

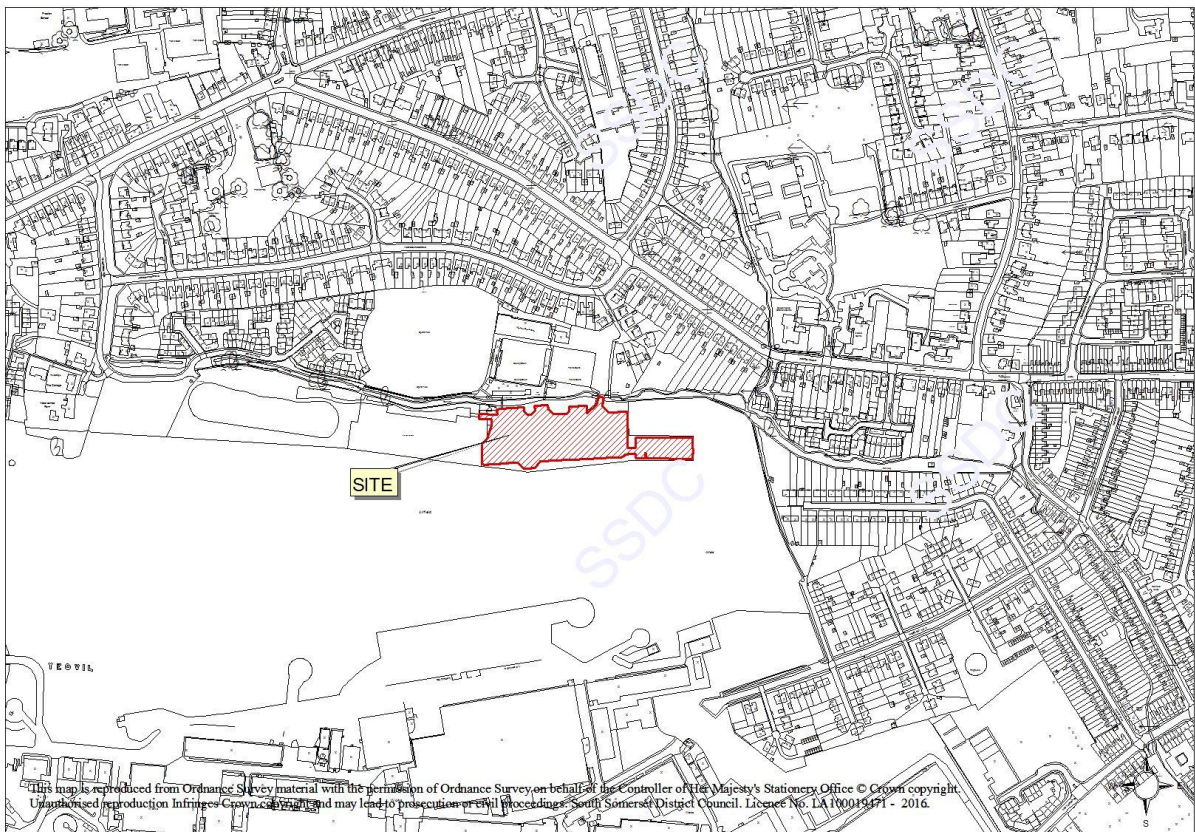
Officer Report On Planning Application: 16/04549/FUL

