

<b>DECISION DATE</b> 9 January 2007	<b>APPLICATION NO.</b> 06/01239/FUL A10	<b>PLANNING COMMITTEE:</b> 18 December 2006
<b>DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED</b>  ERECTION OF NEW STAND INCORPORATING OFFICES, FUNCTION ROOM, BAR AND SPECTATOR SEATING TERRACE AND ERECTION OF NEW PUB WITH ASSOCIATED SIGNAGE, CAR PARKING, SOFT LANDSCAPING AND MODIFICATIONS TO EXISTING SITE		<b>SITE ADDRESS</b>  CHRISTIE PARK LANCASTER ROAD MORECAMBE LANCASHIRE
<b>APPLICANT:</b>  Morecambe Football Club Christie Park Lancaster Road Morecambe LA4 5TJ		<b>AGENT:</b>  Bywater And Tweedale

**REASON FOR DELAY**

None.

**PARISH NOTIFICATION**

Views awaited.

**LAND USE ALLOCATION/DEPARTURE**

Christie Park Football Pitch is allocated as a Major Sports Ground in the Lancaster District Local Plan 1996-2006. The land subject to this application does not benefit from any specific designation. Lancaster Road is a Primary Bus Corridor.

**STATUTORY CONSULTATIONS**

**County Highways** - No objections in principle - the level of parking proposed for the various uses is in accordance with the county's parking standards. Conditions will be required regarding the provision of car parking spaces, provision of cycle storage, and the removal of the existing street tree, which will be carried out at the developer's expense.

**Lancashire Constabulary** - Have provided statistics regarding criminal activity in the locality. There are no objections subject to the provision of 'Secured by Design' methodologies and CCTV around the building/car park.

**Environment Agency** - The site is within Flood Zone 3 with an annual probability of flooding of 1% or greater from rivers and 0.5% or greater from the sea. In view of the nature of the development a Flood Risk Assessment will not be necessary. They recommend a condition be imposed requiring trapped gullies to be provided to aid surface water drainage.

**Environmental Health Service** - The Environmental Risk Assessment report is acceptable as a Phase I desktop study. A land contamination condition will still be required. Use of the function room and pub for functions could include the playing of amplified music and so the building must be designed to control noise impacts.

**United Utilities** - No objection subject to the site being drained on a separate system. Other general matters of advice have been provided.

## **OTHER OBSERVATIONS RECEIVED**

At the time of compiling this report seven letters have been received from residents.

Four letters have concerns regarding the potential loss of sunlight caused by the new stand, loss of privacy, the unsightly nature of the building, the rise in noise level from both the football stand and the pub, the potential hours of use, potential light intrusion from signage, potential for outdoor drinking after 2100.

Two letters support the proposal, commenting that development will continue the process of regenerating the resort of Morecambe and enhance the local area.

## **REPORT**

This application proposes the redevelopment of the former Morecambe Football Club Social Club site off Lancaster Road.

The proposal includes a three-storey football stand, a public house with a beer garden and manager's living accommodation over, 51 car parking spaces and associated landscaping.

A car wash (separate from the football club) occupies a position immediately adjacent to the north-west site boundary. The remainder of the site is bounded by predominantly terraced residential properties, most notably to the east and south on Christie Avenue.

## **Site History**

Morecambe Football Club have played at Christie Park since 1921. The last 15 years have arguably been the most successful sustained period for the football club, and this has been reflected by gradual redevelopment of their stadium and their immediate surroundings.

This culminated in the granting of the 1997 planning permission for a new North Terrace (Reference: 97/00637/FUL). As part of this consent the car park to the north was formally marked out and surfaced.

However the eastern side of the ground has remained largely undeveloped, comprising a shallow uncovered terrace, the car wash and the site of the former Auxiliary Supporter's Social Club building.

The Social Club had been unused for some years and the building had fallen into disrepair. Earlier this year the Football Club decided to demolish the building and they are currently using the open land as an overspill car parking area on matchdays. It is this site that is the subject of the application.

## **Planning Policy**

Policy R3 of the Lancaster District Local Plan (LDLP) 1996-2006 allows development within major sports grounds such as Christie Park where the proposal relates to the sports and social activities which are specific to the site, and where the amenities of adjoining uses are protected. The 'Major Sports Ground' designation applies only to the football pitch. The application site does not benefit from any specific designation.

Policy T5 of the LDLP permits development on Primary Bus Routes providing that it does not adversely affect the operation of buses.

