Expiry: 4/12

Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1227/23 Recommendation: Grant

Site: Worthing Football Centre Ltd, Woodside Road, Worthing

Proposal: Provision of a roof covering across the West end standing terrace. This will replace and enlarge a previous roof covering that had to be removed in March 2023 for safety reasons. The development will also include the provision of a roof covering across the North East section of the currently uncovered standing terrace. (Part retrospective application)

Date of Site Visit: 15/9

Neighbours Checked: Y

Additional neighbour notification: N

Site and Surroundings:

Worthing Football Club is on the west side of Woodside Road including behind flats at Nos. 27-41, Bulkington Avenue back gardens are to the north, St Elmo Road rear gardens to the west and the Bowls club to the south.

This is not a conservation area and no part of the ground is listed. There are no protected trees on the site.

Proposal:

This application seeks permission to erect covers to standing terraces on the west side and north east side of the pitch. The west side stand had a partial enclosure until March of this year which was removed for safety reasons. This stand runs parallel with the rear gardens of St Elmo Road houses. On the north east corner of the ground the stand runs parallel with the gardens of flats at 27-41 (odd) Woodside Road. There are already covered stands on the east side and north side with the main stand on the south side of the pitch.

The west side stand is approximately 70 metres in length. This shared boundary is delineated by a 1.9 metre high wall and 6 metre high ball stop metal posts and a fencing/mesh enclosure. There is a pitch side barrier approximately 1100mm in height.

The posts and net fencing are to be replaced to the same height. Between these posts and the pitch side barrier it is proposed to erect a roof enclosure with a maximum height of 3.05 metres dropping down to 2.9 metres pitch side. A corrugated steel roof and rear wall is proposed. At some future date terrace steps and a crush barrier may be added within this overall structure.

On the east side again it is proposed to replace posts and netting enclosures. This existing stand has a ramped access, shallow stepped terraces and a concrete rear wall, crush barrier and pitch side barrier. A similar corrugated steel enclosure is proposed to a maximum height of 3.2 metres, 33 metres in length.

The application has been revised to include a management plan to deal with excessive noise.

'The proposed controls are :-

1. Drums and other musical instruments will be prohibited at all night games. This will be enforced by carrying out bag searches at the turnstiles before entry into the football ground.

2. The Club will install new signage in the proposed west stand and around the ground stating as follows: 'Please be mindful of our respected neighbours when you are in the stadium and when you are leaving the ground'.

3. During every game, announcements will be made on the PA system reminding fans to refrain from inappropriate behaviour.

4. The Club will continue to implement their policy and procedures for addressing abusive language and swearing. Stewards are briefed on this before every game.

The above controls will be regularly reviewed by the Club and updated, as required.'

Planning History:

AWDM/0901/23 - Retention of external container bar and construction of a single storey building to create a covered area for the Club's Fanzone. Granted 15.9.23

AWDM/2327/21 – Approval of Details Reserved by Condition 3 (Management Plan) & 5 (Construction Management Plan) of Application No AWDM/1519/21. Approved 3.3.22

AWDM/1519/21 - Change of use of part of the existing gym building into a Worthing Football Club bar together with the construction of a covered training area, new gates, cellar and altered configuration of window and door openings and location of existing gate to south elevation. Granted 26.10.21

AWDM/0773/21 - Variation of Condition of approved AWDM/0155/14 (Condition No.4) to be varied to enable the pitch and floodlights to be used on Sunday evenings by community based teams, to use the pitch until 2000 hours, with the lights to be switched off no later than 2010 hours (No spectators allowed for any community based use on a Sunday evening) and to include reference to the women's teams in addition to 1st team, under 21s and under 18s games. Granted

AWDM/0134/20 - Removal of three x 21m high floodlight poles and all existing floodlights from all poles, (retention of existing telecommunication mast to south-west corner) and installation of eight x 15m high floodlight poles with LED lighting (two light fittings per column) (four to the south of site and four to the north of site). Granted

AWDM/1903/19 - Enlargement of existing kiosk and proposed single-storey extension to provide store and kit room to north-east of football club grounds and repositioned turnstile and gate and new fence to part of north boundary.

Consultations:

Representations:

One objection from St Elmo's Road:

'The removal of the old stand was a relief. Balls bouncing off corrugated steel causes tremendous noise. As does the use of the steel stands as drums during matches.

Please don't allow them to use cheap corrugated steel. Please also ensure a barrier is erected at the front to stop balls bouncing on the roof.

We all thought that the noise had gone for good and that the noise during practice and matches was a lot better, reinstating this structure will lead to yet more noise, and along with the recently installed sound system speaker at the end of our gardens, create an intolerable existence and lead to a lack of enjoyment of our gardens, which has been severely curtailed by the constant use of the ground.'

Relevant Planning Policies:

Worthing Local Plan (2021): SP1, SP3, DM5, DM7, DM8, DM12 and DM22

National Planning Policy Framework (CLG 2019)

Planning Practice Guidance (CLG 2014)

Planning Assessment

The main issues in the determination of the application are the effects of the proposal upon the character of the area and the amenities of neighbouring properties.

<u>Visual</u>

The covered stands are within the grounds at the end of neighbours gardens'. The proposed design reflects the design of existing covered stands on the east and north sides. They are purely functional in their design but acceptable contextually.

<u>Neighbours</u>

The main issue is therefore the impact upon neighbouring residents.

In response to the objection received the applicant was asked to consider the use of an alternative material for the enclosures. This request was declined on the basis that the material is universally used for such stands. The applicant also believes the noise issue may be from balls hitting the pitch side barrier rather than the metal sheeting but in either case the noise must be irregular and less than when compared to the general ambient noise generated at a football match.

The applicant advises that the public address system at the western boundary was previously in the demolished stand. This issue should be improved if the new enclosure is permitted and the PA is repositioned within it.

Enclosing the stands may assist in preventing noise spill from the ground into the adjoining properties as well as improving privacy for neighbours and possibly security.

Worthing FC is increasingly successful hence the need for improved facilities. Clearly it needs to co-exist with its residential neighbours. Implementation of and adherence to the Management Plan submitted should help with noise during games.

Recommendation

1. Approved Plans
2. Full Permission
3. The management plan received 12/10/23 shall be implemented at all times during club matches unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Informative

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern within the application (as originally submitted) and negotiating, with the Applicant, acceptable amendments to the proposal to address those concerns. As a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

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

Case Officer:	MOK	Date: 17/10/23
Authorised by:	Gary Peck	Date: 17 October 2023