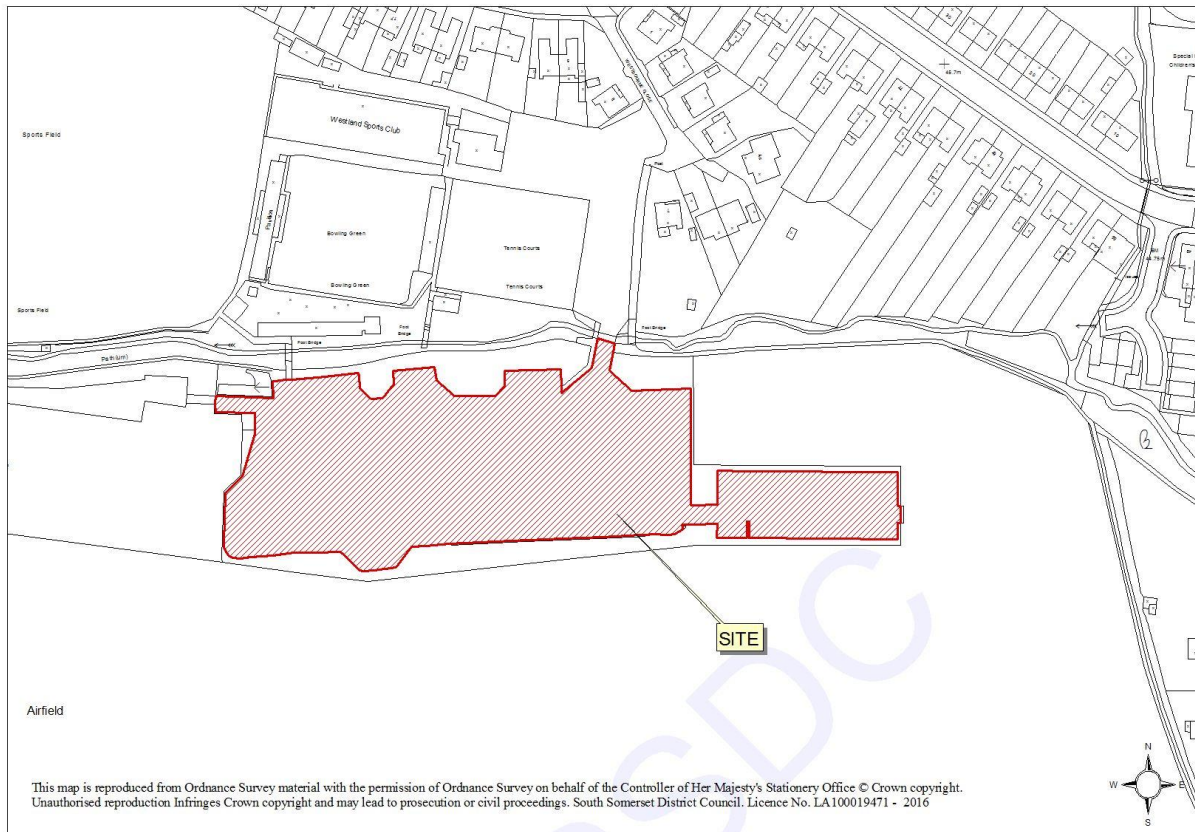
Proposal :	Alterations to elevations, new entrance, new sheltered walkway and amendments to associated external landscaping and parking
Site Address:	Westland Leisure Complex Westbourne Close Yeovil
Parish:	Yeovil
Yeovil (South) Ward (SSDC Member)	Cllr J Field Cllr N J Gage Cllr S McAllister
Recommending Case Officer:	Andrew Collins Tel: 01935 462276 Email: andrew.collins@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date :	21st December 2016
Applicant :	South Somerset District Council
Agent: (no agent if blank)	Roberts Limbrick Ltd The Carriage Building Bruton Way Gloucester GL1 1DG
Application Type :	Minor Other less than 1,000 sq.m or 1ha

Reason for Referral to Committee

This application is referred to Area South Committee at the request of the Development Manager in accordance with the scheme of delegation and with the agreement of the Area Chairman due to Council's involvement in the site.

Site Description and Proposal





The site is located on the northern side of the Leonardo Helicopters airfield. Access to the site is via Westbourne Close. To the north of the site are the residential properties in Westbourne Grove and to the East the Century Park residential area.

The Westlands Leisure Complex was formerly owned and operated by Leonardo helicopters. Recently South Somerset District Council (the Council) has signed a 30 year lease to run the leisure complex after it was threatened with closure.

Through the centre of the site is a small water course that runs East - West with a public footpath (Y32/4) following its route.

