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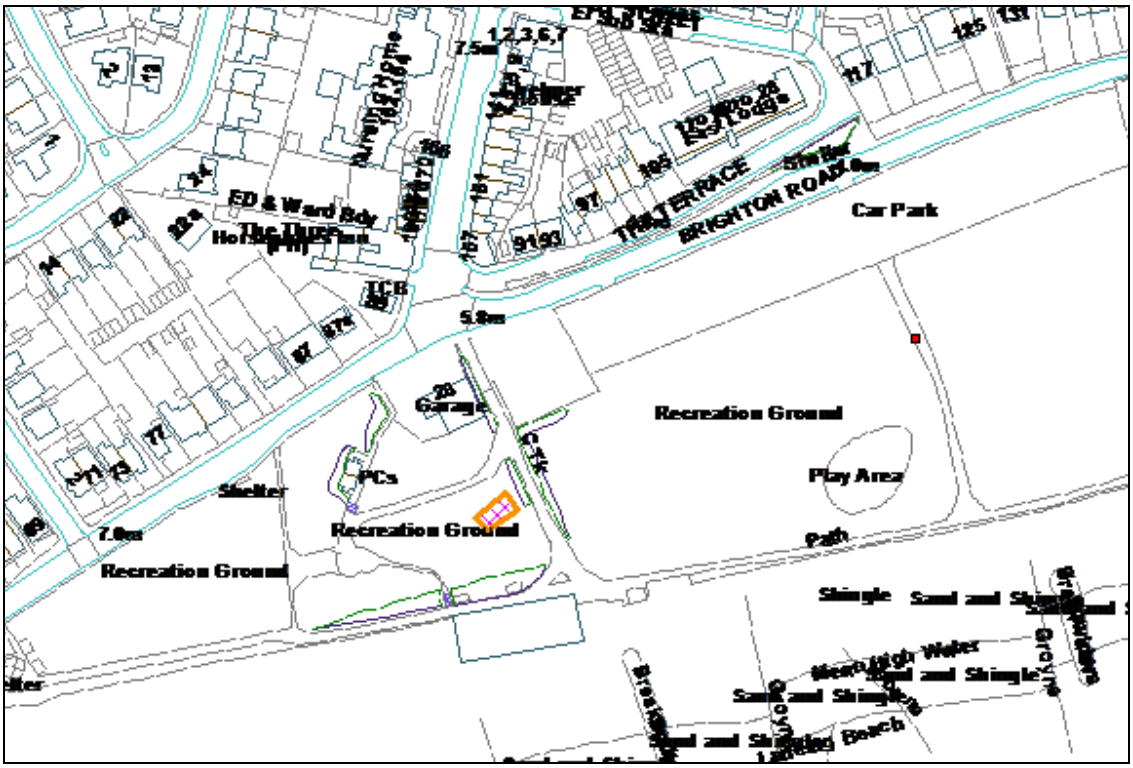
Application Number: AWDM/1572/15 Recommendation – APPROVE

Site: Beach Green, Brighton Road, Lancing

Proposal: Construction of permanent skate park constructed in concrete of varying heights with soft landscape surrounds

Applicant: Lancing Parish Council Ward: Widewater

Case Officer: Peter Barnett



Not to Scale

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Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The application relates to an area on the western part of Beach Green, located to the north of the new café/gym facility on the seafront and south of the SEtyres building

fronting Brighton Road. Public toilets lie to the north west. Lancing Parish Council is proposing to construct a skatepark facility measuring 30m long and 11.8m wide within a dip in the ground. It is proposed to utilize natural ground contours to provide a facility which rises to 1.95m at its western end and 1.35m at its eastern end. It is to have a concrete surface finish with soft landscape (grass) surrounds.

The Parish Council's Design and Access Statement states that the site was preferred over others in Lancing because the contours of the site lend itself to the profile of skate parks, it is close to toilet and refreshment facilities, security is good as the site is visible from afar and from many angles which should deter anti-social behaviour, the site is sufficiently far from residential property so as to cause minimal disturbance, the provision of the skate park on the Green meets with aims of Lancing Vision, and the site is close to a car park and has good public transport links.

