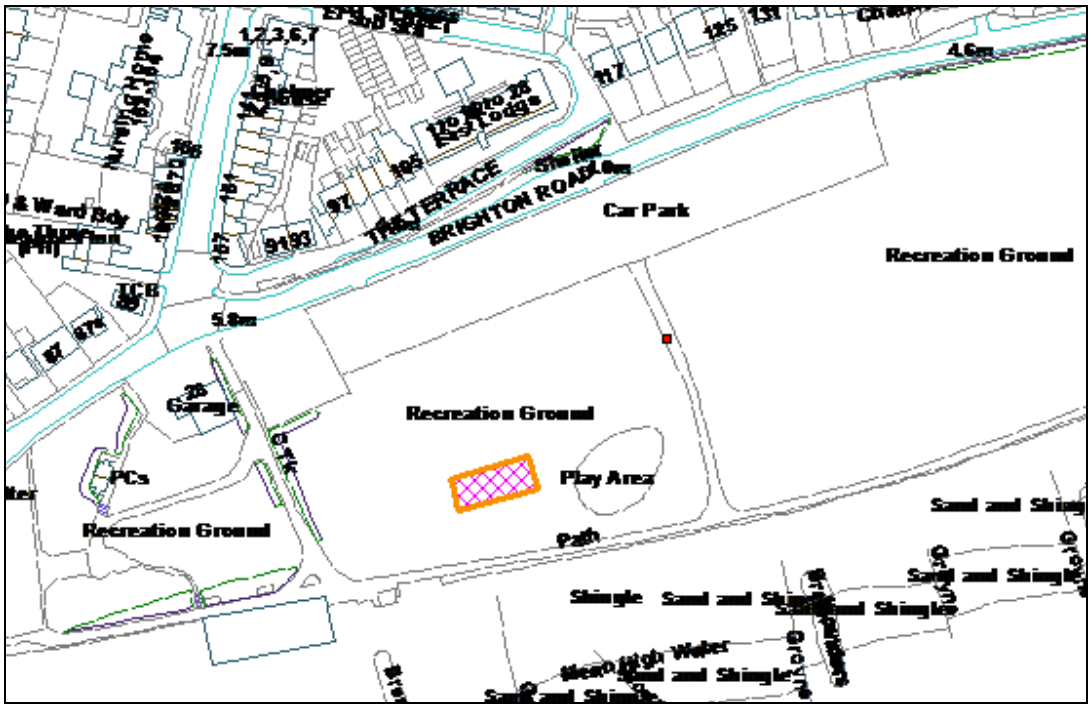
Application Number: AWDM/0259/16 **Recommendation – APPROVE**

Site: **Beach Green, Brighton Road, Lancing**

Proposal: **Construction of permanent skate park constructed in concrete of varying heights with soft landscaped surrounds (Resubmission of AWDM/1572/15 - relocation of skate park).**

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 Beach Green, located to the west of the children's playground and north of the outdoor gym equipment. Lancing Parish Council is proposing to construct a skatepark facility measuring 30m long and 11.8m wide at the bottom of a slope to the south. The facility will rise 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. A 2m wide footpath is also proposed to run east-west to the north of the skatepark linking the existing north-south footpaths at either end.

The application is seeking an amended location for the skate park following the granting of planning permission for the facility further west in January 2016 (AWDM/1572/15). This revised location is slightly further from residential properties but close to the Beach Green car park. It will be more visible from the road as it will not be 'hidden' behind the SETyres building, as was the case with the previous location.

The Parish Council has advised that it does not need planning permission for the skate park because of the permitted development rights for local authorities under Part 12 of the General Permitted Development Order, but it has submitted the application as it wishes to "extend the same consultation opportunities afforded to residents under the first application to other residents that may be affected by the change in location of the skate park."

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 full 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.

Southern Water Services: No objection.

