

APPLICATION NO.	P13/V2738/DC
APPLICATION TYPE	DEEMED CONSENT
REGISTERED	23.12.2013
PARISH	ABINGDON
WARD MEMBER(S)	Julie Mayhew-Archer Tony de Vere
APPLICANT	Vale of White Horse District Council
SITE	The White Horse Leisure & Tennis Centre Audlett Drive Abingdon, OX14 3PJ
PROPOSAL	Provision of new car parking area for 99 vehicles with revised access arrangements. (revised scheme)
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	451160/197513
OFFICER	Mark Doodes

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site is the popular sports centre on Audlett Drive. Specifically the development site is a rectangular area of undeveloped open space land (6.5ha) to the west of the main car park (constructed in 1998). The site holds no special planning designation(s).
- 1.2 This application is referred to planning committee due to the works being undertaken on District land by the District itself. The site location plan can be found **attached** at appendix 1.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The District seeks to expand the existing car parking provision at the centre by 99 spaces (up from 238 spaces) to 337 in total plus disabled spaces. No further cycle spaces are proposed. A SUDS drainage scheme is proposed including permeable surfacing.
- 2.2 The area will measure 65m x 32m. The plans can be found **attached** at appendix 2.

3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 County Archaeologist (VWHDC) - No strong views
Environment Agency (Lesley Tims & Cathy Harrison) - No strong views
Landscape Architect - Vale of White Horse DC - No strong views
Forestry Team (Vale of White Horse) - No strong views
Drainage Engineer (Vale of White Horse District Council) - No strong views
Countryside Officer (South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse) - No strong views
Abingdon Town Council - No strong views

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 [P13/V2253/DC](#) – Withdrawn following committee concerns (04/12/2013)
Provision of new car parking area for 99 vehicles with revised access arrangements at White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre, Audlett Drive, Abingdon

[P04/V0185/DA](#) - Approved (07/06/2004)

Provision of 60 additional car-parking spaces for staff parking and overflow parking.

[P01/V1327/A](#) - Approved (19/11/2001)

Display of new signage.

[P99/V1340/DA](#) - Approved (20/12/1999)

Formation of 4 additional outdoor tennis courts, without floodlighting.

[P98/V0803](#) - Approved (01/09/1998)

Revised Access to Approval ABG/14858/1. (Cross road with signal control to replace roundabout).

[P97/V1559/DA](#) - Approved (23/04/1998)

New leisure facility comprising Swimming Pool, Tennis Courts, Dry Sports, Health & Fitness, Outdoor Tennis Courts and Car Parking.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 policies;

DC1 - Design

DC5 - Access

DC6 - Landscaping

DC9 - The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses

L6 - Major Leisure and Entertainment Facilities

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The prime consideration in this application is the test in policy L6 which requires such works to be necessary to support a key leisure asset for the town and district. Highways matters and design also feature as considerations.

6.2 Support of leisure facilities – The White Horse leisure centre is a key leisure asset and policy L6 seeks to protect such assets. The land in question will be used to provide parking to support the continued growth of centre and leisure destination for Abingdon and the wider area. The land use proposed is not a diversification or dilution of the centres facilities and as such the works are considered to accord with policy L6.

6.3 OCC Highways have, unlike the previous scheme, not made a holding objection to the works on the grounds that there could be considered to be an overprovision of staff parking. However, such previous comments were made in the interests of sustainability and such matters are a golden thread throughout the NPPF are therefore upheld in this application. The leisure centre management team already encourage staff to travel to work by walking or cycling and this is manifest in the provision of 25 cycle spaces on site. However it is accepted by planning officers that this provision needs to be audited for suitability and capacity in light of the growth of car parking. The provision of secure means of cycle storage is a key influencing factor in the travel choices made by both staff, and more importantly, leisure users. Therefore the use of a condition to require the Leisure team to provide a Green Travel Plan prior to commencement of the development and a review of the cycle arrangements is considered to be the most appropriate way forward. A condition has been imposed, which once satisfied will ensure that the scheme complies with policy DC5 of the local plan.

- 6.4 No objections have been raised by any other statutory consultee listed in section 3. No land use conflicts arise from the works proposed as the car parking is integral to the leisure centre, making the scheme compliant with policy DC9 of the local plan.
- 6.5 The landscaping officer have asked for revised drawings prior to commencement to compel the developer to preserve a tree which forms part of an arch of mid-sized trees towards the sports centre. The developers and officers are comfortable that this matter can be resolved by condition.
- 6.6 No concerns that go to the heart of the scheme are considered to exist in this resubmission. This condition is considered reasonable and fitting as the landscaping works will not go to the heart of the principle of the scheme (the provision of further parking) and will only serve to improve the aesthetics of the scheme and in doing so allow the scheme to comply with policy DC6 of the local plan.
- 6.7 Finally the open space which will be lost is not considered to be of great amenity or ecological value and forms part of the setting of the leisure centre rather than an area for leisure users per se. Therefore the loss for leisure purposes is not considered to outweigh the gain that the leisure centre will yield in terms of parking and potential safety issues at peak times which are known to occur in the local area. The works will also be barely visible from the main entrance and site entrance.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The revised works are considered to support the ongoing successful operation of the leisure centre whilst allowing a wider range of events to be held at the centre that would otherwise have proven troublesome through inadequate parking. Subject to the precise details of a soft landscaping scheme and the conditions listed below, the works are considered to be acceptable.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

Planning permission be granted subject to these conditions;

- 1 : Commencement 3 yrs - Full Planning Permission
- 2 : Approved plans *
- 3 : Green Travel Plans
- 4 : No Surface Water Drainage to Highway
- 5 : Landscaping Scheme (trees and shrubs only)
- 6 : Landscape Management Plan
7. Minor amendment to scheme to safeguard arch of trees.

Author: Mark Doodes
Contact Number: 01235-540519
Email: mark.doodes@southandvale.gov.uk