

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE
25th April 2019

APPLICATION NO.

DATE VALID

19/P0693

12/02/2019

Address/Site: Former Atkinson Morley Hospital site, Copse Hill, Wimbledon, SW20

Ward Village

Proposal: Extension of existing play space

Drawing Nos: TM342-L21(A), 22(B), 23(B), 24(A), 26 (A) and 30.

Contact Officer: David Gardener (0208 545 3115)

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Planning Permission Subject to Conditions

CHECKLIST INFORMATION

- Heads of agreement: None
- Is a screening opinion required: No
- Is an Environmental Statement required: No
- Has an Environmental Impact Assessment been submitted: No
- Press notice: Yes
- Site notice: Yes
- Design Review Panel consulted: Yes
- Number of neighbours consulted: 100
- External consultations: None

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application has been brought before the Planning Applications Committee due to the number of objections received.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site comprises a recently built residential development which included the redevelopment and refurbishment of the former Atkinson Morley hospital. This formed part (phase 2) of a wider development which also included the redevelopment of the Firs (phase 1) and the Wolfson Neurorehabilitation Centre (phase 3). Phase 1 and 2 are complete and phase 3 is currently being

constructed. The redevelopment included the provision of an existing play space area of 101.5sqm which is located to the east side of the site.

- 2.3 The site is located on the south side of Copse Hill, Wimbledon and the whole of the site is within the Merton (Copse Hill) Conservation Area. The surrounding area is predominantly residential with residential buildings located to the north, east and west of the application site. The existing play space area as well as the part of the site earmarked for its extension is located in a wooded part of the site and is designated as Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) in the Merton Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Map July 2014. Land to the south of the site also falls within this designation.

3. CURRENT PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The applicant seeks planning permission to enhance and extend the existing dedicated play space area. The proposed extension would involve extending the existing play space to the south.
- 3.2 The proposed extension would be 128.2sqm and it is proposed to offer dedicated provision for 0 – 3 year olds and 3+ year olds. The play equipment would be natural in character with the use of timber. The proposed play space would replace a proposed play space area which would have been located to the south of block D (adjacent to the north/south path) in phase 3.
- 3.3 Plans have been amended since the application was first submitted with two dedicated doorstep playable spaces (0 – 3 year olds) which will be located in the Block B courtyard of the phase 3 development now also proposed.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

The following planning history is relevant:

- 4.1 11/P0346 - DEMOLITION OF EXTENSION TO FORMER HOSPITAL BUILDING, EXISTING OUTBUILDING ON SITE AND THE RESIDENTIAL ACCOMODATION AT THE FIRS. RESIDENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING BOTH NEW BUILD AND THE CONVERSION AND REFURBISHMENT OF THE FORMER ATKINSON MORLEY HOSPITAL BUILDING, TO PROVIDE A TOTAL OF 79 RESIDENTIAL UNITS INCLUDING BOTH PRIVATE AND AFFORDABLE DWELLINGS, TO PROVISION OF 261M2 D2 (GYMNASIUM) USE, 144 CAR PARKING SPACE, NEW ACCESS POINTS FROM COPSE HILL, LANDSCAPING AND ASSOCIATED WORKS. RESURFACING OF EXISTING 27 CAR PARKING SPACES ADJACENT TO COTTENHAM PARK ROAD, REMODELLING OF EXISTING SPORTS PITCHES, REFURBISHMENT AND EXTENSION OF THE EXISTING SCOUT HUT, REPLACEMENT OF THE EXISTING SPORTS PAVILION WITH NEW CHANGING ROOM FACILITY, REBUILD AND RESITING OF EXISTING COTTAGE, LANDSCAPING, DRAINAGE WORKS AND OTHER ASSOCIATED WORKS. Granted - 08/12/2011

- 4.2 13/P2722 - APPLICATION FOR VARIATION OF CONDITION 2 ATTACHED TO LBM PLANNING APPLICATION 11/P0346 DATED 08/12/2011 (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED 12/P0537) RELATING TO THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER HOSPITAL AND THE FIRS FOR RESIDENTIAL AND RECREATIONAL PURPOSES. VARIATION OF APPROVED DRAWINGS LISTED IN CONDITION 2 RESULTING IN AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF RESIDENTIAL UNITS TO 102, SUBSTITUTING 8 DETACHED HOUSES TO THE SOUTH OF THE FORMER MAIN HOSPITAL BUILDING WITH 2 RESIDENTIAL BLOCKS PROVIDING A TOTAL OF 30 APARTMENTS, RELOCATION OF BASEMENT CAR PARK FROM IN FRONT OF THE FORMER HOSPITAL TO THE REAR, MINOR RECONFIGURATION OF APARTMENTS WITHIN MAIN HOSPITAL BUILDING RESULTING IN ONE ADDITIONAL UNIT AND REVISIONS TO THE LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN INCLUDING ADDITIONAL CAR PARKING SPACES TO THE NORTH OF THE HOSPITAL. Granted - 31/03/2014

5. POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1 Adopted Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Maps (July 2014):
DM O1 (Open space), DM O2 (Nature Conservation, Trees, hedges and landscape features), DM D2 (Design considerations in all development)
- 5.2 Adopted Core Strategy (July 2011):
CS.13 (Open Space, nature, conservation, leisure and culture)
- 5.3 London Plan (2016):
3.6 (Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation Facilities)
- 5.4 National Planning Policy Framework 2019
- 5.5 Merton's Draft Local Plan (2020)
- 5.6 Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play and Informal Recreation SPG 2012

