



RR/2019/737/P

BEXHILL Bexhill & Polegrove Bowls Club, The Polegrove, Richmond Road

Variation of Condition 2 imposed on RR/2016/424/P to allow reduction of building foot print; relocation of building within site; removal of 1 No. window in rear elevation; reduction of end windows in north elevation and internal layout changed as per planning permission to lobby disabled WC

Applicant:	Mr P. Butler
Agent:	E.P. Architects Ltd – Mr Daniel Kemp
Case Officer:	Mrs Ita Sadighi (Email: ita.sadighi@rother.gov.uk)
Ward Members:	Councillors D.B. Oliver and Mrs D.C. Earl-Williams

Reason for Committee consideration: Council owned land

Statutory 8 week date: 16 May 2019

1.0 POLICIES

- 1.1 The following policies of the Local Plan Core Strategy are particularly relevant to the proposal:
- OSS4: General Development Considerations
 - EN3: Design Quality
 - CO1: Community Facilities and Services
 - CO3: Improving Sports and Recreation Provision
 - TR4: car parking
- 1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance are also material considerations.
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2.0 SITE

- 2.1 The Polegrove recreational ground is located to the west of Bexhill town centre lying between Richmond Road and Brockley Road. The Bowls Club is sited in the south west corner of the Polegrove. Access and parking is available to the rear of the building, with pedestrian access available from Richmond Road and other entrances to the Polegrove grounds.
- 2.2 The existing building is a single storey, concrete (painted) building under a flat roof with surrounding parapet walls. It is situated at the top of four bowling greens. The building is an art deco' style, with a typical veranda, glazing and doors.
- 2.3 The Pavilion and bowling greens are bordered by hedges along the east side boundary. This provides a good separation with the football/playing

areas. There are trees and shrubs along the edge of the Polegrove which forms the west side boundary. To the rear of the Pavilion there is a small access with parking for club members.

3.0 HISTORY

- 3.1 B/59/237 Extension to Bowls Pavilion. Approved Conditional
- 3.2 RR/2016/424/P Demolition of existing bowls pavilion and shed and erection of a new club house. Approved Conditional.
- 3.3 The Design and Access Statement submitted with the original planning application RR/2016/424/P outlined the history of the Club:

“The Bexhill Bowling Club was founded in 1907. The Bexhill Bowling Club was founded in 1907 and they played then on the only Bowling Green in Bexhill at Egerton Park. With Bowling growing in popularity a new green. Measuring 42 x 35 yards was laid down in there and opened in 1908. The Bexhill Club became affiliated to the Sussex County Bowling Association in 1911 when club rules were drawn up and adopted. By 1924 membership of the Club was starting to grow quickly and the Council were beginning to realise that good Bowling greens might be an asset to the town and so two new greens were laid in the Polegrove Recreation Park. Bexhill Bowling Club subsequently move to Polegrove.

- 3.4 *On July 23rd 1937, the Mayor officially opened a third green at Polegrove and the membership had increased to 140. Interest in indoor bowling was also growing and in September 1941 Bexhill Bowling Club agreed to set up bowling in the Egerton Park Pavilion, during the winter months. The first indoor Tournament was held in 1942. It consisted of triples only and was open to Ladies and local clubs. 1959 saw an extension to the Polegrove Pavilion and a breakaway from the club by some members who wanted to play on Sunday, and formed the Polegrove Men’s Bowling Club. In 2003/4 the Bexhill Men successfully amalgamated with the Bexhill Women and in 2007 the club celebrated its Centenary Year.”*

4.0 PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Planning permission has previously been granted for the new clubhouse building under planning approval RR/2016/424/P. This proposal is for a variation of Condition 2 imposed on RR/2016/424/P to allow reduction of building foot print; relocation of building within site; removal of 1 No. window in rear elevation; reduction of end windows in north elevation and internal layout changed as per planning permission to lobby disabled WC.
- 4.2 The original proposal is to replace the old pavilion with a new timber framed club house that contains the facilities the club needs. The new building is required due to the growth and success of both clubs, Bexhill and Polegrove, and the poor condition of the old pavilion. The existing clubhouse building is in a poor state of repair with a leaking roof in several sections, no heating and inadequate inside space and no facilities for the

club members. A public toilet is located in a building nearby which members and their guests have to use.

- 4.3 The building is leased by the District Council, and the club now wishes to fund a replacement building and maintain it as the council does not have the available resources to address its on-going condition. The existing structure is in need of modernisation and the roof has been repaired on several occasions but there are still signs of water ingress. The internal space is poorly ventilated and suffers from mould growth.
- 4.4 The new replacement building would be a slightly reduced footprint to the 2016 approval and relocated within the existing site area. Other changes are to the external fenestration and internal layout including how the disabled WC is to be accessed. The proposal would still use modern materials – timber cladding under a tiled roof to provide a building with low maintenance costs and suitable for use all year round by members.
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5.0 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Planning Notice

- 5.1.1 The notice does not expire until 26 April 2019. No comments have been received at the time of writing and any comments received prior to Planning Committee will be reported at meeting.
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6.0 APPRAISAL

- 6.1 Both the National Planning Policy Framework and Core Strategy policies are supportive of providing and upgrading sports facilities. Policy CO3 states *that,*

“the provision of sufficient, well-managed and accessible open spaces, sports and recreation facilities, including indoor sports facilities, will be achieved by (i) Safeguarding existing facilities from development, and only permitting their loss where it results in improved provision (in terms of quantity and quality) as part of a redevelopment or elsewhere within the locality”. In this case the main issues to consider are:

- The loss of the existing Pavilion
- The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area
- The effect of the proposal on the near neighbouring properties

6.2 Loss of the Pavilion

- 6.2.1 The original 2016 planning application was initially delayed when a request was made to Historic England to have the existing pavilion considered for listing.
- 6.2.2 The existing pavilion is an early-mid twentieth century structure in an Art Deco style, which has been extended on either side during the later twentieth century. Its architectural character, and existence as a visible piece of the history of sporting facilities, could lead the building to be

considered a 'non-designated heritage asset' in National Planning Policy Framework terms. As such the National Planning Policy Framework advises that a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of the harm or loss, and the significance of the heritage asset.

6.2.3 Historic England decided not to add the building to the statutory list, they highlight that:

- *Although the Polegrove bowls club was built at a similar time to the Art Deco De La Warr building, and Bexhill has a number of other buildings from this era, there does not appear to be any direct association.*
- *In contrast to the De la Warr building, the design of the pavilion is not innovative, is very plain, and has none of the chevron patterns or sweeping curves of the period. It is also a late example of the style which by the end of the 1930s, was suffering a decline in popularity. It is suggested that its plain style is more a result of impending war time austerity rather than an Art Deco statement.*
- *Plain extensions to each side of the building and the glass infill of the principal elevation have overly disguised the original form and function. The loss of the flagpole centrepiece and support fitting has also lessened its claims to special architectural interest.*

6.2.4 Losing any heritage asset is disappointing, but in this context, in balancing the limited significance of the pavilion as identified by Historic England, and the social benefits of providing a new sporting facility, it can be argued that the proposal should be supported.

6.3 Character and Appearance

6.3.1 The new building would offer the club modern larger facilities, improving its provision and reflecting its purpose as a sporting facility. The proposal would be sited centrally but still overlooking the four bowling greens, in a similar position to the older pavilion.

6.3.2 The proposal would be a large timber framed building, single storey and sited in replacement of the demolished pavilion and adjoining shed. In terms of external appearance, the proposed design possesses the symmetry and central gable feature that is typical of sports pavilion typology. Materials can be covered by condition; it is expected that the fire authorities may require a cementitious board (e.g. Eternit or Hardiplank) rather than timber weatherboarding.

6.3.3 Although its scale is large, its design is simple with a central gable and symmetry typical of a sports building. The proposal should not be unacceptable in the site and it would not adversely impact the character or appearance of this area. The slight variations to the design are minor in nature and would not significantly alter the overall design and scale of the previously approved new building.

