



**Development Management Officer Report
Committee Application**

| Summary | |
|---|---|
| Committee Meeting Date: 23 April 2015 | |
| Application ID: Z/2013/1485/F | Target Date: |
| Proposal: New 3G pitch in revised position with floodlights, dug outs, turnstiles, 1.2m fence to pitch and associated ground works | Location: Sports and Leisure Swifts FC Glen Road Heights Belfast BT11 8RB |
| Referral Route: Falls outside delegated scheme | |
| Recommendation: | Approval |
| Applicant Name and Address: Sports and Leisure Swifts FC c/o agent | Agent Name and Address: Fresh Design 667 Shore Road Whiteabbey BT370ST |
| Executive Summary: This application seeks full planning permission for a new 3G pitch in revised position with floodlights, dug outs, turnstiles, 1.2m fence to pitch and associated ground works. . The main issues to be considered in this case are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The principle of a new 3G pitch and floodlighting at this location;• Impact of floodlighting on residential amenity; and• The impact of floodlighting on bats. The Development plan does not zone the site for any particular land use. The site is located out with and abutting the settlement limit of Belfast. The proposal was assessed against Planning Policy CTY 1 Development in the Countryside of Planning Policy Statement 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside and Policies OS 3: Outdoor Recreation in the Countryside and OS 7: The floodlighting of Sport and Outdoor Recreational Facilities. The proposal complies with these polices. Given that a pitch is already established on the site and this proposal involves shifting the pitch approximately 5-8 metres to the west the principle of development is considered acceptable. The nearest residential properties are located over 200 metres away and it is therefore not considered that the floodlighting will have any adverse impact on residential amenity. The impact on bats can be mitigated by placing a condition on any approval ensuring that the floodlights will not be operational between the 1 st April and 30 th September. | |

Consultees offered no objections in principle with conditions suggested for the operational times of the floodlighting and that the floodlighting scheme to be installed as per the drawings.

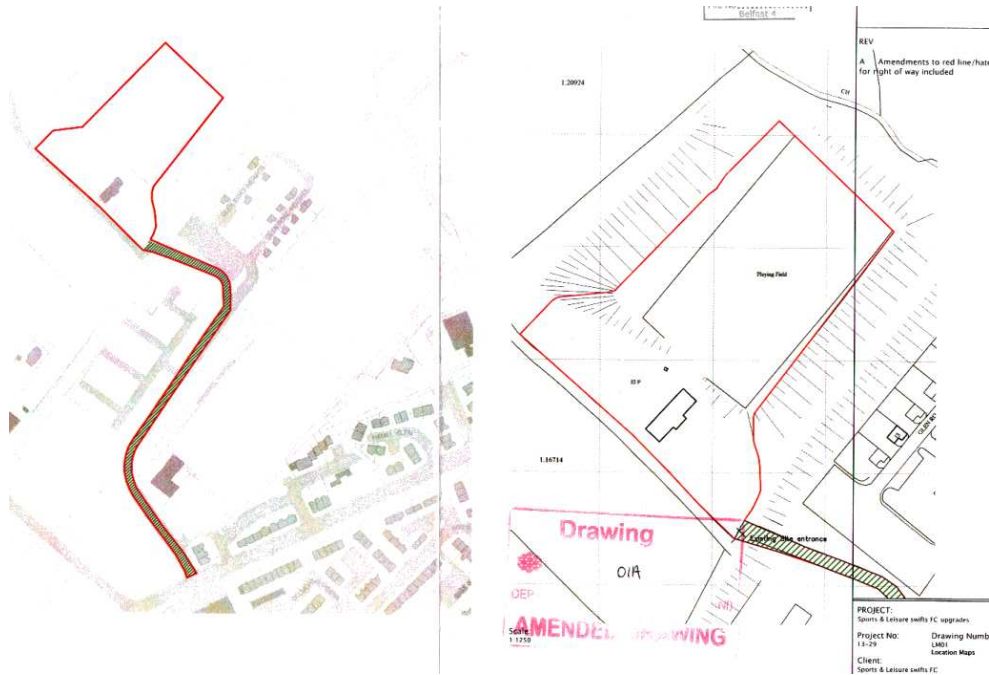
One representation was received from Belfast Hill Partnership. The sole issue raised related to the presence of Japanese Knotweed on the site.

It is recommended that the application is approved with conditions.