Consultations

West Sussex County Council: No objection from a transport/highways aspect subject to condition requiring a construction management plan. Comment that the site is sustainably located with a car park near-by, a direct bus route, and the south coast cycle route which runs along the seafront. The site is also close to local shops and the café on the seafront. Access during construction of the skate park will be from the A259 Brighton Road roundabout, and onto the private access road leading to the café. A construction management plan should be submitted to the LPA for approval but the site has plenty of room for the parking and turning of construction vehicles, and no problems are foreseen from a highway safety or capacity point of view.

Once the skate park is complete, young children and teenagers are the most likely users of the facility. It is anticipated any new car trips associated with the park will be drop offs, however there is the beach green car park available for use, if needed. Cycle and scooter storage should be considered

Adur & Worthing Councils: The ***Environmental Health*** officer has no objections. The ***Contaminated Land*** officer recommends that the contaminated land condition is imposed.

The ***Drainage Engineer*** has no objection. The skatepark will be built at existing ground level and above with no deep bowls, therefore surface water will run off to the periphery of the hard surfaced site.

The design and access statement states excavation into the ground should be minimized and, therefore he would suggest that a ring drain or similar is constructed around the edge of the hard-surface comprising of shingle or crates wrapped in geotextile and topped with 50 mm of topsoil and seed. This simple approach will be adequate. He would not advocate large deep soakaways.

The comments of the ***Safer Communities*** Officer are to be reported.

Southern Water Services: No objection.

Environment Agency: No comment

Sussex Police: To be reported

Lancing Parish Council: No objections

Representations

21 letters of support received:-

- Great asset for local children and much needed
- Not enough facilities for outdoor exercise for children in Lancing
- Beach Green is the ideal location
- Perfect site for it close to gym and kite surfing zone
- Site will be visible from routes approaching the café/gym and will be monitored
- Close to safe crossing for children wishing to use facility
- Utilizes natural contours of ground
- Close to bus stop and toilets
- Does not affect visual amenities
- Sited away from residents so will not disturb
- Parents can enjoy refreshments at café while children skateboard
- Skate parks reduce anti-social behavior
- Welcome not having to travel to Shoreham to skate

13 letters of objection received:-

- Will result in noise and anti-social behaviour, particularly in evenings
- Located in a dark dip, screened from view behind a garage and close to toilets
- Difficult to monitor what is going on
- Will adversely affect nearby residents including those above the café and in nearby care homes and retirement complexes
- Could discourage families from using the Green
- Good idea but better sited elsewhere
- Should be within the town/village away from busy A259
- Will compromise views of the sea and affect other activities on Beach Green
- Would be better at Monks Recreation Ground
- Too much concrete
- Potential conflict with users of cycleway/path
- Badly designed with no access for disabled users
- Area regularly floods
- Will increase littering

Further 12 letters received objecting to possible alternative location for the skate park to the east of Beach Green as it would adversely affect residents in the retirement flats (Beachville Court).

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AG1, AR7, AR12
National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)
Lancing Vision (2012)

Relevant Legislation

The Committee should consider the planning application in accordance with:
Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) that provides 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; and
Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that requires the decision to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Planning Assessment

Principle

Saved Policy AR7 permits the development of new recreational facilities within the built-up area subject to a number of criteria, including ensuring that the development is of a scale and character appropriate to the locality and consideration of the effects on the residential amenity of nearby dwellings. Policy AR12 states that improvements to facilities at Lancing Beach and Beach Green will normally be permitted subject to sea defence, local access and environmental considerations.