Sussex Police: No objection. The proposed location has areas of observation from the road, car park, the dwellings facing Beach Green and the promenade/cycle path. These public views will be very useful should any anti-social behavior occur. The design will remove opportunity for graffiti and reduce amount of noise normally associated with old 'box style' design. It will blend into landscape which will enhance observation over it and reduce opportunity for loitering without being observed from a distance. Not concerned at lack of perimeter fencing or lighting.

Lancing Parish Council: Although all but one of the Committee did not raise any objections, Cllr Doris Martin wished it minuted that she found the decision to relocate the skatepark totally unacceptable and that the decision had been taken purely on financial grounds and without due regard to the Police and other outside agencies advice.

Representations

4 letters of support received:-

- Lancing needs a skate park
- Will be an asset for Lancing
- Beach Green is an ideal location
- Recommend bicycle rack is installed

41 letters of objection received:-

- Increasing encroachment onto grass areas of Beach Green
- Such a concrete construction would be harmful to character and appearance of Beach Green
- Will now be in full view of residences in Brighton Road
- Increased safety risk – children will have to cross A259 to access facility and will be less likely to use light-controlled pedestrian crossing as it is further away
- Lack of lighting makes area unsafe at night
- Increased risk of anti-social behaviour
- Inappropriate location next to a children's playground
- Beach Green should be for families
- Site is too exposed to the elements and will not be well used
- Area behind SETyres is a better site as it would be better screened, more sheltered for skaters, closer to toilets, further from children's playground
- Site has only been changed because café owners do not want it close to them
- Users may not walk to toilet block to use facilities and may urinate on beach, by beach huts or near to skate park instead
- Deeds to Green say nothing should be built on it
- Path planned in front of skate park will not soften its appearance
- Would be better located on Manor Ground next to leisure centre
- Noise will detract from enjoyment of open space

- Relocate it close to bandstand instead
- Funds should be better used on more priority services

[Note: The original application generated 13 letters of objection and 21 letters of support.]

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. It would be close to the gym equipment and children's playground, ensuring that the development on the green would be located together. The playground would be approximately 15m from the skate park and it is likely that families will have children of different ages who will want to use both facilities. The location is therefore considered to be appropriate.

The site would enjoy natural surveillance from the footpath/cyclepath which runs along the seafront and which is well used. The objective of the facility is to avoid anti-social behaviour by focusing the attention of young persons on the recreational facilities on offer. Sussex Police have no concerns at the siting of the facility in this location.

Visual amenity

The proposed facility would be more exposed and visible from Brighton Road, although it would be sited against a grass bank, at a lower level than the cycle path to the south. The skatepark will not be fenced and its contoured shape will help to assimilate it into the Green setting to some extent, although it is acknowledged that the original location sat in more of a natural 'bowl'. Nevertheless, it is not considered that it will cause serious harm to the setting of Beach Green or to the visual amenities of the locality and will be seen in the context of the fenced playground to the east.

The proposed path will enable easier access to all facilities and will be of tarmac construction, 2m wide and 160m long. It will have some visual impact, cutting across the grass immediately to the north of the site. However, it will not be overly intrusive and will not detract unduly from the setting of the Green. Such development is also permitted under Part 12 of the General Permitted Development Order.

Impact on nearby land uses

The skate park will be further than the previous approval from the café/gym to the west and from residential dwellings and care homes also to the west. The nearest dwellings will be due north and over 100m away. They are separated from the site by the busy A259 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.

Representations have been received expressing concern that, because of its siting further east and some distance from the pedestrian crossing, children and other users may try and cross the busy A259 where there is no controlled crossing, putting themselves at risk. However, there is nothing to suggest that users of the facility will access Beach Green in a different way to any other visitor to the Green and its revised location is not therefore considered to increase the risk of an accident.

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.

Conclusion

The revised location for the skate park would result in it not being directly overlooked by the café, it would be further from the toilets and would be more exposed in views from Brighton Road. It has generated a greater number of objections than the original proposal. However, the new site would be further from the nearest residential properties and would be more centrally located within the Green, close to existing facilities such as the playground. Both sites have their merits therefore and it is considered that either location would be acceptable in planning terms.

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

11th April 2016