Signature(s):

Case Officer Report

Site Location Plan



Consultations:

| Consultation Type | Consultee | Response |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Non Statutory | Env Health Belfast City Council | No Objection subject to condition |
| Non Statutory | Roads - Hydebank | No Objection subject to conditions |
| Non Statutory | Natural Heritage | Email confirming no objections subject to conditions |
| Non Statutory | UK Crown Bodies - D.I.O. LMS | No Objection |

Representations:

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Letters of Support | None Received |
| Letters of Objection | 1 letter of objection received |

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Number of Support Petitions and signatures | No Petitions Received |
| Number of Petitions of Objection and signatures | No Petitions Received |
| <p>Summary of Issues</p> <p>One issue raised relating to the presence of Japanese Knotweed (invasive Species) however NIEA conducted a site visit and it was only found outside the proposed site.</p> | |
| <p>Characteristics of the Site and Area</p> <p>The site consists of an existing grass soccer pitch and changing facilities. The site is access off the Glen Road .To the south of the application site there is a building which serves as changing facilities. The land rises up to the site.</p> | |
| <p>Planning Assessment of Policy and Other Material Considerations</p> <p>Relevant policy considerations include BMAP 2015, PPS 1, PPS 2, PPS 3, PPS 8 and other material considerations including objections and representations</p> <p>Planning History</p> <p>Z/1996/2548/F- Changing pavilion and football pitch- approved;</p> <p>Z/2009/1154/F- Erection of covered seated stand, additional toilet facilities, disabled access ramp, access steps and fencing- approved</p> <p>Area Plan</p> <p>COU 1 Hannahstown Rural Landscape Wedge COU 5/4 Belfast Basalt Escarpment Area of High Scenic value</p> <p>Policy CTY 1 – Development in the Countryside</p> <p>The application site lies outside the development limit of Belfast as defined in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 and therefore falls under the definition of countryside as defined in Planning Policy Statement 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside (PPS21). Policy CTY1 of PPS21 states that there is a range of types of development which are acceptable in principle in the countryside and that will contribute to the aims of sustainable development. Under the sub heading of non residential development one such uses is outdoor sport and recreational uses in accordance with PPS 8.</p> <p>The preamble to this document states that PPS8 sets out the policy for the protection of open space, the provision of new areas of open space in association with residential development and the use of land for sport and recreation. For the purposes of PPS8,</p> | |

open space is defined as all open space of public value and the range is set out in Annex A of the policy statement. The proposal falls under A2 (ii) of Annex A-outdoor sport facilities.

As the site is located in the countryside adjacent to the settlement limit of Belfast in BMAP 2015, Policy OS3 Outdoor Recreation in the Countryside is relevant. This policy states that proposals for outdoor recreational use in the countryside will be permitted subject to 8 criteria.

Criterion (i) requires that there is no adverse impact on features of importance to nature conservation, archaeology or built heritage.

The site is located within an area of high scenic quality (Belfast Basalt Escarpement) in BMAP 2015. Approximately 100 metres to the west is a designated site of local nature conservation importance. It must be noted that this is an established use within the countryside and it is my opinion that there is no persuasive evidence that the proposal would lead to a significant loss of wildlife habitat. I'm reinforced in this opinion as no objection in this regard was received from NIEA Natural Heritage. Under Criterion (ii), the site cannot be defined as the best and most versatile land and there was no evidence that the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on nearby agricultural activities. Criteria (i) and (ii) are therefore met.

Criterion (iii) requires that there is no adverse impact on visual amenity or the character of the local landscape and the development can be readily absorbed into the landscape by taking advantage of existing vegetation and/or topography. The pitch itself is being relocated 5-8 metres to the west to facilitate dug outs and floodlighting along the eastern side. The changes in levels on the pitch are insignificant and therefore do not give rise to any adverse visual impact. The proposal complies with criterion (iii).

Criteria (iv) requires that there is no unacceptable impact on amenities of people living nearby. The nearest residential properties are over 200 metres away from the pitch. Given the distances involved and the lack of objection of Belfast City Council's Environmental Health Department I consider the proposal complies with criterion (iv).

Criterion (v) requires that public safety is not prejudiced and that the development is compatible with other countryside uses in terms of the nature, scale, extent and frequency or timing of the recreational activities proposed. The pitch serves a local soccer team. Given its location abutting the development limit edge and the fact that the use is already established I am satisfied that the proposal is compatible.

Criterion (vi) requires that any ancillary buildings or structures are designed to a high standard, are of a scale appropriate to the local area and are sympathetic to the surrounding environment in terms of their siting, layout and landscape treatment. The structures proposed include the erection of 8 floodlighting columns and the relocation of the dug-outs as well as the erection of turnstiles and fencing. The floodlighting columns are 16 metres in height. Floodlighting columns by their very nature are always conspicuous in the landscape and it would be unreasonable to object to their erection at this location given that they are essential equipment for the Swifts FC to carry out their

training etc especially during the lack of daylight during the winter months. The relocation of the dug-outs and the erection of turnstiles are considered minor works and are acceptable in terms of their siting and layout.

