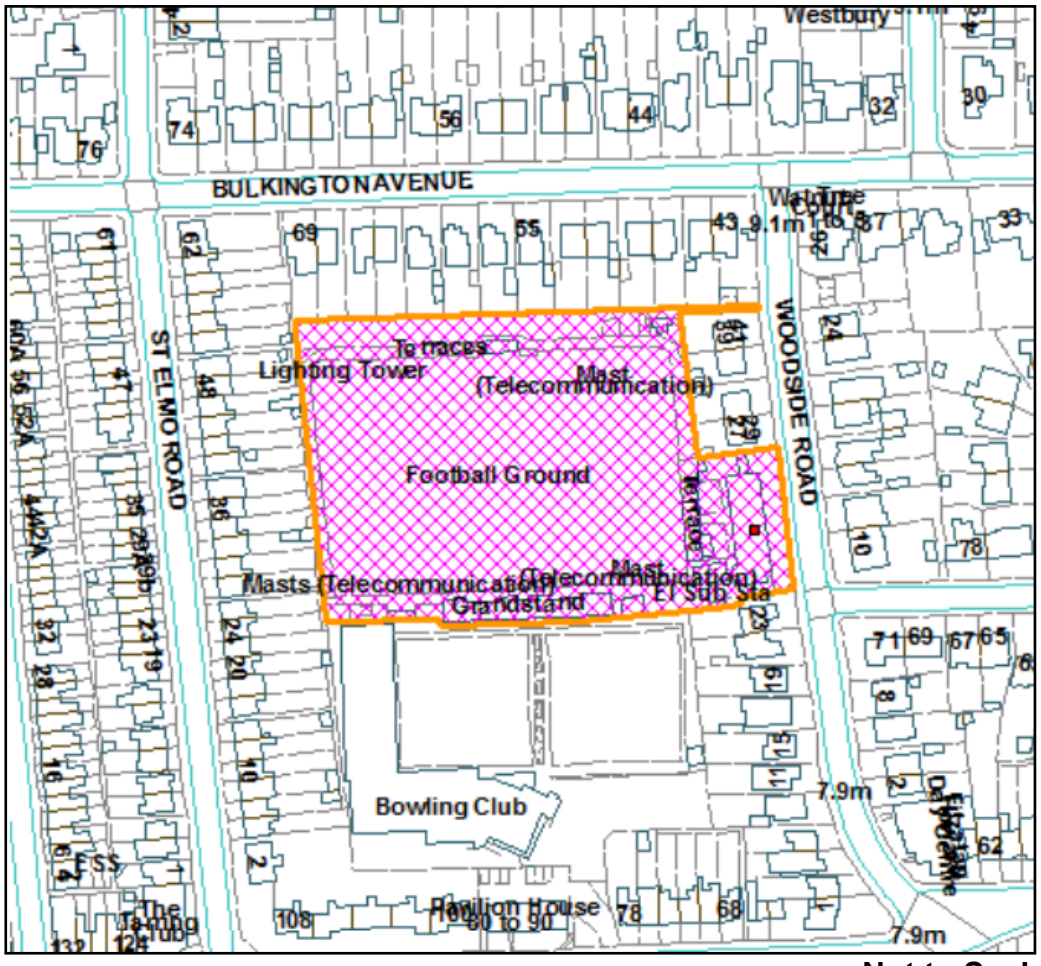
Application Number:	**AWDM/0351/24**	**Recommendation - APPROVE**
Site:	**Worthing Football Club, Woodside Road, Worthing**	
Proposal:	**Provision of a roof covering across the West end standing terrace. This will replace and enlarge a previous roof covering that had to be removed in March 2023 for safety reasons. The development will also include the provision of a roof covering across the North East section of the currently uncovered standing terrace. Application to Vary Condition 1 of approved AWDM/1227/23 to amend the roof design and length of stand (part retrospective application).**	
Applicant:	Mr Keith Mitchell	Ward: Gaisford
Agent:	Miss Debbie Marriage	
Case Officer:	Gary Peck	



Not to Scale

Reproduced from OS Mapping with the permission of HMSO © Crown Copyright Licence number LA100024321

Proposal, Site and Surroundings

Planning permission was granted in 2023 for a roof covering over the western end of the ground. A roof covering was subsequently constructed but not in accordance with the approved plans. The agent states:

'The approved plans show the west stand being 70 metres long, 3.45 metres high at the rear and 3.2 metres high at the front. The roof had a very shallow slope downwards from back to front. The stand has been built slightly differently to the approved plans. It is 50 metres long, 3.2 metres high at the rear and 3.475 metres high at the front. The stand is essentially the same height as shown on the approved plans, the difference being that the roof slopes front to back, instead of back to front. Precipitation falling on the roof will be collected in a horizontal gutter running the whole length of the stand, which will route into three downpipes (shown on the west elevation on KD.1527_A.200) and then into a soakaway in the south-west corner. This roof design is superior to that shown on the plans, both for the club and nearby neighbouring properties. It routes rain and snow directly into the surface water drainage system instead of onto the pitch. The height of the back of the stand, nearest to the neighbours, is 250mm lower than as shown on the plans. The front of the stand is 275mm higher than shown on the approved plans.'