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The application was originally publicised by means of a site notice and individual letters to occupiers of neighbouring properties. In response, 13 letters of objection were received on the following grounds:
- Proposed location of doorstep playspace is not appropriate and conflicts with the requirements in the NPPF due to large distance from phase 3
 - Proposed access routes are either not accessible for all residents or difficult to navigate
 - Unsafe
 - Potential impact on badgers, bats and birds due to woodland location
 - Security concerns for phase 2 residents

6.2 Planning Policy Officer – Child’s Play Space

The drawings provided shows further details on the two areas of play space around the public square in Phase 3. These areas will provide doorstep play space of 208sqm and will be located in a central location less than 100m walking distance from the residential units. The applicant has included details to indicate there will be seating provided around the play areas and climbable features, which are two of the examples provided in the Mayor’s Children’s Play and Informal Recreation SPG as suitable facilities for doorstep playable spaces. As long as all play areas in Phases 2 and 3 are provided with unrestricted access to all residents, the proposed play areas would be deemed suitable in accordance with the SPG.

7. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Principle of Development

7.1.1 Policy 3.6 of the London Plan states that the Mayor and appropriate organisations should ensure that all children and young people have safe access to good quality, well designed, secure and stimulating play and informal recreation provision, incorporating trees and greenery wherever possible.

7.1.2 The proposed play space extension would replace the proposed play space which was to be located south of Block D in the phase 3 development. The proposed extension would be 128.2sqm and it is proposed to offer dedicated provision for 0 – 3 year olds and 3+ year olds. The play equipment would be natural in character with the use of timber. Although it would be located towards the eastern edge of the phase 2 part of the development, it is considered to be acceptable given there would be two unrestricted access routes from phase 3 to the play space extension i.e. via the acid lawn route or through the front of the phase 2 development from Copse Hill.

7.1.3 In addition to the play space extension, two areas of play space around the public square in Phase 3 will be provided. These areas will provide doorstep play space of 208sqm and will be located in a central location less than 100m walking distance from the residential units. The applicant has included details to indicate there will be seating provided around the play areas and climbable features, which are two of the examples provided in the Mayor’s Children’s Play and Informal Recreation SPG as suitable facilities for doorstep playable spaces. It is considered that a combination of all play areas proposed for Phases 2 and 3 would be deemed suitable and as such be in accordance with the Mayor’s SPG. It should also be noted that Morley Park Metropolitan Open Land sits immediately adjacent to the south of the phase 3 development and will offer good play opportunities and a large multifunctional open space providing a range of leisure and recreation opportunities for users of all ages.

7.2 Impact on MOL/SINC

7.2.1 Policy DM O1 states that the Council will continue to protect Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and designated open spaces from inappropriate development. The proposed extended play space area would be located within MOL. It is considered that the proposal would comply with Policy DM O1 as play space

for children is considered to be an appropriate use within MOL. The proposed play space is also considered to be appropriately designed with bark mulch used on its surface whilst the play equipment would be natural in character through the use of timber.

- 7.2.2 Concerns have been raised following public consultation regarding the potential impact of the extended play space on nearby Badger setts. The applicant's ecology consultants have advised that the nearby 'outlier' badger sett was last surveyed in March 2016, whilst a desk-based assessment also suggests that this sett is no more active than when it was last assessed as receiving "some degree of use". It is advised that it strongly appears that this sett is not in constant use, nor would it appear to have changed its status from an outlier to a more intensively used category of sett in the intervening three years. It is considered that on the evidence submitted by the applicant and given there would be no significant excavations that the risk of disturbing badgers is low. Nevertheless, as a precautionary measure a condition will be attached requiring that the sett shall be properly surveyed by a suitably qualified badger specialist prior to works commencing on site with the findings of the survey plus any potential mitigation measures approved by the Local Planning Authority.

7.3 Residential Amenity

- 7.3.1 Policy DM D2 of the Adopted Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Maps (July 2014) states that proposals for development will be required to ensure provision of appropriate levels of sunlight and daylight, quality of living conditions, amenity space and privacy, to both proposed and adjoining buildings and gardens. Development should also protect new and existing development from visual intrusion.
- 7.3.2 It is considered that the proposed play area extension would have an acceptable impact on neighbour amenity. The proposed play area extension would be located a sufficient distance from adjoining blocks within the development whilst there is high boundary treatment between the proposed play area and properties which back onto the development on Prospect Place. It is also considered that the play area would not be intensively used therefore further limiting any impact. The proposal therefore accords with policy DM D2.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.2 The application does not constitute Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 development. Accordingly, there are no requirements in terms of EIA submission.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 It is considered the principle of the proposed play space extension is acceptable, whilst its design, location and impact on the Metropolitan Open Land is also considered to be satisfactory. The proposal is considered to comply with all relevant planning policies and as such planning permission should therefore be granted.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following conditions:

- 1) The development to which this permission relates shall be commenced not later than the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning

- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: TM342-L21(A), 22(B), 23(B), 24(A), 26 (A) and 30

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning

- 3) B.3 (Materials as specified)

- 4) Prior to commencement of works a full survey of any Badger setts located within close proximity of the extended play space area shall be undertaken by a suitably qualified badger specialist with a report detailing the results of this survey including any potential mitigation measures submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of works.

Reason: To protect a protected species in accordance with policy CS.13 of the Core Planning Strategy 2011.

[Click here](#) for full plans and documents related to this application.

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