### The Football Stand

The main element of the application involves the erection of the football stand. It will be located in the south-eastern corner of the ground, measuring 31m in length (which equates to approximately 1/3 of the length of the football pitch). The stand will measure 23m in width and will rise from a height of 7.7m at the eaves level to 12.1m at the highest point of the roof.

The building will have a metal-clad monopitched roof sloping downwards towards the pitch. The external walls will be buff brick with small bands of off-white render and brown brick to break up the elevations. The end elevations are symmetrical and provide a glazed area at ground floor and smaller windows above. The feature elevation will be the north-east, which will incorporate glazing in the centre of the structure.

The stand will provide a modern hospitality suite on the first floor. This will provide direct access to 160 seats, which will be covered by the overhang of the stand roof. The applicant has confirmed that this suite will be available for commercial/social hire when not in use by the football club.

The office accommodation on the ground and second floors will be available for rent. This is an important feature that will provide a consistent revenue stream for the club. It is not dissimilar to other floorspace rental agreements at football stadia in this country. It is considered prudent to restrict usage of these floors to offices only, to prevent any more intensive commercial uses occurring.

Given the location of the football club within a predominantly residential area, the impact upon the nearest dwellinghouses is critical to the outcome of the application.

The original plan showed the south-eastern corner measuring approximately 27.5m to the nearest rear elevation of the properties on Christie Avenue. Whilst this appeared to be an acceptable distance, the Local Planning Authority was keen to take advantage of the greater amount of space that existed to the north. The applicant has agreed and consequently the stand has been moved north-westwards to increase the distance between the buildings to approximately 29.8m. This corner will now measure 12.5m to the residential boundary fence.

The orientation of the stand reduces the impact upon numbers 1-9 Christie Avenue still further. The building would not run parallel to these dwellings and thus the 'built impact' is not considered excessive. The stand will however run parallel to numbers 13-23 Christie Avenue, but the distance between the stand and those houses is even greater at this point.

The existing flat-roofed turnstile block will be rebuilt as part of the proposals. This is not an intrusive feature and in terms of design it will match the existing turnstile block. It is considered that this matter be conditioned so that the details are acceptable.

### The Public House

The principle of a social venue on the roadside portion of this site was established by the long-term existence of the Social Club. However that building has now been demolished and the case for a new public house must be considered on its own merit.

Social clubs and public houses are often located close to modern or redeveloped football grounds as a method of attracting fans to the ground at an earlier time. The general pattern at football stadia is that this bar would be frequented by visiting supporters, with home fans continuing to use the existing drinking facilities inside the ground. The Police have been consulted on this application and do not object to the principle of this use, nor its location. They have advised that security measures, including the use of CCTV, should be implemented at the time of construction.

The design of the pub has been altered during this application. At first the building was intended to be a low, bungalow-style structure with a gable-roof advertisement feature which was designed to obscure the excessive, bland roof. This was deemed unacceptable and the applicant agreed to alter the design by incorporating a three-bedroomed manager's flat to the first floor. This allows the roof form to be broken-up.

The new roof arrangement is still a little unconventional; the ground floor has a low eaves detail and the first floor is setback into the roof, being hipped at the football pitch end and gabled at the Lancaster Road end. This is advantageous because it keeps the weight of the roof to a minimum whilst allowing an interesting glazed feature to be visible on the more public roadside corner. The roofing materials will be concrete tiles whilst the elevational materials will mirror those used on the new stand.

The pub is positioned forward of existing properties on Lancaster Road. This is to maximise the space behind the pub and allows for the stand to be relocated away from the residential boundary.

Sandwiched between the rear elevation of the pub, the car wash boundary and the new car parking spaces will be a small, triangular area given over to a beer garden. Measuring approximately 12m at its longest point, this is not a significant area of land. However it is recognised that the garden has the potential to cause late-night noise and nuisance to residential neighbours. Therefore the Local Planning Authority proposes to impose a condition limiting use of this external area to 1100-2200. It is unreasonable to set an earlier time limit given that midweek football matches conclude at 2130 and fans inside and outside the ground would still generate noise.

At present the applicant has not identified a brewer for the pub and therefore they do not know what times the pub would be open for business. It is anticipated that any future public licence application would be subject to planning consultation. However if Members were minded to impose a planning condition restricting opening hours, this would be reasonable.

On both the pub and the football stand elevations areas have been set aside as possible locations for signage. Separate advertisement consent will be required for these signs and they do not form part of this application.

### Parking & Access Arrangements

The redevelopment allows space for 51 vehicles in a surfaced and marked area. This will include 5 mobility spaces. The spaces are equally distributed along the spine of the internal road and at the rear of the pub and stand.