The stand backs onto properties in St Elmos Road which are clearly visible from within the football ground. A wall is located behind the stand with residential properties beyond. Previously, a smaller stand in length roughly extending to the edge of the 6 yard box in each penalty area stood at this end. The stand as built extends just beyond the penalty area on each side.

The entrances to the ground are on the eastern side of the ground in Woodside Road and the largest stand is to the south of the ground consisting of a raised seating area centrally located and extending about half the distance to each end. A bowling club is located behind the stand. A report regarding a new north stand appears elsewhere on the agenda.

The application site is within the built-up area and is located outside of any Controlled Parking Zone which means that parking is unrestricted in the immediate environs of the ground.

Relevant Planning History

(Relevant to the western side of the ground)

AWDM/1227/23: *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)*. Approved, but not implemented in accordance with the approved plans.

A smaller roof serving the western end of the ground was granted permission in 2000.

Consultations

No comments received

Representations

3 letters of objection have been received on the following grounds:

- the stand is unsightly and out of keeping with the character of the area
- loss of light
- the wall to the back of the stand is unsafe
- the structure has been built with disregard to the previous permission
- the design will require balls to be collected from the roof rather than bouncing back onto the pitch

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Worthing Local Plan 2020-2036:
DM5 Quality of the Built Environment, DM7 Open Space, Recreation and Leisure, DM8 Planning for Sustainable Communities / Community Facilities, DM9 Delivering Infrastructure, DM12 The Visitor Economy, DM15 Sustainable Transport & Active Travel, DM16 Sustainable Design, DM18 Biodiversity, DM19 Green Infrastructure, DM20 Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage & DM22 Pollution

Supplementary Planning Document 'Sustainable Economy' (WBC 2012)
'Infrastructure Delivery Plan' (WBC 2010)

Relevant Legislation

The Committee should consider the planning application in accordance with:

Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provides that the application may be granted either unconditionally or subject to relevant conditions, or refused. Regard shall be given to relevant development plan policies, any relevant local finance considerations, and other material considerations

Planning Assessment

The principle of development has already been established by the previous permission and therefore the key issue in the determination of this application is whether the development as constructed is material harmful, when compared to the previous permission, to justify a different conclusion.

The previous Officer report noted that, '*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*.'

Given that the design was indeed similar to 2 of the existing stand designs at the football ground, it would have been difficult to reach any other conclusion than as described above. In visual terms from within the ground, though, it is difficult to come to any other view than that the new stand is more visually appealing than the stands referred to on both the northern and eastern sides of the ground. The stand on the

northern side will be removed if permission is granted for the scheme which appears elsewhere on the agenda, while the stand at the eastern end with a low roof and a number of supporting poles obscuring the view of the pitch appears quite dated in comparison to some of the more modern facilities that have been provided elsewhere in the ground.

The previous proposal had the roof sloping towards the pitch whereas the scheme, as built, has the roof sloping away from it. The low roof at the existing eastern stand again seems to impair supporters' view of the game and therefore it does seem beneficial for the roof to slope upwards. This also means that the lowest part of the stand is at the rear towards neighbouring properties.

It is noted that a representation raises concern that balls landing on the roof of the stand would now fall back towards neighbouring properties but it is noted that the protective netting is located to the front of the stand and therefore would prevent this occurrence.

The key issue is therefore the impact of the building upon neighbouring properties in St Elmo Road. Since the stand when viewed from the rear is essentially the same height as previously approved and that the gardens serving these properties are reasonably long at around 18 metres, your Officers do not consider that the revised design of the stand has any greater impact on the amenities of adjoining residents. The pitch of the roof is very shallow and accordingly its increase in height to its front is barely discernible when viewed from those residential properties. The slightly lower roof at the rear immediately adjoining the properties can be seen as a slight improvement.

While, as previously, concerns have been raised regarding noise, in essence the enclosure of the ground, rather than it being predominantly open as was previously the case, would seem to assist in preventing noise spill from the ground overall. Some concern was raised about noise being caused to the back wall of the stand (caused by fans backing on the metal cladding).

A noise management plan was submitted as part of the previous application and included the following provisions:

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.

It was not evident from your Officer's site visit that the 2nd point had yet been implemented and in light of points raised, it is considered that the management plan should be updated to reflect the altered circumstances of the new stand. Subject to

the above, it is considered that the application is acceptable and retrospective permission for the stand, as built, be granted.

Recommendation

APPROVE

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Approved Plans.
2. Prior to the commencement of the 2024/25 football season, an updated Noise Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.