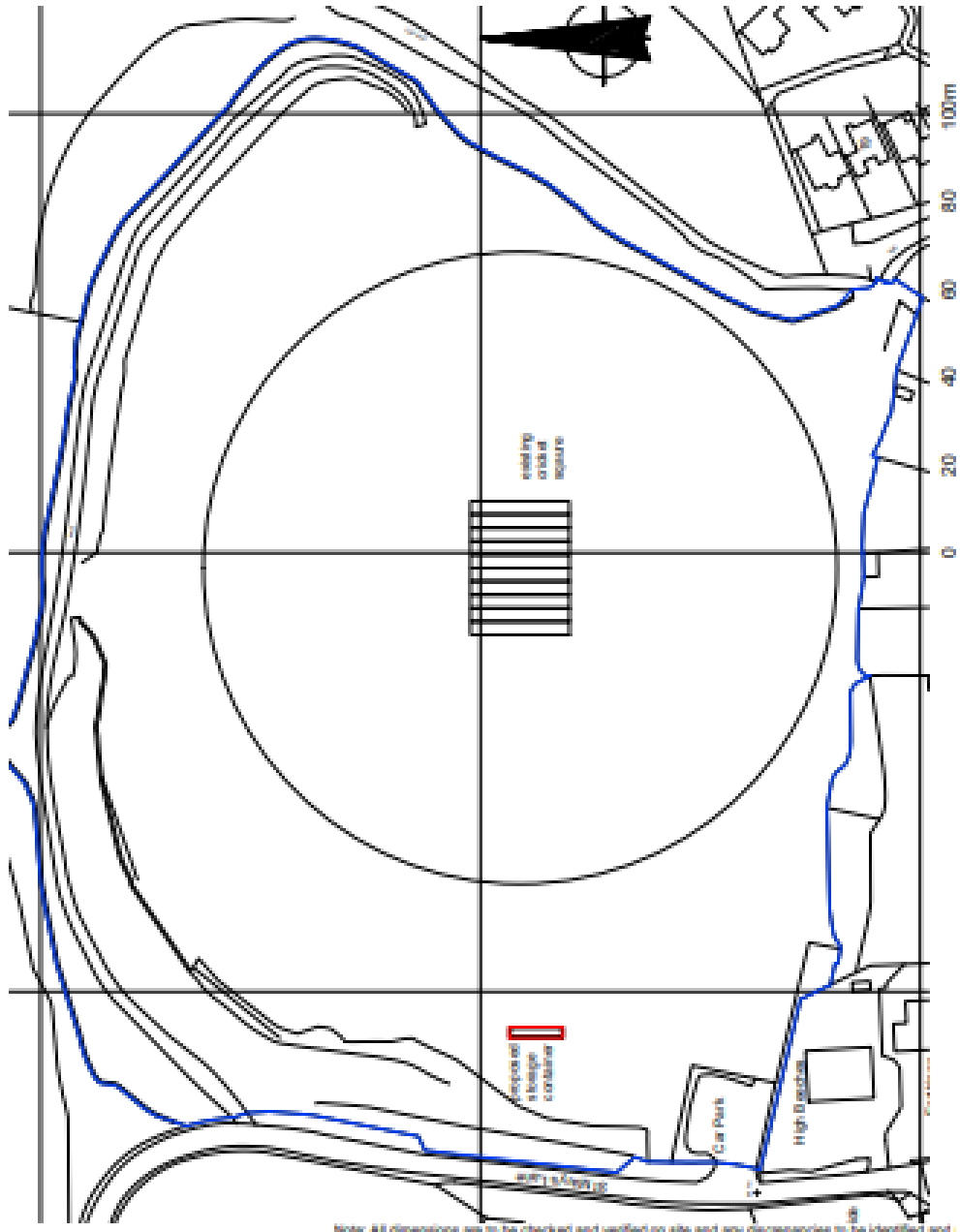


SITE PLAN

RR/2022/830/P

BEXHILL

Car Park
St. Mary's Lane



Rother District Council

Report to - Planning Committee
Date - 21 July 2022
Report of the - Director - Place and Climate Change
Subject - Application RR/2022/830/P
Address - Car Park, St Mary's Lane, Bexhill, TN39 5JE
Proposal - Siting of portable changing facility at St Mary's Recreation Ground

[View application/correspondence](#)

RECOMMENDATION: It be **RESOLVED** to **GRANT (FULL PLANNING)**

Director: Ben Hook

Applicant: Mr Jamie Ramsden (Sidley Cricket Club)
Agent: Mr Jamie Ramsden
Case Officer: Mr Michael Vladeanu
(Email: Michael.vladeanu@rother.gov.uk)

Parish: BEXHILL - SIDLEY
Ward Members: Councillors J.J. Carroll and S.J. Coleman

Reason for Committee consideration: Director - Place and Climate Change referral: Rother District Council owned land

Statutory 8-week date: 25 June 2022
Extension of time agreed to: 28 July 2022

This application is included in the Committee site inspection list.

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 The proposed portable changing facility would complement the existing recreation facility along St. Mary's Lane. It would not detract from the rural character and appearance of the locality, would not adversely impact on the living conditions of occupiers of nearby residential properties and there are no highway safety concerns. The recommendation is to grant permission subject to the imposed conditions.