3 motorcycle spaces and 10 bicycle spaces are also provided. Whilst `Sheffield'-style racks are shown, the applicant has been made aware that the cycle racks will have to be covered and this matter will be conditioned should the application be approved.

The County Highways Department confirms that the total of 51 car parking spaces accords with the Lancashire Parking Standards. Further spaces will not be required given the site's location on a Primary Bus Corridor. However given that a proportion of these spaces would be used by future office tenants, it is considered prudent to request a car parking management plan to ensure that there is no conflict between office worker parking and supporter parking, particularly during midweek evening matches.

The existing vehicular access onto Lancaster Road remains in broadly the same position, although improvements to its width and kerb treatments are proposed. The untidy hoarding to the east of this access is shown as being removed. A street tree will also be removed to improve visibility at the junction. This will be undertaken at the developer's expense. The amount of new tree planting will compensate for the loss of this tree.

## Landscaping & Boundary Treatments

Clearly the scheme will improve the external environment around Christie Park. A significant element of this will be the provision of a new strip of tree planting along the eastern boundary. This will be planted in front of a new 1.8m boundary fence, details of which are to be agreed. This fence would replace the derelict concrete and mesh fencing that currently exists.

The grassed area adjacent to 251 Lancaster Road will also enhance the locality and it is envisaged that some shrub planting could occur in this location.

At the time of compiling this report negotiations were also ongoing regarding the provision of additional landscaping along the perimeter of the existing north car park, in an attempt to screen this large expanse of tarmac. The Football Club had indicated that they were willing to provide planting in this location.

## Flood Risk and Land Contamination

A Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted but the Environment Agency considers that it is not necessary, given that the only residential unit is located above ground floor level.

A Stage 1 Environmental Risk Assessment has also been submitted. This concludes that the embankment may have contaminated the soils on the site and that asbestos may exist inside the turnstile building. It recognises that further work will have to be undertaken to identify and, if necessary, remediate the land in question. This approach is acceptable and will be controlled via a standard land contamination condition.

## **Conclusions**

There are many benefits associated with this development. It removes the largest derelict area around Christie Park and brings it into beneficial use. It provides income-generating uses for the football club, including a hospitality suite and offices for rent. It will allow part of the site to be landscaped and should enhance the Lancaster Road frontage.

However these benefits must be assessed against the potential problems. The Local Planning Authority has reacted to neighbour concerns by requesting the relocation of the stand further away from residential boundaries and by imposing a condition limiting the evening activity in the beer garden. Matters such as artificial light intrusion are appropriate grounds for concern, and it is intended that the position of new lighting outside the football ground should be conditioned to protect neighbour amenity.

The location of the new stand is considered appropriate and would not cause a loss of privacy. In fact the construction of a replacement fence and landscaped area will provide a more secure and impermeable boundary in time and the orientation of the stand protects the private amenity of residents.

This is a scheme that will provide economic, social and environmental benefits to the area and Morecambe as a whole. It is on this basis that the proposal is supported.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

The applicant's right to develop the land in the manner indicated has been balanced against the views and rights of objectors. However, for the reasons set out in this report and having regard to the principles of proportionality, the objections do not outweigh the applicant's right to use and develop his land subject to the recommended conditions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That **PERMISSION BE GRANTED** subject to the following conditions: -

1. Standard planning consent.
2. Development as per approved plans.
3. Amended plan condition.
4. All external materials, including the roofing materials, to be agreed.
5. All surface materials to be agreed.
6. Details of windows, doors, canopies, eaves, verge and rainwater goods to be agreed.
7. Standard landscaping condition.
8. Boundary treatments to be agreed, including the boundary treatment to the beer garden.
9. Details of reconstructed turnstile to be agreed.
10. All external lighting details to be agreed.
11. Details of extraction/ventilation systems to be agreed.
12. Removal of street tree and constructional details of highway improvements to be agreed.
13. Provision and retention of car parking spaces as per the approved plan.
14. Submission and implementation of car parking management plan.
15. Cycle storage details to be agreed, including the specific details of covered cycle storage.
16. Land contamination condition.
17. Separate sewerage system.
18. Standard surface water discharge condition.
19. Office use restricted to A2 and B1 (a) Use Class.
20. Public House restricted to A4 Use Class.
21. Residential unit above public house to be used solely as a manager's accommodation.
22. Use of the beer garden to be restricted to 1100-2200 daily.
23. Standard hours of construction condition.
24. As required by consultees.