

OFFICER REPORT FOR DECISION UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

APPLICATION NO: P0376.24

WARD: Rush Grn & Crowlands **Date Received:** 13th March 2024

ADDRESS: Rush Green Training Ground, Rush Green Road
Romford

PROPOSAL: Retention of temporary gymnasium building

DRAWING NO(S): PL00 Rev A
PL01 Rev A
AWESLON1H Rev 2

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that **planning permission be GRANTED** subject to the condition(s) given at the end of the report

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is an area of hardstanding located at the old Ford Motor Works Sports Stadium north of Rush Green Road. To the immediate north of the site is a football ground, to the south is a car park which serves the football ground and beyond the car park is Rush Green Road; to the east across an area of grassland at a distance in excess of 70 metres are the rear gardens of houses on Bellhouse Road and to the west is open grassland. The site is used by West Ham United as their training ground.

The area is within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

Consent is sought for the retention of a gym building for a further fixed period. The unit is in situ currently (having obtained permission under ref P1504.21 for a fixed period of three years) expiring 15-10-2024.

By way of background permission was granted earlier this year for alterations to a consented scheme which would provide gym facilities within the main club building as extended (P0080.24). The facilities provided by the temporary structure are necessary for the club as evidenced by the granting of permission previously, in particular whilst more permanent redevelopment of the site is explored and/or implemented.

At the same time that permission was granted for the gym building subject to the current application, an application was also made for the retention of an Aganto Media Building, a requirement by UEFA for the clubs involvement in European competition. A further temporary consent for this structure was granted permission under ref: P0361.24 7th May 2024 and it is considered that the current

proposals will be considered consistently with this decision.

RELEVANT HISTORY

CONSULTATIONS/REPRESENTATIONS

A site notice was displayed adjacent to the site and the application was advertised in the local press. In addition, neighbouring occupiers were consulted. No letters of representation have been received.

No objections have previously been made by other consultees and given the nature of the development it is not envisaged that its retention raises any material considerations not previously considered.

RELEVANT POLICIES

Havering Local Plan 2016-2031 - Policies 23, 24, 26, 27, 34.
London Plan - Policies D1, S5, G2, T5, T6
NPPF

MAYORAL CIL IMPLICATIONS

The proposals are not liable for a Mayoral CIL contribution.

STAFF COMMENTS

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The applicant (West Ham United Football Club) took over the former Ford United Football Club ground in 2009 to use it for youth and reserve team training and games. The former use of the site by Ford United Football Club came under Class D2 of the Use Classes Order; the use of the site by West Ham United also falls under the same use class therefore no planning permission is required for a change of use.

The application site is designated as being within the Metropolitan Green Belt where Government guidance and local planning policy encourages specified uses which have a positive role in fulfilling Green Belt objectives. The occupation of the site by West Ham United ensures that the site continues to be used to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation in a manner that supports Green Belt objectives. This is consistent also with Policy 18 of the Havering Local Plan 2016-2031 which supports development that improves the quality of and access to, existing open space, sports and recreation facilities.

The above is consistent with earlier decision making and the Council's views of the site more broadly.

The current proposals do not seek additional floor area on top of that permitted previously. The purpose of the current proposals is to provide necessary gym floor area whilst an extant permission is either built out or superseded by a further application to extend the main building/facilities. As with previous applications made the proposals are to be viewed as a temporary measure and not a permanent addition to the site.

GREEN BELT IMPLICATIONS

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) attaches great weight to Green Belts in preventing urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. In addition the NPPF sets out five purposes of the Green Belt, which includes to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas and to safeguard the countryside from encroachment. As with previous Green Belt policy, the NPPF advises that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt.

The NPPF sets out forms of development that are deemed to be appropriate within the Green Belt and states that construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate development. A given exception to this is the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation as long as it would preserve the openness of the Green Belt. The use of the overall site as a sports ground plays a positive role in fulfilling Green Belt objectives and the building to be retained for a further temporary period plays a part in meeting UEFA requirements, as is evidenced by the applicant.

