



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING COMMITTEE: 9th February 2010
DIRECTORATE: Planning and Regeneration
HEAD OF PLANNING: Susan Bridge

APP: N/2009/1044
Installation of adventure play equipment and associated landscaping –The Racecourse

WARD: Kingsley

APPLICANT: Northampton Borough Council
AGENT: Northampton Borough Council

REFERRED BY: Head of Planning
REASON: Northampton Borough Council Application

DEPARTURE: No

APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION/ CONSULTATION BY:

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 APPROVAL subject to conditions and for the following reason

The proposed play equipment would improve existing facilities and facilitate the use of the Racecourse without harm to residential amenity in accordance with the guidelines contained within PPG24, (Planning and Noise,) and the appearance and setting of the Racecourse in accordance with Policy E20 and E26 of the Northampton Local Plan.

2. THE PROPOSAL

2.1 It is proposed to install children's play equipment up to 6 metres in height. These would be ten pieces of equipment complimented by landscaping.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1 The application site covers approximately 1000 square metres located at the eastern end of the area known as 'Happy Valley' located toward

the centre of The Racecourse. The piece of land is contained within the Kingsley Conservation Area.

4. **PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 None relevant to this application.

5. **PLANNING POLICY**

5.1 **Development Plan**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The current Development Plan comprises of the East Midlands Regional Plan, the saved policies of the Northamptonshire County Structure Plan and Northampton Local Plan 1997.

5.2 **National Policies:**

PPG24 Planning and Noise

5.3 **East Midlands Regional Plan 2009**

Policy 2 – Promoting Better Design

Policy 26 Protecting & Enhancing the Region's Natural & Cultural Heritage

Policy 41 - Regional Priorities for Culture, Sport and Recreation

5.4 **Northampton Borough Local Plan**

E20 – New Development

E26 - Conservation Areas

5.5 **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

Planning out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG 2004

6. **CONSULTATIONS/REPRESENTATIONS**

6.1 **Arboricultural Officer (NBC)** – no objections but the Council would require 6 weeks notification prior to commencement.

6.2 **Conservation (NBC)** - no objection.

6.3 **Historic Environment County Council**- unable to provide detailed archaeological advice.

6.4 **Colwyn Road Residents Association** - support the application.

6.5 **157 Colwyn Road** objection- play equipment is unsympathetic to the natural landscape of the Racecourse would create an intrusion into the rolling landscape of the Racecourse.

6.6 **149 Colwyn Road** - objection. Could increase noise and disturbance as its large scale will attract a n enormous number of young people. Losing our natural Greenfield parks.

6.7 **135 Colwyn Road** - support the application

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 The Racecourse provides a large area of general play and parkland for all residents of the Borough. Within it are areas set out for different recreational facilities in the vicinity of the application site such as bowls, tennis and playing fields.

7.2 The 2006 Northampton Racecourse Feasibility Study identified better play provision for children as a priority.

7.3 The 2007/08 Racecourse Masterplan was reported to the Northampton Borough Council Cabinet in November 2008. Cabinet resolved to lend the Council's support in principle to the Masterplan and in particular to certain priorities, which include amongst other things:

- Increased and improved park furniture.
- Play facility improvements for younger children.
- Play facility improvements for older children and fitness trail facilities for all generations.

7.4 This site enables the maximum use of the existing undulation at the head of the valley which would be enhanced with the associated landscaping. The nearest residential property is sited approximately 140 metres away in Colwyn Road and therefore, the proposed play equipment should not have any detrimental effect upon those residents.

7.5 Furthermore, the equipment will not have any impact on the setting of the conservation area due to the Racecourse's large size in relation to the comparatively small area involved for the equipment.

7.6 Concerns have been made upon the impact the proposed equipment would have on the archaeological history of The Racecourse. However, after assessing the Geoenvironmental and Geotechnical study submitted with the application, there is no reason to believe that the proposed works would have detrimental effect upon the archaeological remains or on the wider historical environment.

7.7 It should also be noted that such works by local planning authorities do not require planning permission if the height of the development is no more than 4m. In this case one piece of play equipment exceeds this height by some 2m, so strictly speaking it is only this one element of the scheme that requires planning permission.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The location of play equipment on within The Racecourse is considered to be in keeping with the open recreational land character of the area. The siting and design of this play equipment is also considered to be acceptable and will not have any significant impact on visual amenity or the setting of The Racecourse. Moreover the proposed play equipment would improve existing play facilities for the local community.

9. CONDITIONS

(1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

(2) No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a detailed scheme of hard and soft landscaping for the site. The scheme shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land and details of any to be retained.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan.

(3) All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, and which shall be maintained for a period of five years; such maintenance to include the replacement in the current or nearest planting season whichever is the sooner or shrubs that may die are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 N/2009/1044

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 None

12. SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

12.1 In reaching the attached recommendations regard has been given to securing the objectives, visions and priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan together with those of associated Frameworks and Strategies.

Position:	Name/Signature:	Date:
Author:	Geoff Wyatt	18 Jan 2010
Development Control Manager Agreed:	Gareth Jones	20 Jan 2010

