

Planning Committee

16 January 2020

Reference:
APP/19/01479

Area Team:
**Development
Management Team**

Case Officer:
Mr N Williams

Ward:
Rock Ferry

Location: Lairds Sports Club 93 & Cammell Laird 1907 FC, ST PETERS ROAD, ROCK FERRY, CH42 1PY

Proposal: Construction of new single-storey clubhouse (to south-eastern corner of the site) together with a new 25no. space car park (to north-west of site) and associated works

Applicant: Lairds Sports Club '93
Agent: Paddock Johnson Partnership

Qualifying Petition: Yes, Number of Signatures: 52

Site Plan:



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Development Plan designation:
Sports Ground

Planning History:

There is no relevant planning history for the site relating directly to this proposal.

Summary of Representations and Consultations Received:

1.0 WARD MEMBER COMMENTS

- 1.1 Councillor Moira McLaughlin did not object but expressed concern about traffic and proximity of the car park to residents of Church Mews.

2.0 SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

2.1 REPRESENTATIONS

Having regard to the Council's Guidance for Publicity on Planning Applications, 41 notifications were sent to adjoining properties. At the time of writing, there had been a petition of objection containing 52 signatures and 5 individual objections received. The objections can be summarised as:

1. Too close to existing houses;
2. Noise and disturbance;
3. Increased traffic and highway safety concerns

2.2 CONSULTATIONS

Highways - No objection subject to condition

Environmental Health - No objection

Sport England - No objection

3.1 Site and Surroundings

- 3.1.1 The application site contains Cammell Laird 1907 Football Club, a semi-professional football club who have been present in this location since 1922. The site includes the main playing pitch together with several small, ancillary structures including a shower block and spectator stands.

- 3.1.2 The site fronts onto St Peters Road and adjoins residential properties to the north (Church Mews) and south (Procter Road). Directly to the west of the site is a large Stagecoach bus depot.

3.2 Proposed Development

- 3.2.1 The application proposes the construction of a new single-storey clubhouse, to be located towards the south-eastern corner of the site, together with a new 17-space car park to north-west of site. The proposal also includes a smaller 4-space car park off St Peters Road and the slight relocation of existing containers.

3.3 Development Plan

- 3.3.1 The site is designated in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan as a Sports Ground. Given that the site is surrounded on three sides by residential areas, UDP Policy HS15: Non-Residential Uses in Primarily Residential Areas is also considered to be relevant.

3.4 Other Material Planning Considerations

- 3.4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework is also relevant.

3.5 Assessment

- 3.5.1 The main issues pertinent in the assessment of the proposal are;

- Principle of development;
- Design;
- Highways; and
- Amenity

3.6 Principle of Development:

3.6.1 The provision of a new clubhouse is part of a broader strategy from the club to secure its long-term future. The original Lairds Sports Club was, until recently, on the opposite side of St Peters Road. However, this was deemed no longer fit for purpose, being outdated, basic and oversized for the declining number of members, together with increasing maintenance and running costs. The building has now been demolished and replaced by a residential development, approved under planning permission APP/18/00662.

3.6.2 Whilst it is understood that the intention had always been to build a smaller clubhouse on the main site, the loss of income for the club since the original clubhouse closed has merely highlighted the importance of such a facility to the club's finances. The applicant contends that the longevity of Cammell Laird 1907 FC is at risk without a new clubhouse, and the additional parking facilities on site.

3.6.3 Sport England initially submitted a holding objection to the application. However, they have now withdrawn this on the basis that the proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field and does not affect the quantity or quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use. Sport England also consulted with the Football Foundation who confirmed that they are satisfied on the basis that a 3-metre run off (safety margin) around the pitch will be maintained.

3.7 Design:

3.7.1 The proposed clubhouse is a single-storey structure with a shallow, standing seam roof. The building has a simple form but the roofscape and contrasting brickwork will provide interest and character. The building will be set back from the front of the site by over 15 metres and will therefore not be prominent on the street scene. Regardless, the design of the building is considered to be acceptable with sufficient interest to make a positive contribution to the character of the area.

3.8 Highways:

3.8.1 The proposal will provide a new 17-space car park to the north of the football pitch, together with a smaller car park containing 4 disabled spaces to the side of the pitch.

3.8.2 It is accepted that parking is a serious issue within the area on matchdays, as well as when there is a church service at the nearby St Peter's Church. Although the new parking area will not solve parking problems completely, it will certainly help to alleviate this. A condition has also been attached to provide double yellow lines at several locations, mostly nearby junctions, within the area. This should therefore enhance the parking and highway safety situation within the immediate area and should be seen as beneficial.

3.9 Amenity:

3.9.1 Clubhouse

The proposed clubhouse will be approximately 15 metres from the main rear elevation of properties adjoining the site on Procter Road. Given that the proposed structure is only single-storey and contains no habitable windows, this distance is acceptable to ensure it does not have a direct adverse impact upon windows in these properties.

3.9.2 Following concerns raised about the close proximity of the proposed clubhouse to properties on Procter Road, the applicant submitted amendments to reduce the height of the building by 0.6m and reduce the footprint by 50 square metres, including a reduction in the floorspace of the customer area (conference room). The amendments also relocate the entrance door from the southern elevation (directly facing these properties) to the eastern elevation facing towards St Peters Road, and includes a small wall to the side of the entrance door (between the door and the dwellings) to further minimise any noise impact.

