
- The security gate could cause problems if cars get locked inside.
- Landscaping is very important.
- Traffic calming measures should be introduced.
- Existing facilities at the site are underused.
- The applicant has not consulted widely enough.
- Money was set aside for a MUGA in the 90's and it was not spent.
- The MUGA would be too far from the centre of the village.
- The facility might not come forward.
- A facility like this would not be in accordance with the site allocation policy for development in Stondon.

It should be noted that a large number of the comments received referred to the application for housing in Stondon (12/2929) or this applications relationship with it and those are not matters for assessment as part of the determination of this application.

Consultee responses:

Highways	No objection
Public Protection	No objection subject to conditions
Sport England	Support
Play Officer	Support

Determining Issues:

The considerations in the determination of this application are:

1. The principle of the development
2. Appearance
3. Noise and disturbance
4. Other matters

Considerations

1. Principle

The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) states that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities and that decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as sports venues) to enhance the sustainability of communities. It states that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

Stondon Recreation Ground is an outdoor space where community sports based facilities are acceptable in principle. Although now dated, a planning obligation attached to an approved development at this site required the provision of a similar facility and this adds further weight to the acceptability of this development in principle.

2. Appearance

The MUGA would be large and designed functionally. It would be visible from The Pastures and from rear gardens serving houses on Hillside Road. It would, though, represent a feature commonplace in recreation spaces like this and would add to the vibrancy of the space. In this context, the development would cause no harm to the appearance of the site or the wider area.

3. Neighbours

The site is near to gardens serving houses on Hillside Road and particularly, The Pastures. The use of the MUGA would create noise. People living near to the Recreation Ground will expect there to be a level of noise and disturbance associated with living near to an open space designed for play and recreation. Further, many current occupiers will be aware that it was intended that a MUGA was planned in a similar location as part of the residential development of The Pastures in the 1990's. Notwithstanding that, the concentrated, formalised play associated with a MUGA would introduce a type of noise that is not currently found at the site and it is important that nearby neighbours would not be unduly inconvenienced. Most affected would be occupiers at No's 5 and 6 The Pastures. The National Playing Fields Association suggests that there should be a 30m buffer around development like this and here, that buffer would intrude upon gardens serving those properties. It is clear that measures would need to be put in place to address noise at the site.

Measures can be put in place to mitigate noise problems for existing residents. It is likely that these would take the form of a Perspex acoustic barrier around the facility. Full details of mitigating measures would be required through a planning condition.

The MUGA would be served by two floodlights, the details of which would be secured by condition. Further, a planning condition would prevent the use of flood lighting after 9pm so that the use of the facility would not extend in to the night and the result would be that no significant harm would be caused to living conditions at neighbouring houses as a result of the lighting.

It is not considered likely that the introduction of a MUGA to the open space would notably increase security problems. More likely is that the organised use of the facility would result in a more regular presence at the site that could deter anti-social or illegal behaviour.

4. Other matters

Historic s106

It is clear that a facility will not now come forward as a result of an historic legal agreement and in any event, it should not be a material planning consideration in the determination of this application, which should be assessed independently and on its merits.

Gates

The submitted drawings show gates at the entrance the Recreation Ground that do not form part of this application. There are shown outside of the application site and if they needed consent, that permission would need to be sought prior to their erection. An informative would be added to a planning decision to that effect.

Access and Parking

The MUGA would be accessed from The Pastures and would be served by the existing car park at the site so as to ensure that there would be no harm caused to the safe and free flow of traffic.

Recommendation:

That Planning Permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

- 1 The development shall begin not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the specification shown on drawing Ston-03-100 rev C unless otherwise agreed beforehand in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the site is satisfactory.

3 No flood lighting shall be used at the site between the hours of 2100 and 0800.

Reason: To protect living conditions at neighbouring properties.

4 No development shall commence at the site before a scheme has been submitted to the Council for approval outlining what measures shall be put in place to protect neighbouring properties from excessive noise and disturbance. The submission shall be supported by a noise assessment. The measures shall be carried out as approved and shall be permanently retained thereafter.

Reason: To protect living conditions at neighbouring properties.

5 No development shall commence at the site before a scheme has been submitted to the Council for approval outlining what measures shall be put in place to protect neighbouring properties from light pollution associated with the use of flood lighting. The submission shall be supported by a lighting assessment. The measures shall be carried out as approved and shall be permanently retained thereafter.

Reason: To protect living conditions at neighbouring properties.

6 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers [STON-03-200 and Ston-03-100 rev C].

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

Reason for approval:

The development would represent a valuable local facility in Stondon, would cause no harm to the appearance of the site and subject to appropriate conditions, would cause no harm to living conditions at neighbouring properties. The development would be in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), the Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2009) and Design in Central Bedfordshire (a guide for development) (2010).

Notes to Applicant

- 1. For the avoidance of doubt, this permission does not imply consent for any pedestrian or vehicular gates at the entrance to the site from The Pastures.

DECISION

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