Criterion (vii) requires the facility takes account the needs of people with disabilities..and is accessible by a means of transport other than the private car. The applicant Swifts FC will have to comply with the latest disability legislation. In respect to transportation the site is accessible by bus from the Glen Road and there are 4 cycle stands proposed. The proposal therefore complies with criterion (vii).

In respect to the final criterion which requires that the road network can safely handle the extra vehicular traffic the proposal will generate and satisfactory arrangements are provided for access, parking, drainage and waste disposal. Transport NI has offered no objections to the proposal in regards to the access arrangements and the level of car parking proposed.

The proposal consists of the erection of a 8 x 16m tall floodlight columns. Each column will contains one floodlight. These will be positioned at intervals of approx. 25m apart. All will face down onto the pitch.

Policy OS 7 of PPS 8 is relevant. This policy states that proposed floodlighting of sports and outdoor recreational facilities will only be permitted if all 3 criterion of the policy are met. The criteria are as follows: there is no unacceptable impact on amenities of people living nearby; there is no adverse impact on the visual amenity or character of the locality; and public safety is not prejudiced.

Belfast City Council's Environmental Health Services department was consulted regarding this proposal and requested a light spill report. On receipt of this EHO re-assessed the proposal and offered no objections to the principle of the proposal, subject to the inclusion of a condition that will serve to minimise potential for light pollution. The site's remote locality will ensure the proposal does not affect important views.

Policy NH 2 - Species Protected by Law Planning Policy Statement 2: Natural Heritage is relevant. The site is located close to habitat where bats are known to forage. The proposal is subject to The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) (known as the Habitats Regulations). Following discussions with NIEA- Natural Heritage it has been agreed to condition the approval to ensure that the floodlighting is not operational between the 1st April and 30th September in order to mitigate potential impact on bats. The proposal therefore complies with this policy.

Planning Policy Statement 3: Access, Movement and Parking sets out specific policies which are of relevance. In the assessment of this case Policy AMP 2- Access to public roads is of particular relevance. Transport NI have concluded that the access is acceptable and has raised no objections to the proposal.

Neighbour Notification Checked

Yes

Summary of Recommendation:

After careful consideration of the proposal including the site context, planning policy and representations, I have concluded that the scheme complies with Planning Policy Statement 1: General Principles, in that, it will not cause demonstrable harm to the interests of acknowledged importance.

Conditions

1. As required by Article 34 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991, the development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: Time Limit.

2. The floodlighting hereby approved shall not be used between the 1st April and 30th September in any given year.

Reason: To minimise the effects of the proposal on bats, a European protected species.

3. The proposed floodlighting scheme must be installed as per the specification illustrated in the following drawings:

- Thorn Lighting Ltd drawing titled: 'Swifts FC, Glen Rd, Belfast' drawing no: TLZ0144772 dated 27.01.14
- Fresh Design drawing showing the proposed mounting height, mounting details and lantern type of the proposed floodlighting, drawing no. D05 – Lighting details dated March '14.

Reason: In the interests of Environmental Health.

4. The development hereby permitted shall not become operational until provision has been made for cycle parking in accordance with the approved Drawing. These facilities shall be permanently retained.

Reason: To ensure acceptable cycle parking facilities on the site and to encourage alternative modes of transport to the private car.

5. The development hereby permitted shall not become operational until hard surfaced areas have been constructed and permanently marked in accordance with the approved drawing. No part of these hard surfaced areas shall be used for any purpose at any time other than for the parking and movement of vehicles.

Reason: To ensure that adequate provision has been made for parking, servicing and traffic circulation within the site.

Informatives

1. The applicant should be aware that Japanese knotweed is a non-native, highly invasive weed listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 (as amended) has been found near the site.
2. Precautions shall be taken to prevent the deposit of mud and other debris on the adjacent road by vehicles travelling to and from the construction site. Any mud, refuse, etc deposited on the road as a result of the development, must be removed immediately by the operator/contractor.
3. All construction plant and materials shall be stored within the curtilage of the site.
4. It is the responsibility of the developer to ensure that:- surface water does not flow from the site onto the public road; the existing roadside drainage is accommodated; no water flows from the public road onto the site; surface water from the roof of the development hereby approved does not flow onto the public road, including the footway

Signature(s)

Date: