

CH/2008/1346/FA

Case Officer: Sarah Mountford
Date Received: **01.08.2008**
Parish: **The Lee**

Decide by Date: **17.10.2008**
Ward: **Cholesbury, The Lee, Bellingdon**

CP RB [Signature]
17/10/08

App Type: Full Application
Proposal: **Single storey side/rear/front extensions and replacement pitched roof over existing flat roof**
Location: **The Lee Cricket Club
Lee Clump Road
The Lee
Buckinghamshire
HP16 9QH**

Applicant: **The Lee Cricket Club**

SITE CONSTRAINTS

Article 4 Direction
Adjacent to Unclassified Road
Area Special Adv. Control
Within Chilterns AONB
East West Line
Within Green Belt other than GB4 GB5
Within 500m of SINC NC1
CDC Statistical Area

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

CH/2007/1951/FA: Single storey side/rear/front extensions and replacement pitched roof over existing flat roof. Application withdrawn.

CH/2006/2116/FA: Retention of cricket club practice nets. Planning permission refused due to the close proximity of the nets to Manor Hey, their use would result in an unacceptable intensification of cricketing activity in this area and mindful of the close proximity to the adjacent residential property the associated disturbance which would be detrimental to the residential amenities of occupants of Manor Hey and the quiet enjoyment of their property. Appeal dismissed.

CH/1975/1542/FA: Changing room and toilets. Conditional permission

THE APPLICATION

This application proposes a single storey side/rear/front extension and a replacement pitched roof over the existing flat roof. The proposal would remove the existing tool shed and replace this with an integral extension 3.5 metres wide and 5.7 metres deep. The open porch to the front of the building would extend across the entire width of the building and would involve a small single storey extension on the north west corner of the building. To the rear, the extension would be stepped, not projecting to the rear of the existing rear elevation. The shallow sloping mono-pitched roof would be replaced with a half-hipped roof, 5.2 metres high. The ridge line would be located off-centre and thus to the front the roof would be more steeply pitched than to the rear. A dormer-type structure within the front roof slope would contain a clock.

PARISH COUNCIL

No objections.

REPRESENTATIONS

Councillor Rose has requested that the application be referred to Planning Committee if the Officers' recommendation is for refusal.

A Design and Access Statement has been submitted with this application.

The applicant has submitted copies of Sport England's Design Guidance Note: 'Pavilions and Clubhouses' and a guidance document produced by the English Cricket Board: 'Pavilions and Clubhouses'.

A supporting letter from the agent has been submitted with the application, covering the following points (summarised):

- The previous application was withdrawn following publication of the Committee report recommending refusal
- This application is a resubmission, with more supporting information, setting out why the extensions are required
- The existing pavilion was erected in 1975 and at this time, the club only had one team playing once a week and only 50 members
- Today, the club has 233 members, of which 195 are classed as playing members (133 adults and 62 juniors)
- There are now 2 competitive Saturday men's teams, one Sunday men's team and five junior teams (ages 10-14) playing weekday evenings and weekend mornings, with the pavilion being in use for five days a week during summer
- The club now has 8 teams, compared to 1 team in 1975
- The two current changing rooms measure 7.2 sqm and 7.14 sqm in area: the proposed changing rooms will measure 12.42 sqm and 13.74 sqm respectively. This below the minimum size of changing room recommended by Sport England (15 sqm)
- The existing home changing room is used as a store, due to lack of space elsewhere, and members currently have to change in the social areas or arrive to play cricket fully changed
- The existing single shower head is inadequate for 22 players participating in a match and for the 50 children using the pavilion during summer evenings: this will be replaced by a larger area containing 3 or 4 shower points, which is below the number recommended by Sport England (who state that 7 shower points are required for a two team pavilion)
- The proposed increased number of toilets is still below the levels recommended by Sport England
- The existing kitchen measures 5.28 sqm in area and is inadequate for preparing match teas; consequently much it has to be done by volunteers elsewhere and brought to the site
- The main social area of the pavilion will only be increased slightly in size: from 35 sqm to 40 sqm
- Most of the increase in footprint is from infilling, a slight increase at the rear and mainly from incorporating the floorspace of the existing tool shed
- The pavilion is not readily visible from the surrounding area
- The enhanced design will conserve the high scenic beauty of the Chilterns AONB better than the existing structure
- If the club continues with facilities that are so patently below the standards set by Sport England and the English Cricket Board, it risks losing its membership of the leagues within which it competes at both junior and senior level.

An additional letter has been submitted by the applicant during the course of the application, making the following points (summarised):

- we have a very large membership
- we are desperately short on storage space for equipment
- our changing rooms are too small
- we only have a single shower head
- the kitchen facilities need to be enlarged and amalgamated into the same general area as the bar, to share essential services and comply with health regulations

- we are a major community asset, providing sports facilities to a wide range of the population ranging from ages 5 to 70
- on Friday evenings, we have 150 children playing cricket and now run 4-5 junior teams
- on Saturdays, we run a 1st and 2nd XI and another team on Sundays
- we need the facilities to fulfil the interest from young players
- the ground is beautiful and we aim to have a pavilion to match this: the pitched roof will be more aesthetically pleasing and the space in the roof will be used for storage of equipment and bar supplies.

21 letters of support have been received which can be summarised as;

- The redevelopment of the clubhouse would be a major benefit to all involved with the cricket club;
- The current pavilion is inadequate for the amount of use that it currently has;
- The design of the building will fit beautifully;
- The club has made great efforts to develop cricket for all ages providing an outstanding resource for the community;
- The club has a vibrant playing and social side and is a key part of the community;
- The current changing rooms are inadequate terms of size and storage of large cricket bags and the showers/toilets are in needs of bringing into the 21st century;
- There is demonstrable need for new and enlarged facilities;
- The improvement of the pavilion will make the facilities even more used and provide greater scope for community activities;

CONSULTATIONS

County Highway Engineer:

The Highway Authority had no objection to a previous proposal at this site: application reference CH/2007/1951/FA. This application is still the same in highway terms.

This planning application is for the refurbishment and extension of the pavilion for The Lee Cricket Club to accommodate the additional load that the success of the cricket club has brought.

I have no objections and no conditions to include in any planning permission that you may grant.

District Tree and Landscape Officer:

There is a very large horse chestnut tree about 20 metre high with a stem diameter of about a metre just beside the existing pavilion. This is an important amenity tree which forms part of a line of similar sized trees along the side of the cricket pitch adjacent to the road. The plans show the horse chestnut tree over five metres from the pavilion whereas it is just over a metre from the building opposite the door to the changing rooms. The plan shows a new disabled access extending two metres out from this door but there appears to be no information about what this actually consists of or what materials it would be constructed in. It may be a ramp dropping to ground level but this is not clear. If this disabled access is constructed in the position shown on the plan it would require the loss of the tree. The plan also shows the door opening outwards whereas the existing door opens inwards. Ideally the disabled access would be removed to allow the retention of the tree but if the access is necessary it may be possible to adapt it to avoid the tree and also to design it to avoid excavation into the ground damaging the roots of the tree.

The proposal shows a small extension and another disabled access at the front of the pavilion. The extension should cause little root damage, particularly if appropriate foundations are used, and the access could use a no dig method of construction.

There are various branches from the horse chestnut tree growing over and very close to the existing roof so the proposed pitched roof would require the removal of a number of branches. This would

have some effect on the appearance of the tree, but bearing in mind the size of the tree, if minimal work were carried out, it should not have a significant effect on the amenity value of the tree.

There are some small holly and hawthorn in one area on the boundary behind the pavilion and these would require severe trimming back and may be lost.

Overall I am concerned about the loss of the horse chestnut tree and if the disabled access could not be changed to allow the retention of the tree, I would object to the application.

