Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0613/24 Recommendation: APPROVE

Site: Worthing Football Club, Woodside Road, Worthing

Proposal: Provision of new external turnstile block. New external fenestration to south elevation. New entrance doors and canopy to frontage facing Woodside Road, Relocation of front entrance gate and brick pier, New external ramped accesses

Date of Site Visit: 16 May

Neighbours Checked: Y

Additional neighbour notification: N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings:

This application seeks full permission for the provision of a new turnstile block, new entrance doors and canopy, the relocation of an entrance gate, new ramped accesses and alterations to fenestration. These changes will primarily be to the eastern side of the football ground where its frontage faces Woodside Road, although the fenestration changes are also to the south.

The existing building is single storey with a pitched roof for about 2/3rds of its length. The main entrances to the football ground are mainly to that side. The existing turnstiles are further to the north, although the area to the south of the building is currently used as an exit. The football pitch and other stands are to the east.

Planning History:

The football ground has been undergoing significant improvement work recently. At present a new north stand is being constructed, with a new east stand already being constructed. A new turnstile block, for use by away supporters, was opened to the north further to a permission granted just before the lockdown in 2020.

Consultations:

West Sussex County Council Highways - No objection, the ramps will improve disability access and do not impact upon vehicle access to the ground.

Environmental Health - No adverse comment

Sussex Police

With regards to the turnstile buildings - the siting of CCTV will act as visual deterrent and be an effective tool in both reducing the fear and incidents of crime when fans access the site.

With regards to the proposed lighting - lighting is an effective security measure and a useful tool for public reassurance in that it enables people to see at night that they are safe or, to assess a developing threat and if necessary, to identify a route they could take to avoid potential issues. Recent events that have made national news have become the focus of concern over safety in public places means that there is merit in recognising the enormous value people place on being able to move around in public places at night under high quality lighting systems.

Where lighting is implemented, it should conform to the recommendations within BS5489-1:2020.

With regards to the new external fenestration to the south elevation – the glass in situ should be laminated, and consideration given to further protection by a roller shutter or grille.

Although not part of this planning application - I note the proposed food & beverage bar. The applicant and their partners are strongly advised to consult directly with the licensing team at Sussex Police before making plans for licensed premises serving alcohol or conducting other licensable activities at this site. The Sussex Police Licensing Team may have some of their own requirements that they wish to be implemented into the premises before they are satisfied it meets licensing objectives on the day-to-day operation of the premises which is why it is extremely important the applicant contacts them. To protect buildings when the site is not in use consideration should be given to the siting of intruder alarms.

Officer note - Cllr Kevin Jenkins requested that confirmation be obtained that the applicant had discussed the matter with Sussex Police in line with the last paragraph. The Club has contacted Sussex Police who have confirmed that their Licensing section has no adverse comment to make.

Representations:

No comments received

Relevant Planning Policies:

Worthing Local Plan (2023): SP1, DM5

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023)

Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Assessment

The main issue in the determination of the application is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area and the amenities of neighbouring properties.

The existing building could be said to lack an obvious focal point at the moment, the main entrance are not particularly obvious and given its function as the main access point for the majority of those visiting the stadium, it is considered that an entrance canopy will provide a more cohesive approach the stadium (at present the building is more dominated by a sign denoting the sponsored name of the stadium).

The access ramps are certainly to be welcomed and will provide a more obvious entrance to those with disabilities, again existing entrances can somewhat be hidden by the car parking that takes place on the forecourt to the front of the stadium.

The continued recent success of the team has meant larger attendances and it has been apparent that at busy times there has been pressure from queues to the existing turnstile entrances which can mean the pavement becomes blocked leading to supporters walking in the road. A further turnstile block to the southern side of the building should alleviate this pressure and will have little visual impact.

There are already windows to the southern side of the building plus a walkway, so even though there are windows in the neighbouring residential bungalow to the south, it is not considered that a material increase in overlooking will occur. There is a boundary fence as well that partly restricts overlooking.

The application will represent another improvement to the grounds facilities and is therefore considered acceptable.

Recommendation

01 Approved Plans
02 Full Permission

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? N

Case Officer: Gary Peck Date: 3 July 2024

Authorised by: James Appleton Date: 3 July 2024