

Parish: West Wittering	Ward: West Wittering
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WW/15/02066/FUL

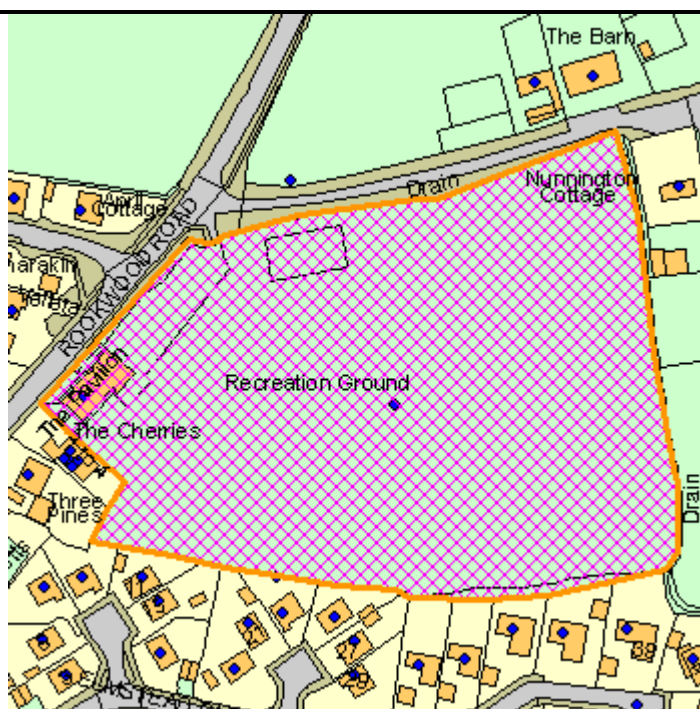
Proposal Re-submission of WW/14/01522/FUL. The installation of 2 full sized Tennis Courts within the sports field curtilage situated adjacent to the existing play park.

Site Recreation Ground Rookwood Road West Wittering West Sussex

Map Ref (E) 478368 (N) 98673

Applicant Joanne Brown

RECOMMENDATION TO PERMIT



**NOT TO
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1.0 Reason for Committee Referral

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Statutory Consultee Objection - Officer recommends permit

2.0 The Site and Surroundings

2.1 The application site is situated to the north of the settlement of West Wittering, to the east side of Rookwood Road. It is a parcel of recreational ground, screened by trees to the north and hedging to the west. The site is semi-rural in character. It predominantly comprises a grassed playing field, within which are designated football pitches. There is a children's play area to the north of the site, a pavilion to the south west and off road parking provision. The site is bounded by residential housing to the south, Rookwood Road to the west and agricultural land and caravan sites to the north and east.

3.0 The Proposal

3.1 The proposal seeks to construct two tennis courts, adjacent to the existing children's play park, within the northern part of the site. A green porous macadam surface would be laid to form the surface of the courts and a 2.5m high green galvanised steel fence would be erected around the perimeter. The courts would exceed the Lawn Tennis Association court dimensions, measuring at 24mX11m, a distance of 3.7m between the courts. The net height would be adjustable, enabling play by wheel chair users.

3.2 The football training area would be relocated in order to accommodate the proposal. A further floodlight would be sited adjacent to existing floodlights and an existing floodlight would be relocated, to further illuminate this area. A level access would be provided from the parking area to the existing play area and tennis courts. An additional disabled parking bay would be formed in the car park.

4.0 History

97/02797/FUL	PER	Two floodlights for sport training purposes.
03/02399/FUL	PER	Pavilion to replace existing, 2 no. lighting pylons.
07/00231/FUL	PER	2.03m high galvanised green coated play fence to rear boundary of sportsfield.
14/01522/FUL	WDN	The installation of 2 full sized tennis courts within the sports field curtilage situated adjacent to the existing play park.

5.0 Constraints

Listed Building	NO
Conservation Area	NO
Rural Area	YES
AONB	NO
Strategic Gap	NO
Tree Preservation Order	YES
South Downs National Park	NO
EA Flood Zone	NO
Historic Parks and Gardens	NO

6.0 Representations and Consultations

6.1 Parish Council

The Parish Council are the applicants for this application.

6.2 Sport England

Essentially Sport England will oppose to the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or prejudice the use of, all/part of a playing field, unless one of 5 exceptions applies which are clearly set out in policy.

This proposal would result in the loss of playing field in order to create tennis courts. Sport England has provided pre-application advice and at that time advised the applicant to remove the sports lighting on the current playing field and to include artificial sports lighting around the tennis courts to increase usage for both tennis and football in winter.

This amended proposal does not include any sports lighting on the tennis courts but proposes some changes to the provision of irregular lighting on the playing field.

The application has potential to be considered in light of Sport England Exception Policy E5 which states;

E5 The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field of playing fields.

However in order for the development to be considered a fit for purpose sports facility which provides sufficient benefit to sport, Sport England considers it necessary for the tennis courts and or the playing field to be served by artificial sports lighting.

6.3 Third Party Objections

5 no. third party objections raising the following concerns;

- a) Do not consider there is a need in the locality
- b) Would result in an increase in light pollution
- c) Adverse impact on the character of the area.

Non material matters

- a) Where funding is to be sourced from

6.4 6 Third Party Support

6 no. Third Party support comments raising the following;

- a) There is a lack of tennis courts in the area available for public use;
- b) The location is ideal.

6.5 Applicant Supporting Information

- The Parish Council identified a need for tennis courts following a village wide survey as part of its consultation on the production of its VDS.
- The Council has a long term strategy to increase the sport and leisure opportunities in WW. Therefore in 2000 the Council purchased an additional 5 acre field in Elms Lane to relocate cricket from the site it shared with football in Rookwood Rd (the site of this application)
- The development of facilities in Elms Lane has been successful for cricket, with 2x croquet lawns and a boules rink being added, leaving the Sportsfield in Rookwood Rd providing play and fitness facilities and football. With the development of a youth football academy in East Wittering there is now only 1 football team operating for 8 months of the year at the Sportsfield site.
- The Council has a desire to increase sport usage at the Sportsfield and identified that 2 tennis courts could be provided with no loss of pitches as a youth pitch can be overlaid on the main pitch and a training area accommodated as detailed in the application.
- The Parish Council has to cater for its residents and potential user groups. The village is predominantly a retirement one, in a rural mostly unlit location and it is envisaged that the tennis courts would be used during daylight hours 52 weeks per year, thus increasing use of the space currently playing field. It is very unusual for residents to venture out at night so the requirement for floodlit facilities was considered unviable.
- The current floodlights at the Sports field are used for football training and are subject to planning consent. The application includes the relocation of 1 light to improve the training facilities. No amendment to the current consent for floodlighting is being sought as the current consent is satisfactory.

7.0 Planning Policy

The Development Plan

7.1 The Development Plan for Chichester District comprises the Chichester Local Plan Key Policies 2014-2029 and all adopted neighbourhood plans. There is no adopted neighbourhood plan for West Wittering.

7.2 The principal planning policies relevant to the consideration of this application are as follows:

Chichester Local Plan: Key Policies 2014-2029

Policy 1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy 39: Transport, Accessibility and Parking

Policy 48: Biodiversity

Policy 54: Open Space, Sport and Recreation

National Policy and Guidance

7.3 Government planning policy now comprises the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), paragraph 14 of which states:

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking:

For decision-taking this means unless material considerations indicate otherwise:

- Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and
- Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting planning permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or specific policies in (the) Framework indicate development should be restricted.

7.6 Consideration should also be given to paragraph 17 (Core Planning Principles), 28, 73.

Other Local Policy and Guidance

7.8 The following Supplementary Planning Guidance and Interim Statements are material to the determination of this planning application:

West Wittering Village Design Statement

7.9 The aims and objectives of the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy are material to the determination of this planning application. These are:

B1 - Managing a changing environment

C2 - Encourage healthy and active lifestyles for all

D2 - Vibrant, safe and clean neighbourhoods

D4 - Understanding and meeting community needs

E4 - People will have easier access to services at a local level

8.0 Planning Comments

8.1 The main issues arising from this proposal are:

- i) Principle of development
- ii) Impact on the character and appearance of the area and amenities of neighbouring properties
- iii) Loss of the playing field

Assessment

i) Principle of Development

8.3 The application site is located abutting the defined settlement boundary of West Wittering. Policy 54 of the Chichester Local Plan seeks to enhance well-being and promoting healthy lifestyles by protecting; enhancing and providing new open space, sport and recreation facilities. Furthermore paragraph 73 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises 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. The addition of two tennis courts would provide an added public community facility, to the benefit of the wider community. The location of these allows for the provision of a training ground, full size football pitch and a junior overlay pitch. The proposal would enhance the offering of sporting facilities at the site, increasing the diversity of sporting facilities. It is therefore considered that the principle of the development is acceptable, subject to all other material considerations.

ii) Impact on the character and appearance of the area

8.4 The application site is located to the north of the village and is semi-rural in character. As such it is a sensitive location whereby it is important to ensure that the balance between protecting the character of the area and providing ancillary sporting facilities such as fencing and potential light pollution, seeking to minimise this impact wherever possible.

8.3 It is proposed to erect a fence around the proposed tennis courts; a standard chain link fence, in a green finish that is frequently used for providing boundary treatment to sports and play equipment areas. The colour and finish would allow the fencing to 'blend in' against the boundary trees and vegetation when viewed from a distance. The green hardstanding proposed would also result in minimal visual intrusion within the wider landscape and would not adversely impact on the semi-rural character of the area. It is considered the fencing and hardstanding would not result in significant or detrimental impact on the visual appearance of the immediate surroundings.

8.4 The proposal seeks an additional two floodlights, to the existing 4 flood lights on site. One would be located to the north of the pitch and one to the south, adjacent to the existing, these would provide additional lighting to the relocated training pitch. The closest neighbouring property would be situated 21.5m from the light, with an intervening vegetative screen. Currently the times and hours of operation are restricted by way of a planning condition, allowing the lights to be used three evenings Monday to Friday 0800 until 21.00hrs and the other two weekday nights used 0800-18.00hrs. On Saturdays, Sunday and Bank Holidays they are allowed to be operational 0800-18.00hrs. It would be appropriate and

proportionate to ensure the same restrictions be applied to the proposed two new floodlights and to require measures to ensure the lighting system is controlled sufficiently so as not to cause glare beyond the pitch. This would appropriately mitigate any potential impact on neighbouring amenity and ensure minimal light pollution within this semi-rural location. Consequently it is not considered the two additional lights would result in additional impact on neighbouring amenity or the surrounding area that would be significantly different from what exists at present.

iii) Loss of the playing field

8.5 The proposal results in a net loss of ground dedicated to playing pitches and would normally be contrary to the aims of Sport England. However exception may be made where "...the proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field." Sport England consider that the proposal would meet this exception policy if the tennis court pitches and the football pitches were adequately lit. There is however significant concern in introducing further lighting on the recreation ground. Whilst there is some boundary screening to the north, the increase in further lighting on site is considered likely to result in additional light pollution into the wider area, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the semi-rural location. Furthermore, there is a recorded presence of bats in the locality and having regard to the significant number of hedging and trees surrounding the site, there is concern the introduction of further lighting could be detrimental to foraging area currently used by bats.

8.6 Whilst the lighting of the courts would allow a further period of extended use in to the evenings into darker evenings, it is considered that the negative effect the additional light pollution would have on the character of the semi-rural area outweighs this benefit. Nonetheless, having regard to the retention of the ability to retain the range of playing pitches on site and the significant community benefit that the addition of two tennis courts would provide to the local community, the proposal is considered to be acceptable.

Significant Conditions

8.7 In addition to the conditions mentioned in paragraph 8.4, it is considered proportionate to attach a condition ensuring the tennis court hardstanding is porous and green in colour and the fencing is also green.

Conclusion

8.8 Based on the above assessment it is considered the proposal complies with development plan policies 1, 48 and 54 and therefore the application is recommended for approval/refusal.

Human Rights

8.9 In reaching this conclusion the Human Rights of the applicants and nearby occupiers have been taken into account when reaching this recommendation and it is concluded that the recommendation to permit is justified and proportionate.

RECOMMENDATION PERMIT

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|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | A01F Time Limit - Full |
| 2 | U97593 U97593 - PLANS |
| 3 | U97589 U97589 - hours flood lighting |
| 4 | U97590 U97590 - materials |
| 5 | U97591 U97591 - luminance levels |

INFORMATIVES

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------------|
| 1 | W01F Disclaimer - Other Consents |
| 2 | W36H Wildlife |
| 3 | W44F Application Approved Without Amendment |

For further information on this application please contact Caitlin Boddy on 01243 534734