POLICIES

The Adopted Buckinghamshire County Structure Plan 1991- 2011: No relevant policies.

The Adopted Chiltern District Local Plan - 1997 (including The Adopted Alterations May 2001 and July 2004): Policies GC1, GC2, GC3, GC4, GB2, LSQ1, TR11 and TR16.

ISSUES

1. The site is located in the open Green Belt in The Lee where most development is inappropriate and there is a general presumption against such development for which planning permission will be refused. However, Local Plan Policy GB2 sets out the criteria by which development may be acceptable. Criterion (b) of Policy GB2 states that new buildings to provide essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation and other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it may be considered acceptable. This is also highlighted in Planning Policy Guidance 2 - Green Belts (PPG2) which states that essential facilities are those 'genuinely required for uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it'. PPG2 also states that possible examples of such facilities include small changing rooms or unobtrusive spectator accommodation. The site is also located in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and therefore any development should conserve the high scenic beauty of the locality.

2. The existing building is designed with a mono-pitched roof sloping to the rear with a small open porch area to the front and two smaller and subservient wings to the side; one housing a separate tool shed. The alterations proposed would increase the footprint of the existing building from approximately 136 sqm to 178 sqm which is considered to be a significant extension. The additions would include the extension of the open porch area to extend across the front elevation with an extension to the north west corner, the replacement of the tool shed with the side to a more substantial integral structure, a single storey extension to the rear and a replacement roof. Taking into account that the existing roof is a shallow sloping mono-pitched felt roof and the replacement roof would be a half-hipped slate roof, the change in the appearance, and the increase in height, of the building would be significant.

3. The application includes an explanation and justification from the applicant and the agent for the proposals. It is stated that the Club now has 233 members, of which 195 are playing members, compared to 50 members when the clubhouse was first built in 1975. The club now has 8 competitive teams, compared to 1 team in 1975, with up to 150 people playing cricket at any one time (junior events on Friday evenings during the summer). The existing changing facilities are around half the size recommended by Sport England for cricket clubhouses and the number of shower heads is well below the recommended levels. The agent also states that the existing toilet facilities are inadequate and do not comply with Sport England recommendations or Furthermore, it is stated that the clubhouse has no essential storage space and currently the home changing room is used as storage space, meaning there is no designated space for home teams to change. In addition, the kitchen facilities are very small and are insufficient to cater for match day refreshments, which are often prepared elsewhere and transported to the site. It is also stated that the addition of a pitched roof to the existing flat roof would result in a more aesthetically pleasing

building and would provide much needed storage space within the roof space. It is also noted from the layout of the existing building shown on the plans that the existing toilets can only be accessed internally through one of the changing rooms.

4. In the Green Belt there is a general presumption against inappropriate development, which is by definition harmful to the openness of the Green Belt. However, buildings to provide essential facilities for outdoor sports and recreation and other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it may be considered acceptable provided that the use maintained the openness of the Green Belt and the building provides essential facilities for the proposed use. With regard to the supporting information submitted with this application, there are several important points to note. The applicant has assessed the individual areas of the clubhouse on the 'Sport England Design Guidance Note: Pavilions and Clubhouses'. As these guidelines form a benchmark for sporting facilities, and contain details of essential and non-essential elements of clubhouse design, it is considered reasonable to assess the individual parts of the clubhouse against the criteria contained therein, in order to ascertain whether the individual elements are essential. It is of note that these guidelines list the essential and non-essential parts of a clubhouse. Included in the 'essential' list are changing rooms, showers, toilets, meeting/social area, store, lobby and disabled facilities. Included in the 'non essential' list are a kitchen and lounge/dining facilities. Firstly, the number of changing rooms is not being increased; instead the existing ones are being enlarged. The enlarged changing rooms will still be below the minimum size recommended by Sport England. The enlarged toilet and shower facilities will also remain below the recommended minimums published by Sport England and the revised layout will enable players and spectators to access the toilets from the rest of the clubhouse without having to walk through one of the changing rooms. The existing kitchen is small in size and the applicant states is inadequate for the increased number of members, therefore the enlargement is considered reasonable. This part of the extended clubhouse would occupy a similar footprint to an existing tool shed which would be demolished as part of the scheme. The applicant has explained that the enlarged roof space would provide storage facilities for equipment, which is classed as an essential part of a clubhouse in the Sport England guidance. Mindful of the extensions being mainly to the essential elements of the clubhouse (changing rooms, toilets, showers, store), together with the increased membership of the club, it is considered that the extensions would provide essential facilities for outdoor sports which are genuinely required for the use of this land. However essential facilities should also preserve the openness of the Green Belt and in this case, the design and size of the resulting building would not achieve this and concern is also raised in respect of the impact on the natural beauty of the AONB. As such the proposal is considered to be inappropriate development and therefore it is necessary for the applicant to show that very special circumstances exist that outweigh the harm arising from the inappropriateness of the development and any other harm: in this case, the impact on the AONB. As detailed above, the applicant has set out a convincing case in respect of the essential nature of the proposed accommodation and taking into account the design and appearance of the existing building and that the size of the resulting building has been kept to a minimum, it is considered that very special circumstances exist to outweigh the harm arising from the inappropriateness of the development and any other harm.

