Development Management - Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1098/13 Recommendation – Approve

Site: **Adur Outdoor Activities Centre, Brighton Road, Shoreham-By-Sea, West Sussex, BN43 5LT**

Proposal: **2 storey north extension to create accommodation block, single storey extension to create additional facilities including new entrance and cafe.**

Date of site visit: 4 October 2013

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The application relates to a purpose built sports and outdoor pursuits facility which sits immediately to the west of the River Adur, opposite the Ropetackle development and to the north of the A259 Brighton Road and east of the Adur Recreation Ground.

It is proposed to construct a two storey extension to the north east end of the building to provide more residential accommodation at both ground and first floor level (currently there is only accommodation on the first floor). The extension will continue the flat-roofed form of the existing building and will be 8.25m deep, 13.5m wide and 6.4m high. The existing external staircase and walkway, 1.9m wide, will also be extended to wrap around the extension.

Also proposed is an extension to the south east corner of the building to provide an enlarged rock climbing facility with an indoor bouldering wall, accessed through a new, enlarged reception area plus function room on the ground floor with a new café at first floor. It will project 2.5m from the front (SE) wall at the intersection of the original building and the more recent climbing wall addition to the west, wrapping around the climbing wall building and measuring 17.5m wide along the front and 18.5m wide along the west elevation, projecting 4.7m from the west wall of the climbing building. It will be predominantly single storey with a mono pitched roof but will include a first floor flat-roofed link extension over the existing entrance to form the café.

Relevant site history

None relevant

Consultations

West Sussex County Council – No objection from a highway point of view. The proposed increase in accommodation will increase from 16 beds to 36 beds. The centre currently offers 19 car parking spaces for residents and visitors to the centre. WSCC car parking standards for C1 use recommend

that for the increase in accommodation to 666sqm the centre should be providing 9 car parking spaces, and 1 space for visitor parking. Therefore the existing parking provision at the centre is regarded as adequate to meet the increased vehicle trips associated with the increase in no of beds at the centre.

The activity centre operates all week long, including weekends and provide residential courses to children the majority of which visit the centre at weekends and generally arrive in mini buses. There is enough parking within the centres car park for the residential element of this proposal, however the increase in D2 floorspace would command a higher level of parking provision. Current standards recommend 1 space per 22sqm which would equate to 20 spaces. In addition to this the centre proposes to open a cafe to the public and requires 1 parking space per 5sqm (15 spaces), and 1 space for the B1 office use. Therefore the existing 19 space car park is not large enough to accommodate the required 46 spaces.

However; although the current car parking space levels are under what would be expected for this increase in floorspace it has been considered that as most groups staying at the centre arrive in one vehicle or two vehicles at a time. The café, which will be open to the public, will attract custom from people already using the recreation ground and groups staying/visiting the centre thus reducing the number of trips to the site. Adjacent to the site is a public car park which is large enough to accommodate any overspill parking, should this occur during busy periods. No cycle parking has been included in the application and should be provided for staff and visitors based on WSCC cycle parking standards.

In summary, this proposal will see an increase in vehicle trips associated with the increase in accommodation, and new cafe. However WSCC consider the existing car parking provision and adjacent public car park can accommodate the additional vehicles expected. A review of the existing access onto Brighton Road from the centre is more than adequate to take additional vehicle movements, and offers a safe entrance and exit, not allowing any right hand turns due to its close proximity the Shoreham Bridge.

Adur District Council – The *Environmental Health Officer* has no objection but has recommended imposing the full contaminated land condition.

The *Shoreham Harbour Policy Team* supports the application. Whilst the application site is outside of the Shoreham Harbour Regeneration boundary, it will contribute towards meeting their objectives. An important element of the Shoreham Harbour Regeneration project is to enhance the leisure and recreational offer and resources available to residents and visitors. Expanding the premises at the Adur Outdoor Activity Centre will help to meet this key aim. By providing further accommodation for visitor groups and individuals and for residential group trips, the application will increase the opportunities for people to visit the Shoreham area.

Environment Agency – No objection in principle. Comment that although there is a residential component to this proposal, they consider this to be a 'less vulnerable' use under National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Technical Guidance.

The predicted 1 in 200 year surge tide level for the year 2070 (climate change allowance for 'less vulnerable' uses) is around 4.7mAOD. Therefore, even without the proposed flood defences (or in the event of their failure) we would expect only 20-30cm depth of internal flooding.

However, we would recommend that all accommodation be moved to the first floor.

Representations

None received

Relevant Planning Policies

Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AC1, AC4, ACS5, AR1, AR8, AR17
Assessment of Saved Policies Against the NPPF (ADC 2013)
National Planning Policy Framework (CLG 2012)

Planning Assessment

Principle

The site lies outside of the built up area, within the Strategic Gap between Shoreham and Lancing. Within the Gap development will not normally be permitted to prevent coalescence and to retain the separate identities and amenities of both settlements. However, development which takes advantage of a valuable opportunity to meet the need for recreation is a compelling circumstance which may justify granting permission.

