

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control
Committee

6th October 2004

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

**S/1770/04/F - Milton
Youth Building at Recreation Ground, The Sycamores
for Milton Parish Council**

Recommendation: Approval

Site and Proposal

1. The Sycamores Recreation Ground is located on the western edge of the village, with the residential area of The Sycamores to the north and east, Tesco's to the southeast, the A10 to the west and Cambridge Road to the south. In the northeast part of the ground there is a vehicular access from The Sycamores. This leads to a gravel car park beyond which is a brick built sports pavilion serving the Milton Cricket and Football Clubs. To the northwest of this building is a temporary portacabin structure accommodating a youth club. This is metal clad, single storey with a flat roof and is somewhat 'tired' in appearance. The ground is well screened from The Sycamores by a mature hawthorn hedge to the road frontage and landscaped banks screen it from the surrounding roads.
2. This full planning application, received on the 15th October 2004 proposes to replace the existing portacabin with a permanent building on the same siting. This will measure 14.5 metres by 9.3 metres with a pitched, gabled roof constructed with pvc coated box profile steel sheets with a grey finish. The bricks will match the existing sports facility. All windows and doors are to be fitted with metal roller shutters for security.

Planning History

3. Planning application ref: **S/0587/00/F** gave permission for a portable building for youth activities, limited to a time period of three years. This permission was renewed under planning application ref: **S/0859/03/F** for a further temporary period until 30th June 2006, with a condition that the building be removed at the end of this period.

Planning Policy

4. **Policy SE10 'Protected Village Amenity Areas'** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 ("Local plan") identifies areas of undeveloped land that are important to the character, amenity and/or functioning of the village as a whole. Development of such areas will only be permitted where it would not be harmful to the distinctive qualities and functioning lying behind their inclusion. (The Recreation Ground is defined as such.)
5. **Policy CS13 'Community Safety'** of the Local Plan states that for development that might provide opportunities for crime, the Council will give appropriate consideration to design and layout to minimise such opportunities and the circumstances where the fear of crime would be increased.

6. **Policy RT1 'Recreation and Tourism Development'** of the Local Plan sets out considerations to be made in determining applications for recreation facilities, including the need for such facilities and the benefits they might accrue.
7. **Policy P1/3 'Sustainable Design in Built Development'** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 states that a high standard of design and sustainability should be adopted for all new forms of development.

Consultations

8. **Milton Parish Council** recommended approval
9. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** – no significant Environmental Health impacts.
10. **Police Architectural Liaison Officer** – comments will be reported verbally.

Representations

11. Residents of 47 The Sycamores object to the proposals on grounds that youths frequently gather outside of the building and cause disturbance, including to traffic due to youths running in the road and through intimidating behaviour. The car park has been used by people from other areas of Cambridge to park and play loud music. When residents approach and ask the youths to stop they have been met with verbal abuse. The youth supervisor is unable to police the numbers using the club. Before changes to the car park were introduced, they reported frequent incidents of noise and criminal behaviour to the police. These have lessened but continue to occur sporadically, particularly as the Community Police Officer has been reallocated. They tolerate disturbance and excess car parking when the cricket and football teams use the area but are very concerned about the potential use of the site, particularly in the evenings.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

12. The key issue to consider in respect of this application are the opportunities for crime and whether the fear of crime would increase as a result of these proposals.

Community Safety: Crime

13. Policy CS13 requires consideration to be given to design and layout of proposals, including footpaths, public open spaces, landscaping, lighting and natural surveillance in order to minimise opportunities and the fear of crime.
14. The building itself has been designed so that when not in use it is as secure as possible. Shutters to protect windows and doors are proposed. The building will replace the existing portacabin and in providing a purpose built building, it is likely that there will be an increased 'ownership' of the facility by local users that will, in turn, reduce the likelihood of related crime. It does not introduce a new use to the site.
15. The layout of the site and landscaping provides few opportunities for surveillance from surrounding residential properties due to the hedge and landscaping to the boundaries. The vehicular access to the site is not gated, so cars can access the car park at all times. The comments received from local residents indicate that problems relate to youths outside the building. The presence of the youth club on the site does

not necessarily mean that it is the cause of these congregations of youths. If the building were not there it is probable that youths would still congregate and would be totally unsupervised, outside and potentially are more likely to cause problems. Youths using the building are more likely to walk, cycle or be dropped off at the site than they are to drive there themselves. The site is a public area with unlimited public access. It is difficult to argue that the reported problems are the result of the existing facility.

Recommendation

16. In light of the above considerations and subject to no objections or concerns being raised by the Police Architectural Liaison Officer, approval is recommended, subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard Condition A – Time limited permission (Reason A);
2. Sc5a – Details of materials for external walls. (Rc5aii);

+ any conditions required by the Police Architectural Liaison Officer.

Reasons for Approval

1. The approved development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
 - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:** P1/3 'Sustainable design in built development'
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:** SE10 'Protected Village Amenity Areas', CS13 'Community Safety' and RT1 'Recreation and Tourism Development'.
2. The proposal conditionally approved is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
 - Community safety (crime).
3. All other material planning considerations have been taken into account. None is of such significance as to outweigh the reason for the decision to approve the planning application.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning file Ref: S/1770/04/F

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