Lancing Vision is a document which sets out the regeneration aims for Lancing. It has been prepared by Lancing Parish Council in partnership with Adur District Council and has been subject to extensive public and stakeholder consultation. The Vision seeks to establish Lancing as a vibrant village, an exciting seaside visitor destination and a place that provides for the needs of the community. One of the core recommendations is to "establish a lively seaside destination on South Street and Beach Green, with places to eat, drink, relax, play and enjoy outdoor and watersports activities."

In respect of Beach Green, the aim is to provide an activity area on Beach Green with different activity zones, including a high quality children's play area (relocated from the current location) and a skate park.

The current proposal would therefore be compatible with the aims of Lancing Vision and saved Local Plan policies and can be supported in principle.

Effect on other users of the public open space

Beach Green is an extensive area which is becoming a lively seaside destination, particularly following the completion and opening of the café and gym building on the seafront. The public toilets have been refurbished and the provision of the skate park, as discussed above, would further help to meet the aim of improving leisure activity on the Green.

The position of the skate park would not unduly harm enjoyment of Beach Green by other users as substantial open space would remain, particularly to the east. It would be well sited in relation to the café which should benefit the existing businesses as well as the proposed facility itself.

There has been concern at the possibility of anti-social behaviour being encouraged by siting the skate park close to the public toilets and on a part of the Green which is hidden from Brighton Road by the SEtyres building. However, the skate park would be close to the café and gym, which has permission to be open until 11pm on most days of the week, thereby enabling natural surveillance of the facility. The site also lays close to the footpath/cyclepath which runs along the seafront and which is well used. Furthermore, the objective of the facility is to avoid anti-social behaviour by focusing the attention of young persons on the recreational facilities on offer.

It is considered that the proposed location would therefore be an appropriate one. However, it is understood that alternative locations have been suggested such as at the eastern end of Beach Green. This would bring the skatepark closer to residential properties and could lead to some loss of amenity. It would also be in a more isolated position, further from existing facilities, and would be more prominent. An alternative location could be found closer to the childrens' play area to the west. This would have the benefit of still being close to existing facilities but would be well separated from residential properties, although it would not be directly overlooked by the café.

Visual amenity

The proposed facility would be sited relatively low in the landscape, being set within a dip on lower ground than the café to the south. The use of soft landscaping to the edge of the skatepark will help to assimilate it into the Green setting and it is not considered that it will cause serious harm to the visual amenities of the locality.

Impact on nearby land uses

The café/gym lies to the south of the site. At first floor the building has 3 flats and an 8 bed hostel. While noise from users of the skatepark may cause some disturbance, the residential accommodation at first floor does not have primary windows on the north side of the building which will help to reduce any noise impact. Lancing Beach and

Beach Green, with the café and gym, and its reputation as a destination for kitesurfing, results in it being a lively area already and the proposed skate park would not therefore be introducing activity into a quiet area.

Residential dwellings and care homes are present to the north and west at a distance of approximately 60m at the closest point. The dwellings to the north are also separated by the busy A259 and the SEtyres building and it is not considered that the proposal will result in undue noise disturbance or a serious loss of residential amenity.

Access

The site is within a sustainable location close to the cycle path and car park on Beach Green. West Sussex Highways have no highway safety concerns with regard to this proposal.

Contaminated Land

The site contains concrete blocks which were formerly coastal war defences and which were buried on Beach Green after the World War 2. At that same time, other largely inert materials were buried and it is possible that the site is contaminated. The proposed skate park will be constructed above ground, avoiding excavation and disturbance of potentially contaminated material.

However, the Contaminated Land Officer has recommending that the full contaminated land condition is imposed to enable control to be exercised over the development in the interest of reducing the risk to human health.

Flood risk

The site lies within flood zones 2 and 3 and is therefore at risk of flooding. However, the proposed use is not a 'vulnerable' use and there are no safety concerns with regard to siting the skatepark in this location.

Recommendation

APPROVE

Subject to:-

1. 3 year time limit
2. No lighting without prior approval of LPA
3. Construction management plan to be submitted and approved
4. Details of surface water drainage to be submitted and approved
5. Full contaminated land condition
6. Approved plans