Policy AR17 refers explicitly to the existing water-based club facilities at Adur Recreation Ground and states that permission will be granted for extensions and alterations provided that siting, form, scale, design and construction are appropriate to the local environment, there is no adverse impact on wildlife and the SSSI and on-site parking and access are acceptable.

This proposal comprises extending and enhancing existing leisure facilities and does not extend the building significantly further into the Gap. The extension proposed on the west side of the building is single storey only and will not compromise the aims of the Gap policy. It will not bring the building closer to the river bank or compromise wildlife.

An important element of the Shoreham Harbour Regeneration project is to enhance the leisure and recreational offer and resources available to residents and visitors. Expanding the premises and facilities at the Adur Outdoor Activity Centre will help to meet this key aim. It is therefore considered that the proposal can be supported in principle.

Visual amenity

The building does sit at a slightly lower level than Brighton Road and is reasonably well screened by roadside trees. The proposed front and west

side extension is subsidiary to the existing building and, while expanding the footprint of the building, it will not appear as unduly dominant or prominent in the landscape.

The main visual impact will arise as a result of the proposed two storey rear (NW) extension. At over 9m deep it will be a substantial addition to the building with a flat roof form which is not particularly pleasing in design terms. However, it will match the existing building and will result in a simple extension of the current form which is the most practical in construction terms.

The building sits in a relatively isolated location with no immediate neighbouring buildings, except for the sea scout HQ building over 50m to the north west. Across the river lies the Ropetackle development and the extension will be visible from the flats within that development and from the riverside path on both sides of the river. There is some existing tree screening which helps to screen the existing building but it is more exposed as one moves north west along the river and there is some concern that the proposed extension will be quite prominent in views. Some additional tree planting was considered but it was not found to be practicable as a result of the need to keep the existing slipway from the site into the river, which effectively maintains a visual gap allowing views of the extension.

However, on balance, the extension is not considered to be so prominent as to warrant a refusal of the application. From the Ropetackle side of the river it will be more visible but it will remain subsidiary in height to the existing climbing wall element of the building which will sit behind the extension and, being seen in distant views from across the river only, it is not considered to result in significant visual harm to the amenities of the locality.

From the west, the extension will be visible from the recreation ground and from Brighton Road, although the impact will be mitigated by existing roadside trees. As with views from the north east across the river, the climbing wall building will remain the dominant part of the development while the new extension will be seen against the backdrop of the taller buildings at Ropetackle. On balance, the visual impact of this development is not considered to harmful.

Residential amenity

The nearest affected residents are within the Ropetackle development across the river and are too distant to be adversely affected. While the extension will be visible, it will not restrict light or outlook for those occupiers.

Parking and Access

The existing facility offers 19 parking spaces and there is also the opportunity to use the public car park adjacent to the recreation ground to the west. While on site provision is under normal standards, WSCC Highways consider that most groups staying at the centre will arrive in one or two vehicles at a time. The café, which will be open to the public, will attract custom from people already using the recreation ground and groups staying/visiting at the centre thus reducing the number of trips to the site. They have no highway objection therefore to the proposed extensions.

They have sought the provision of cycle parking at the site as the existing cycle stands at the front of the building would need to be removed to accommodate the single storey extension.

Flood Risk

The site lies within an area of flood risk, being adjacent to the River Adur. Residential accommodation is proposed to be provided on the ground and first floors of the extension and there is concern at the risk to public safety. However, the Environment Agency has indicated that the depth of flooding inside the building during a 1 in 200 year event, if the flood defences were not in place or had failed, would be only 20-30cm. They have recommended that the accommodation be removed from the ground floor,

The applicants have responded by stating that the staff and management at the Centre have sufficient expertise and capabilities, plus the equipment, for Centre users to be prepared and protected should any environmental conditions be forecast to come together such that the Centre may flood.

On balance, in view of the lack of an objection from the EA, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in terms of flood risk and the accommodation can remain on both floors.

Recommendation

APPROVE for the reason:-

The proposed development does represent a large extension to the existing facilities which will have some visual impact on its surroundings within the Strategic Gap. However, the proposal will result in enhanced leisure facilities for residents and visitors and it is not considered that it will result in sufficient harm to the amenities of the local environment or neighbouring properties to warrant refusal. It would consequently not conflict with the saved policies of the Adur District Local Plan (AC1, AC4, AR8, AR17) or the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Standard 3 year time limit
2. Approved plans
3. Cycle parking
4. Contaminated land
5. Materials to match existing
6. The residential accommodation hereby permitted shall be only be used in connection with the use of the Adur Outdoor Activities Centre as a sports and outdoor pursuits facility.

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning

permission 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? N

Case Officer: Peter Barnett Date: 19 November 2013

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 19 November 2013