The unit would therefore be used in a capacity that would improve/supplement the existing facilities and use of the wider site which would comply with the objectives of the Framework (Para 154). There is a general acceptance that where development complies with the objectives of the Green Belt and openness is not specifically cited as a consideration within the relevant exception that openness, or rather any impact upon it, is regarded as acceptable. That said, the relevant exception in the NPPF is reliant on development not harming the openness of the Green Belt or conflicting with any of the purposes of including land within it.

The structure in situ was previously noted to extend development beyond existing developed areas, however as a temporary addition was not regarded as having a significant impact on openness. Accordingly it is the opinion of staff that the overall impression of openness would not be harmed by a further temporary consent and that this would be consistent with earlier decision making. In the absence of any undue impact to the openness of the Green Belt and on the basis that the development would be permitted on a temporary basis, no conflict with relevant policy has been identified. In reaching this view officers accept that proposals would maintain the function of fulfilling Green Belt objectives which would outweigh any harm whilst more permanent redevelopment of the site is explored and then implemented.

DESIGN/IMPACT ON STREET/GARDEN SCENE

The development was observed at the time of the previous temporary permission and no material

changes are proposed to its proportions or siting.

Whilst demountable type units can have a transient and low quality appearance the structure observed at that time integrated well with the surrounding built environment. No objections were raised as to the visual impacts of the development. There is no evidence before officers to justify a departure from this view.

IMPACT ON AMENITY

The application site is largely removed from adjoining residential properties with Crowlands Heath Golf Course to the north and Wood Lane Sports Centre to the west. To the south the site fronts onto Rush Green Road with housing beyond. To the east the site is bounded by a Public Right of Way with the residential dwellings of those properties fronting onto Bellhouse Road and Meadow Road beyond.

The position of the building is adjacent to the main club building on the training pitch side. Consequently it is well removed from any sensitive receptors. Furthermore the activity associated would not be distinguishable from the wider use of the site in the opinion of officers, this is consistent with earlier decision making and the views of the Council's EHOs who have not raised an objection previously.

Whilst there is a potential for noise disturbance associated with the use of the land as a sports ground, the use of the site by West Ham United does not in itself require planning permission. Given the longstanding use of the site, the position of the unit and its use in association with the club, it is unlikely that any amenity issues would arise that would be capable of substantiating a refusal.

HIGHWAY/PARKING

The current proposals are to supplement existing facilities and therefore the impacts of the development in highways/parking terms are regarded as negligible. The site is well served by a existing areas of parking with in excess of 160 spaces. Whilst the proposals have resulted in the loss of five parking spaces in the car park, the building has been in situ since prior to permission being given previously and there is no evidence that this has translated to any material harm to the highway, or that capacity is not met by the retained areas of parking. As such it is not considered that there are any grounds with which to withhold permission. This is consistent with earlier decision making where the Highway Authority had not expressed any objection.

KEY ISSUES/CONCLUSIONS

Officers have had consideration for a condition requiring removal of the structure upon completion of the works pursuant to the extant permission, which would based on the views conveyed by the applicant eliminate any further need for the temporary structure. However no compelling evidence is before officers, nor any assurances provided with regards to timeframe for any associated works and accordingly it is acceptable only to accept a further temporary consent.

Having regard to the above and in doing so all relevant planning policy and material considerations,

temporary APPROVAL is recommended accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that **planning permission be GRANTED** subject to the following condition(s)

1 SC16 (Temporary permission)

This permission shall be for a limited period only expiring on 8 May 2027 on or before which date the use hereby permitted shall be discontinued, the building and associated works carried out under this permission shall be removed and the site reinstated to its former condition to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:

2 SC32 (Accordance with plans)

The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved plans (as set out on page one of this decision notice).

Reason:-

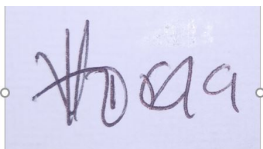
The Local Planning Authority consider it essential that the whole of the development is carried out and that no departure whatsoever is made from the details approved, since the development would not necessarily be acceptable if partly carried out or carried out differently in any degree from the details submitted.

INFORMATIVES

1 Approval - No negotiation required

Statement Required by Article 35(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management) Order 2015: No significant problems were identified during the consideration of the application, and therefore it has been determined in accordance with paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018.

Authorising Officer:



Victoria Collins

8th May 2024