The site includes the sports buildings and facilities on the north side of the brook, including cricket pitch and pavilion, sports centre, bowling green, rifle range and tennis courts. On the southern side of the brook is the entertainment building, allotment gardens and model railway.

Under the Council's lease it was agreed to update / improve the facilities on the site. Included within this remit are the improvements to the entertainment building. Internally improvements are proposed including the formation of 3 meeting rooms in the current skittle alley, changes to the fitness studio, the opening up of the lounge bar, the change of the table tennis room to a meeting room, improved offices and facilities for performers. The internal improvements add to the quality of facilities on offer but do not require planning permission.

Planning permission is sought to erect a new entrance lobby and entrance on the north elevation, a new covered walkway / fire escape on the rear elevation and altered landscaping including parking.

In detail the new entrance and canopy are to be a new semi-circular lobby to the front /

northern elevation.

The application is supported by a Design and Access Statement.

During the course of the application it has been confirmed that the tennis courts will be utilised as additional parking for the site with the provision of 72 spaces on this area. This will result in a net increase of 47 parking spaces, but the loss of the tennis courts. An amended plan has been received to address this and it has been re-consulted upon.

HISTORY

There are numerous historic applications for the site dating from 1955. Since SSDC has obtained the lease;

16/02825/FUL - Demolition of existing pavilion and the erection of a new single storey cricket/bowls pavilion and re-positioning of timber scorers building - Application permitted with conditions - 08/08/2016

POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), and Paragraphs 2, 11, 12, and 14 of the NPPF indicate it is a matter of law that applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

South Somerset Local Plan (2006 - 2028)

On the 5th March 2015 this new local plan was adopted and constitutes the development plan. The most relevant policies are:-

- SD1 - Sustainable Development
- SS1 - Settlement Strategy
- EP8 - New and Enhanced Tourist Facilities
- EP15 - Protection and Provision of Local Shops, Community Facilities and Services
- TA1 - Low Carbon Travel
- TA3 - Sustainable Travel at Chard and Yeovil
- TA5 - Transport Impact of New Development
- TA6 - Parking Standards
- EQ2 - General Development
- EQ4 - Biodiversity
- EQ5 - Green Infrastructure

National Planning Policy Framework

- Chapter 1 - Building a Strong Competitive Economy
- Chapter 4 - promoting Sustainable Transport
- Paragraph 74 - Loss of playing pitches
- Chapter 7 - Requiring Good Design
- Chapter 8 - Promoting Healthy Communities

Other Relevant Considerations

- Somerset Standing Advice
- Somerset Parking Strategy

CONSULTATIONS

Yeovil Town Council - It was decided that the Town Council should declare an interest because of their involvement in the development of the facilities. However note that if the Town Council could comment they would have stated, approve subject to statutory bodies being satisfied.

County Highway Authority - Refers to standing advice.

MoD - No safeguarding objections to this proposal.

Avon and Somerset Police - No objection subject to considering the security value of the door sets in order to maintain burglary resistance. Details of suitable security doors may be sourced from the 'Secure by Design' website.

Rights of Way - No comments received.

Wessex Water - Notes that there is a sewer in close vicinity. There should be no building within 3m of the pipeline without agreement from Wessex Water.

Tree Officer - The 3 trees on site proposed to be removed are high quality specimens and can be incorporated into the proposals. In addition he considers that there are ample opportunities on site to provide additional planting on the site to break up the mass of tarmac over the site.

Landscape Officer - *"Given the scale of the site, there is little landscape change that would result from this proposal. However, I note an intent stated by the D&A statement to enhance the landscape of the site, I agree that intent, and I consider there is more that can be done to improve the appearance of the complex and its surrounds. In that respect, I fully support and endorse the comments made by Phil Poulton re; tree retention, and additional planting."*

Sport England - No comments received at the time of writing report. [These are anticipated before the Area South Committee]

REPRESENTATIONS

None received at time of writing report. (Consultation expiry 9 December 2016)

CONSIDERATIONS

Principle

The site is an existing sports and social club which the Council has acquired on a 30 year lease to avoid the facility from closing. The upgrading of the facilities for community use is supported.