5. The nearest neighbouring property, No. 3 Manor Cottages, is sited approximately 20 metres to the west of the existing building and on the opposite side of Lee Clump Road. As such, whilst the proposed alterations would result in a significantly larger building, it is not considered that this would have a detrimental impact on the amenities of this property of any other neighbouring property.

6. At present, there is an informal parking arrangement within the cricket grounds on areas of the pitch which are not used for playing. Whilst the proposal would increase the floor area of the pavilion by 42 square metres, it is considered that there is sufficient space within the cricket grounds to accommodate the required parking in accordance with Policies TR11 and TR16.

7. The comments of the District Tree and Landscape Officer are noted. A horse chestnut tree has been incorrectly plotted on the site plan and is located just over a metre away from the side of the clubhouse, close to a proposed disabled access ramp. Mindful of the low height of the existing ramp to the front of the building, it is presumed that the ramp to the side will be of a similar height to the ramp to the front. Nevertheless, it is considered appropriate to impose conditions requiring details of the ramp and its impact on the tree to be submitted to and approved in writing prior to the development commencing.

8. The following recommendation is made having regard to the above and also to the content of the Human Rights Act 1998.

RECOMMENDATION: Conditional permission

Subject to the following conditions:-

- 1 C108A General Time Limit
- 2 C432 Materials As on Plan or spec

3 This permission is granted on condition that none of the trees within 5 metres of the clubhouse, at the date of this permission, shall be felled, topped, lopped or uprooted without the prior approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority for a period of five years from the date of implementation of this permission. Furthermore, the existing soil levels around the boles of the trees so retained shall not be altered.

Reason : In order to maintain, as far as possible, the character of the locality.

4 Notwithstanding the details of the disabled access ramp shown on the plans hereby approved, no development shall take place until full details of the disabled access ramps to the north west side of the resulting building hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include the extent of any excavation work, including elevations and a cross section showing the proposed ramp together with any changes in existing ground levels. The proposed ramps shall only be constructed using a 'no-dig' method of construction. The work shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to ensure adequate protection for the horse chestnut tree located to the north west of the clubhouse.

INFORMATIVES

1 **INFORMATIVE:** The applicant is advised that the horse chestnut tree located to the NW of the clubhouse has been incorrectly plotted on the submitted plans. As a result, one of the proposed disabled access ramps in the location shown on the plans conflicts with the actual position of the trunk of the tree. However, as no elevations have been submitted of the access ramps, it is not clear how they will appear or how they will be constructed. Condition 4 above therefore requires details of the ramps to be submitted prior to any work commencing on site, and care should be taken to avoid the location of the tree, if necessary reorientating the ramp to run parallel to the side of the building.