

5f 3/11/1918/FP – Retention of single-storey buildings over sand pit, play area and ride area at Paradise Wildlife Park, White Stubbs Lane, Bayford, Broxbourne, Herts, EN10 7QA for Mr Peter Sampson

Date of Receipt: 03.11.2011

Type: Full – Minor

Parish: BRICKENDON LIBERTY

Ward: HERTFORD HEATH

RECOMMENDATION:

That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following condition:

1. Approved plans (1T102) (PWP 501/003B, PWP 810/01).

Directive:

1. Other legislation (01OL1)

Summary of Reasons for Decision

The proposal has been considered with regard to the policies of the Development Plan (East of England Plan May 2008, Hertfordshire County Structure Plan, Minerals Local Plan, Waste Local Plan and the saved policies of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007), and in particular policies ENV1, LRC10, GBC1 and GBC4 and Planning Policy Guidance 2 – Green Belts. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies is that permission should be granted.

_____ (191811FP.MC)

1.0 Background:

- 1.1 The application site forms part of Paradise Wildlife Park which lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and is shown on the attached OS extract.
- 1.2 The proposal is for the retention of two open-sided structures on the site to provide cover to two adjacent play areas in the north-west of the Park. The areas are used for a sandpit and play blocks (southern structure) and a go-kart area (northern structure).
- 1.3 The structures are single storey and of less than four metres in height. Like the proposed auditorium and stage being considered under application 3/11/1943/FP, they form part of an on-going renovation of the children's play area that comprises much of the western side of the park.

3/11/1918/FP

The structures were erected earlier this year and therefore this application seeks retrospective permission for their retention.

2.0 Site History:

2.1 There is a lengthy planning history for this site, of which Members may be aware. It is not intended to repeat the full history here, but the following current applications are considered to be relevant, as they relate to the ongoing development of the Park's facilities:

- 3/11/1943/FP – Demolition of stage and outdoor auditorium and erection of new stage, changing area and public seating area – Under consideration
- 3/11/1941/FP – Retention of extension to speedway museum and adjacent covered picnic area – Under consideration

3.0 Consultation Responses:

3.1 The Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit has commented that the proposal is unlikely to have an impact upon significant heritage assets. Therefore no comment has been made.

4.0 Parish Council Representations:

4.1 Brickendon Liberty Parish Council has no objections to this proposal.

5.0 Other Representations:

5.1 The application has been advertised by way of press notice, site notice and neighbour notification.

5.2 No comments have been received at the time of writing this report

6.0 Policy:

6.1 The relevant 'saved' Local Plan policies in this application include the following:

- GBC1 Appropriate Development in the Green Belt
- GBC4 Major Developed Sites
- ENV1 Design and Environmental Quality
- LRC10 Tourism

3/11/1918/FP

6.2 In addition, the following National policy guidance is relevant:

Planning Policy Guidance 2 – Green Belts (PPG2)

7.0 Considerations:

- 7.1 The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt wherein inappropriate development will not be permitted. The proposed development is an inappropriate form of development as it does not involve structures used for a purpose which falls within the categories defined as appropriate in PPG2. Members will be aware that, when this is the case, for permission to be granted, the harm by way of inappropriateness and any other harm caused by the development must be clearly outweighed by very special circumstances. This national policy approach is replicated in policy GBC1 of the Local Plan.
- 7.2 The main issue to consider in the determination of the application then is whether there are other matters to which such weight can be assigned that the harm by way of inappropriateness and any other harm is clearly outweighed.
- 7.3 Policy LRC10 of the Local Plan states that the Council will encourage suitable tourism proposals in appropriate locations. Paradise Wildlife Park has previously been recognised by the Committee as a “major educational attraction that provided local employment” (Development Control Committee minutes for the meeting of 19th November 2008) and in general is considered to be a valuable and beneficial tourism facility. In practice, several recent applications at the Park have been considered favourably on these grounds and Officers consider that the development in this case also supports the tourism and educational facilities provided by the Park. This is a material consideration which weighs in favour of the proposal.
- 7.4 In addition, it should be noted that the structures are of generally lightweight construction, although with solid metal roofs. They are set against a backdrop of mature trees, away from the boundaries of the site and are not readily visible from beyond the Park. Their appearance is functional rather than attractive but in view of their limited visibility from outside the site, Officers consider their impact to be acceptable.
- 7.5 Given their design and location, Officers are of the view that little other harm is caused by the structures appearance or in terms of their impact on the character of the area. They are considered to be acceptable in terms of the requirements of policy ENV1 of the Local Plan.

3/11/1918/FP

- 7.6 The structures are of comparable height to other buildings and structures in the immediate area, and much lower than other buildings elsewhere on the site such as the two-storey buildings approved for use as a ticket office (ref: 3/08/1402/FP) and education centre (ref: 3/08/1402/FP) in 2008.
- 7.7 Officers therefore consider that the retention of the development would not represent a major increase in the developed area of the site. The use is a modest extension of the play facilities available to visitors to the Park and does not cause a material impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 7.8 Given this, it is felt that some considerable weight can be assigned to the development of facilities that enable the potential of the attraction to be enhanced. These considerations are felt to be of such weight that they constitute 'very special circumstances' which clearly outweigh any harm caused to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm.

8.0 Conclusion:

- 8.1 Given the limited visual impact of the development beyond its immediate locality, its value to the Park's operations and the enhancement it represents to the operation of the Park, it is considered that any harm in this case is clearly outweighed and that very special circumstances therefore exist to justify the retention of the two covered structures.
- 8.2 It is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the conditions suggested at the head of this report.