

Agenda Item A7	Committee Date 24 August 2009	Application Number 09/00637/CU
Application Site Christie Park Lancaster Road Morecambe Lancashire	Proposal Change of use of an existing area of car parking to accommodate a temporary Club Shop facility in a portable building until June 2010	
Name of Applicant Morecambe Football Club	Name of Agent Andrew Watt	
Decision Target Date 26 August 2009	Reason For Delay None	
Case Officer	Mr Daniel Ratcliffe	
Departure	No	
Summary of Recommendation	Refusal	

1.0 The Site and its Surroundings

- 1.1 The site is currently a car park used by visitors to Morecambe Football Club Stadium. Other than the football ground the surrounding area is predominantly residential particularly those properties directly opposite the site on Lancaster Road. To the east of the site is a commercial car wash business and to the west of the site a local primary school and electricity substation. Lancaster Road is a busy through route to and from Morecambe Town Centre

2.0 The Proposal

- 2.1 This is a retrospective application for the change of use of an area of car park and retention of a temporary building currently used as the 'club shop'. The building in question is situated adjacent to the access into and out of the north stand car park and abuts the boundary with the highway. The building is a 6.6m x 10m flat roof portable cabin type structure with a buff coloured exterior. There are three windows within the front, rear and north side elevations all of which are covered by a grey metal mesh, presumably to protect against vandalism and theft. The application proposes a temporary permission until June 2010 when it is envisaged the new ground at Westgate will be ready.

The football club state that due to their increased work in the community they now employ 4 full time and 11 part time staff which as a result forced the displacement of the club shop from its previous portable building nearer the ground. Hence the use of the new portable building which forms is the subject of this application. According to information submitted with the application, since promotion to the football league in 2007 merchandise sales have increased and the temporary shop now employs one full time member of staff.

3.0 Site History

3.1 An identical application was submitted in January this year and was subsequently refused on the grounds that the temporary structure would be unsatisfactory in terms of visual amenity.

An Enforcement Notice was issued on 28th May 2009 for a breach of planning control in that permission had not been granted for the change of use of the car park area for the siting of the club shop facility. The notice was due to take effect on 2nd July but the Football Club are currently appealing against the enforcement notice.

Application Number	Proposal	Decision
08/01393/CU	Retrospective application for the change of use of an area of existing car park to accommodate a temporary club shop	Refused

4.0 Consultation Responses

4.1 The following responses have been received from statutory consultees:

Statutory Consultee	Response
Access Officer	No attempt has been made to provide ramped access
County Highways	No objections

5.0 Neighbour Representations

5.1 None received.

6.0 Principal Development Plan Policies

6.1 Policy **SC5** of the Lancaster District Core Strategy refers to 'Achieving Quality in Design' in Morecambe Town Centre and its approaches. It states that new development should be of a quality which reflects and enhances the positive characteristics of its surroundings including the quality of the landscape, results in an improved appearance where conditions are unsatisfactory, complements and enhances the public realm and, in high profile locations, creates landmark buildings of genuine and lasting architectural merit.

7.0 Comment and Analysis

7.1 Site preparation works have commenced on the new Morecambe Football Club ground at Westgate and it is hoped that work will be completed for the start of the 2010/2011 season which is end of July 2010. The application seeks temporary permission until June 2010.

7.2 There are similar buildings within the site which are positioned closer to the football ground and as a result are less prominent. This includes the cabin structure which was formally used as the club shop. The temporary building sits forward of any other building on the site or within the vicinity and it unquestionably affects the visual amenity of the locality. As such the local planning authority would not wish to encourage its retention for any period of time, hence the refusal of permission in February 2009 and the subsequent enforcement action.

7.3 Whilst the construction of the new stadium appears to be in accordance with the timescales suggested by the applicant, the local planning authority has to be mindful of any potential over-run in terms of construction. This could result in the portable building being in situ, in this unacceptable position, for longer than that proposed. This of course would necessitate a further temporary submission, but the acceptance of the principle at this present time would set an unfortunate precedent.

- 7.4 The local planning authority wishes to support the football club as far as possible, and this is evident in its previous considerations in respect of the Westgate Stadium. It is not opposed to a club shop at Christie Park, or the provision of a portable building to facilitate this activity on a temporary basis. However it is the authority's view that this structure should be more sensitively located within the existing site. The Football Club have been advised of this in the past and unfortunately they have persisted in pursuing this application. There would appear to be other options both inside the ground and outside (to the east/south-east of the ground) which would be preferable in terms of visual amenity.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 Therefore the retrospective planning application should be resisted due to its detrimental effect on the visual amenities of the surrounding, predominantly residential area.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission **BE REFUSED** for the following reasons:

1. The development would be contrary to National Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development and Policy E1 of the Lancaster City Councils Core Strategy Document in that the type of structure proposed would not constitute a satisfactory form of development for this prominent site adjoining one of the main roads into Morecambe, and would be detrimental to the visual amenities of this predominantly residential area.

Human Rights Act

This recommendation has been reached after consideration of the provisions of The Human Rights Act. Unless otherwise stated in this report, the issues arising do not appear to be of such magnitude to override the responsibility of the City Council to regulate land use for the benefit of the community as a whole, in accordance with national law.

Background Papers

1. None.