6.4 Impact on Neighbouring Properties

6.4.1 The proposal is set within the Polegrove recreational ground. The existing use would not change and only the building is to be replaced. The proposal

should not have any adverse impact to the near neighbouring properties existing amenities given it is a replacement of an existing building.

6.5 Other Comments

Design of new pavilion

- 6.5.1 The internal layout of the new facilities would be slightly altered to accommodate larger changing facilities and the disabled toilet accessed via the lobby rather than directly into the club room which is an improvement for the proposal. There are also a large number of windows proposed with slight variations on this application.
- 6.5.2 In the report for the previous application it was noted that the windows are good for allowing views of the bowls green from inside the pavilion, but could pose a security risk in a building of this nature. No external shutters are proposed and this aspect would not be supported. This council would not want to see external metal roller shutters retrofitted to overcome a problem in this respect. Alternative options might be internal grilles or external timber bi-fold shutters (encompassing a metal core).
- 6.5.3 Again, reported previously, were other security issues such as the number of external doors, the kitchen door in particular is very hidden and might be better simply turned into a fire escape, with access to the kitchen from inside the clubroom only.
- 6.5.4 Previously, the applicants were advised to check the situation regarding locations and numbers of fire escapes with Building Control and the relevant fire authorities.
- 6.5.5 They were also advised to check other layout features and in this respect there are still notable omissions in the internal layout; office; equipment stores, cleaners store – though the Council is not party to the specific brief to the designer, these are all aspects that the Sport England guidance wisely says should be considered at the design stage. Due to the large footprint of the proposed building on the plot, there will be little if any opportunity to extend it later, so it is important the bowls club are sure the building is delivering them everything they require at this stage. Additionally the locations of the bar and kitchen at the opposite ends of the building means each needs to be staffed separately, which may or may not be a logistical problem for how the club operates, but again is worth highlighting.
- 6.5.6 It is possible that external changes to the submitted plans may be necessary or in terms of disabled access. However, rather than requesting amended plans at this stage, like advised in the previous permission, these are matters to be brought to the bowls club's attention.

7.0 **SUMMARY**

- 7.1 The proposal relates to a sporting facility that has been established at the Polegrove for a many years. This application poses alterations from the previous approval in 2016, by a small reduction in the footprint, its position within the site and fenestration details. Internally the main change is the

way the disabled toilet is accessed from a lobby area rather than within the clubroom which is a more acceptable proposal.

- 7.2 In respect of the existing building, it has been noted that any loss of heritage is challenging, but this also has to be balanced with its purpose or use and whether it is worth preserving. Historic England has considered the old clubhouse building but did not wish to add it to the statutory list. Its replacement by a new purpose-built facility will provide the club with modern improved space and services.

8.0 LOCAL FINANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 The proposed development is not liable for Community Infrastructure Levy nor are there any other material finance considerations.

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT (FULL PLANNING) DELEGATED (SUBJECT TO: THE EXPIRY OF THE CONSULTATION PERIOD)

CONDITIONS:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of planning permission RR/2016/424/P.
Reason: In accordance with section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
Design & Access Statement dated February 2016
Proposed Roof & Site Plan Drawing No. 1800.P02 dated December 2018.
Proposed Plans and Elevations Drawing No. 1800.P01 dated February 2018.
Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning, as advised in Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 022 Reference ID: 21a-022-20140306.
3. Prior to commencement of the works for the construction of the new building hereby approved, samples of the external materials to be used in the development shall be provided for the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details
Reason: To ensure an appropriate design for the locality in accordance with Policies OSS4 (iii) and EN3 (i) of the Rother District Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).
4. No external metal roller shutters or similar are to fixed to the building.
Reason: To ensure an appropriate design for the locality in accordance with Policies OSS4 (iii) and EN3 (i) of Rother District Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

NOTE:

1. The applicant's attention is drawn to the advice contained in the Sport England Clubhouse Design Guidance
<http://www.sportengland.org/media/10792/2-clubhouse-design.pdf>

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK: In accordance with the requirements of the Framework (paragraphs 38) and with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, the Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.