3.9.3 All properties on Procter Road which adjoin the site where notified about the proposal. There were no individual objections received from these properties. In any case, a condition has been attached to restrict the use of the clubhouse to no later than 11:30pm. A condition is also attached to prevent an external door serving the conference room is not used past 9pm.

- 3.9.4 Given the fairly limited size of the conference room (101 square metres) and a condition limiting the hours of use, it is considered that the provision of a new clubhouse in this location should not have an unacceptable adverse impact upon the amenities of neighbouring properties.
- 3.9.5 Car Park
The main parking area will be created to the north of the football pitch, to the rear of dwellings on Church Mews. This has been reduced from an initial 21-space car park to 17 spaces in order to minimise the impact on neighbouring properties.
- 3.9.6 It is accepted that the new car park will have some impact on the amenities of the adjacent properties in terms of noise and disturbance. However, the main use of this car park will be on matchdays when there is already an element of noise and disturbance within the wider area from the associated traffic as well as the game itself. It is unlikely that the car park would be well used other than on matchdays, however, to ensure that any disruption to residents is kept to a minimum a condition has been attached to prevent the use of the car park past 9pm other than on matchdays for the first team. The applicant has agreed to this.
- 3.9.7 It is considered that the occasional use of this car park past 9pm (on matchdays), together with the likely limited use of it on non-matchdays (no later than 9pm) would not have an adverse impact upon the amenities of neighbouring properties to the extent as to warrant refusal of the application.
- 3.10 Conclusion:
- 3.10.1 The football club is well established in the area, being present on the site before many of the surrounding houses were even constructed. The noise generated (by traffic and football) is therefore an established feature of the area. It is considered that, on balance, the benefits of securing the future of the club and improved parking facilities, together with conditions controlling the hours of use for the proposals, outweigh any harm to surrounding properties. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the Wirral Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Summary of Decision:

Having regards to the individual merits of this application the decision to grant Planning Permission has been taken having regards to the relevant Policies and Proposals in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan (Adopted February 2000) and all relevant material considerations including national policy advice. In reaching this decision the Local Planning Authority has considered the following: -

The proposed development will support the continued use of the site as a sports ground whilst conditions controlling hours of use shall ensure that the proposal does not have an unacceptable adverse impact upon the amenities of neighbouring properties. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the Wirral Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework

Recommended Decision: **Approve**

Recommended Conditions and Reasons:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans received by the local planning authority on 30th September 2019 and listed as follows: 17119-01; 17119-100, the amended plans received on 28th November 2019 and listed as: 17119-202-K; 17119-203-C; 17119-204-D; 17119-205-D, and the amended plan received on 16th December 2019 and listed as 17119-101-F

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to define the permission

3. Before any construction above ground level commences, samples of the materials to be used in the external construction of this development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved materials shall then be used in the construction of the development.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Policy HS15 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan

4. Construction of the development authorised by this permission shall not begin until the LPA has approved in writing a full scheme of works for the construction of the new vehicle accesses from the highway and any amendments to the existing highway made necessary by this development, including details of the new vehicle accesses in accordance with LPA concrete commercial crossing specifications, tactile pedestrian crossing facilities and the introduction of any necessary TROs in St Peters Rd/ Delta Rd West/Church Mews and Procter Rd. The approved works shall be completed in accordance with the LPA written approval prior to first use of the development

Reason: In the interests of highway safety

5. Prior to the first use of the development hereby approved, a lockable gate or barrier shall be installed at the entrance to the main car park from St Peters Road, the details of which shall beforehand be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The barrier or gate shall be retained and maintained in an operational state in perpetuity in accordance with the approved details. The car park shall be closed and locked at 21:00 hours each evening (and shall not re-open before 09:00 hours the following morning) other than on days when Cammell Laird 1907 FC have a first team game at the site.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity having regards to the National Planning Policy Framework

6. The clubhouse hereby approved shall not be open or in use between the hours of 23:30 and 09:00

Reason: In the interest of residential amenity having regards to Wirral Unitary Development Plan Policy HS15

7. The doors on the south-west elevation of the clubhouse, serving the conference room, shall remain closed and not utilised after 21:00 hours other than in an emergency

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity having regards to the National Planning Policy Framework

Further Notes for Committee:

1. In order to fulfil the highway condition, it will be necessary to enter into a legal agreement with the Council to secure the works under the Highways Act and the New Roads and Streetworks Act. The agreements would include details of the works to be carried out for the new vehicle accesses to the development off St Peter's Rd, tactile pedestrian paved crossings at the new accesses, any amendments necessary to the footways as a result of the development works including the relocation of existing street furniture, details of any new TRO's required to the new accesses off St Peter's Rd, at the junction of Delta Rd

West/Proctor Rd/St Peter's Rd, at the junction to the new residential development off St Peter's Rd and details of the required road markings relating to the TRO's. All costs associated for the provision of the legal orders for the parking restrictions will be the responsibility of the developer

Last Comments By: 13/11/2019

Expiry Date: 25/11/2019