Visual Amenity

The existing entrance to the building is very modest with a simple lobby and no signage. It is proposed to erect a more prominent, single storey semi-circular double glazed enclosure. The roof is proposed to oversail the canopy and show a clear entrance into the building. New windows are to replace the existing behind the canopy. In addition to the canopy the front entrance to the building is to be improved with a new parking arrangement, planting and a new footpath surface. This new entrance canopy creates a more welcoming entrance to the

entertainment complex. Details of the proposed materials are detailed in the application.

In creating an improved entrance to the entertainment complex it is proposed to form new hardstanding in the form of resin bound gravel for pedestrians to easily access the premises and the widening of the road outside the front of the building. As part of these proposals 3 existing trees are to be removed and a single tree planted as a replacement. The Council's Tree Officer however considers that the trees on site to be removed are of high value and can be retained on site. This has been agreed in principle and this can be subject to a condition. Increased landscaping is proposed to the north of the building and the along the northern edge of the car park to the east of the building. However, the existing car parks have a large expanse of tarmac. The proposed alterations to the tennis courts would also create a large area of increased parking. There could be increased planting within the car park without affecting the number of parking spaces proposed. On this basis a condition is considered appropriate.

Residential Amenity

The site is an existing sport and entertainment complex. The extensions / alterations are away from the nearby residential properties and as such the physical built form is not likely to affect residential amenity.

Currently there is limited lighting within the car park. For health and safety requirements it is considered that further lighting would be needed within the parking area. This matter can be conditioned to require the number, positioning and type of lighting to be detailed to minimise any light pollution and any impact upon neighbouring residential properties. The proposals are on this basis considered to be in accordance with EQ2.

The levels of parking on site are to be increased and these considerations are dealt with below.

Highways

Until recently the site was operated by Agusta Westland as their sports and social facility with wider events open to the public. The improvements to the interior of the main entertainment complex do not require planning permission and the owners could have implemented changes to the building without any permission.

Also this application is not seeking to increase the floor area of the building for increased events. The alterations proposed include the erection of a new lobby and a new covered fire escape to the rear.

However there are a number of different uses on the site which all contribute to the number of people on the site. I have seen a draft car park arrangement plan that the regular users to the site including the bowling green, cricket field, rifle range, fitness classes, allotments and staff equates to 144 car parking spaces in the summer and 85 in the winter. This level does not include the main sports complex or the entertainment complex as these levels are liable for variation. The seating area for the improved venue could incorporate up to 870 people with a much further capacity if a standing event is on. Also other uses proposed in the entertainment building would contribute to a greater use of the site.

The originally submitted plans detailed that there would be a loss of 25 car parking spaces over the entire site. It has now been confirmed that additional parking will be provided on the existing tennis courts. On this basis the capacity of the car park will comprise a total of 299 bays including 19 disabled spaces.

The Highways Authority in their response on the application has just referred to Standing Advice. In this respect the Somerset Parking Strategy (SPS) is relevant. The site is within Zone A and the whole site is a D2 use. There are no clear measurements in the SPS to assess the parking requirements for such a mixed D2 use. In applying the parking requirements from cinema uses, leisure centres and other aspects of the SPS the parking proposed on site exceeds the requirements. However these levels are seen as optimum levels and in relation to the assessment of regular users and the close proximity of neighbouring residential streets, it is not considered that the proposal should not provide less car parking than currently exists. The amended plans show the provision of an additional 53 parking spaces over the site by providing a total of 318 spaces with 19 accessible spaces. In considering the current situation and the nearby residential areas, this parking level is deemed appropriate in this specific instance.

Due to the level of proposed use of the site it is also considered necessary to condition a traffic / parking management plan for the site.

Subject to the above it is considered that the proposals can be justified.

Loss of Tennis Courts

The loss of any sports pitch requires consultation with Sport England. As part of any assessment the details in Paragraph 74 of the NPPF are the considerations. This Paragraph states;

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- *an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- *the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- *the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss."*

At the time of writing the report the comments from Sport England are still awaited. Until these comments are received a full assessment on the application is difficult to assess. It is anticipated that these comments will be available before the Area South Committee whereby Members will be updated with any updates.

The proposals detail the permanent use of the tennis courts as car parking. If their removal has not been justified, as assessed by Sport England their use as temporary overflow parking could be an option. This would be linked into the parking management plan that would allow parking on the courts when a larger event is proposed. The remainder of the time the courts could still be used for playing tennis. This arrangement would not result in the total loss of the courts and may be seen as a possible option.

Alternatively if this is not an option and Sport England raise an objection the proposals would have to be referred to the National Planning Casework Unit.

Conclusion

The external alterations to the building including the new entrance and walkway do not have

an adverse impact upon residential or visual amenity.

Concerns have been expressed over the removal of trees on the site and it has been agreed that existing trees on the site can be retained. The potentially most controversial aspect of the proposals is the use of the tennis courts as additional parking. Sport England's comments are crucial in this assessment. Details submitted state that the parking on the tennis courts will be a permanent feature and the application will be assessed on this basis.

RECOMMENDATION:

Grant planning permission subject to no adverse comments being received from Sports England, for the following reason:

01. The site is an existing sports and social club which the Council has acquired on a 30 year lease to avoid the facility from closing. The upgrading of the facilities for community use is supported and subject to conditions the proposals do not have an adverse impact upon visual or residential amenity. The proposals are therefore considered to comply with Policies SD1, SS1, TA1, TA3, TA5, TA6, EQ2, EQ4 and EQ5 of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan (2006 - 2028) and the aims and objectives of the NPPF.

SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:

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

Reason: To accord with the provisions of section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

02. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Roberts Limbrick drawings 8213/L(0)EX01B, 8213/L(0)001L, 8213/L(0)002D, 8213/L(0)003E, 8213/A(0)005E and 8213/A(3)013C received 19 October 2016 and amended drawing 1350-01 received 17 November 2016.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

03. The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall be those as identified within the planning application and no other materials unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Policy EQ2 of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan (2006 - 2028).

04. Prior to the buildings uses on the site a Parking Management Plan shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The parking on site shall be managed in accordance with the approved plan.

Reason: In the interests of managing parking on site in the interests of highway safety and residential amenity in accordance with policies EQ2 and TA5 of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan (2006 - 2028).

05. Prior to the buildings uses on the site details of any proposed external lighting shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details and thereafter retained.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity in accordance with Policy EQ2 of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan (2006 - 2028).

06. Prior to any works to the hardstanding on the Southern side of the brook, details of a scheme of tree protection measures, including tree protection fencing and signage; shall be prepared, installed and made ready for inspection. The locations and suitability of the tree protection measures shall be inspected by the Tree Officer and confirmed in-writing by the Council to be satisfactory prior to commencement of the development. The approved tree protection requirements shall be implemented in their entirety for the duration of the construction of the development and the protective fencing may only be moved or dismantled with the prior consent of the Council in-writing.

Reason: To preserve the health, structure and amenity value of existing landscape features (trees) in accordance with Policies EQ2, EQ4 and EQ5 of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan 2006 - 2028.

Informatives:

01. In relation to condition 06 you are advised to contact the Council's Tree Officer (Phillip Poulton 01935 462670) to arrange a pre-commencement site meeting between the appointed building/groundwork contractors and the Council's Tree Officer, in order to ensure compliance with the submitted scheme of tree protection fencing and other tree protection measures.
02. You are reminded of the comments of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary in their letter of 8 November 2016 whereby they advise that to consider the security value of the door sets in order to maintain burglary resistance. Details of suitable security doors may be sourced from the 'Secure by Design' website
03. You are reminded of the comments of Wessex Water in their email of 1 November 2016 regarding the safeguarding of their equipment. A copy of their letter is available on the Council's website.