2.0 SITE

- 2.1 The site is located within the St Mary's Recreation Ground (SMRG), which is a public recreation ground, owned by Rother District Council, located on the eastern side of St. Mary's Lane. It is a large open space with trees lining the boundary of the ground and consists of an area of amenity grassland with a small section of fenced hard standing to the southwest providing visitors parking. The recreation ground itself is approximately four hectares in size, measuring approximately 175m north-to-south, and 220m east-to-east. The application site is located on the western side of the recreation ground, approximately 30m north of the hard standing parking area.
- 2.2 The recreation ground is surrounded by woodland to the north and east, and bounded by St Mary's Lane to the west, adjacent to Bexhill Cemetery. The nearest residential properties are located to the south of the recreation ground, the closest being approximately 50m from the application site, adjacent to the entrance to the existing hard standing parking area.
- 2.3 SMRG is recognised by Fields in Trust and has 'Queen Elizabeth II Field status', which means that the site is protected as a recreational open space in perpetuity.
- 2.4 The site is located just outside of the development boundary for Bexhill and is partly within the Pevensey Levels Hydrological Catchment Area.
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3.0 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This application seeks planning permission for the erection of a portable changing facility that will be used by the Sidley Cricket Club (SCC). The Design and Access Statement has stated that the changing facility would measure 9.75m by 3m with a flat roof ridge height of 2.4m. The external materials would feature steel with wooden cladding for the walls which would match that of the shipping container approved at the site under planning ref: RR/2021/2252/P.
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4.0 HISTORY

- 4.1 RR/2021/2252/P Construction of an electric race car track and siting of a shipping container for storage. Approved.
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5.0 POLICIES

- 5.1 The following policies of the [Rother Local Plan Core Strategy 2014](#) are relevant to the proposal:
- OSS4: General Development Considerations
 - RA3: Development in the Countryside
 - BX1: Overall Strategy for Bexhill
 - EN1: Landscape Stewardship
 - EN3: Design Quality

- 5.2 The following policies of the [Development and Site Allocations Local Plan](#) are relevant to the proposal:
- DEN1: Maintaining Landscape Character
- 5.3 The following Council documents are considered relevant to the proposal:
- Rother and Hastings Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS), 2016
- 5.4 The National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance are also material considerations.
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6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 Environmental Health – **NO OBJECTION**

6.1.1 I refer to the above planning application, which seeks to install a mobile changing room on playing fields. This department has no concerns and no recommendations to make regarding this application. In conclusion, this department would support this application.

6.2 Planning Notice

6.2.1 Four letters of objection have been received (from forty-one representatives). The concerns raised are summarised as follows:

- Not an established use
- No correspondence with neighbours
- The land in question is contaminated
- St Mary's Lane is not suitable for more traffic, it is very dangerous
- Same drawing has been used for both the location and block plan

6.2.2 34 letters of support have been received (from 41 representatives). The reasons are summarised as follows:

- Good for the local community
- Brings back a site that been unused
- Will offer broader support to the children in our community
- It will assist in the provision of a sporting enmity for the people of Sidley

6.2.3 Three letters with general comments have been received (from 41 representatives). The comments are summarised as follows:

- As I am one of the closest residents to the site, I wish to inform you that I have not received any communication about this proposal until now
- No plans/drawings

6.3 Bexhill Town Council – **No comments received**

7.0 APPRAISAL

7.1 The main issues for consideration are as follows:

- Principle of development
- The effect on the character and appearance of the area
- The effect on neighbouring amenity
- Highway safety and parking

7.2 Principle of development

- 7.2.1 The Rother Local Plan Core Strategy Policy BX1(ii): includes within the 'overall strategy for Bexhill' the objective of delivering development of local amenities, including support for community activities and facilities, and improved sports and leisure facilities.
- 7.2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework at Section 8 sets out the planning objective of 'promoting healthy and safe communities. At paragraph 93 it says that to provide the social and recreational facilities and services the community needs, planning decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities sports venues, open space, and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments. It adds that, decisions should take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, and social well-being for all sections of the community, and guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs. In terms of 'open space and recreation', at paragraph 98 it states that access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Paragraph 99 goes on to say that existing open space, sports and recreational land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless specified criteria are met, including: the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or (c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use. Section 12. 'achieving well-designed places' at paragraph 130 (f) requires that planning decisions should ensure that developments create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.
- 7.2.3 Paragraph 4.4.6 of the Rother and Hastings Playing Pitch Strategy (2016) states that while demand for organised sport is falling in the villages and rural areas of the study area, settlements such as Bexhill, Sidley and Hastings, are expecting an increase in demand for sports such as cricket.
- 7.2.4 The proposal for this changing facility accords with adopted Rother Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CO3(ii) which advises that proposals for the improvement of existing facilities will be permitted where deficits in facilities are identified. The siting of a portable changing facility at SMRG will facilitate the existing use of the site for the playing of cricket and allow SCC to return to its home community after a number of years of playing elsewhere mainly in Hastings. The Rother and Hastings Playing Pitch Strategy (2016) identifies that a key priority for cricket in the area is to work with SCC regarding their aspirations to return to playing cricket in Bexhill. The proposed siting of a portable changing facility would enable this priority to be met and would be the first phase in establishing SMRG as the new permanent home of SCC.
- 7.2.5 Overall, it is considered that the principle of development is acceptable and would accord with local and national planning policies, subject to the assessment of other material planning considerations discussed below.

7.3 Impact upon character and appearance of the area

- 7.3.1 Policies OSS4 (iii) and EN3 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy seek, amongst other matters, to ensure that new development is of high design quality that respects, contributes positively towards, and does not detract from the character and appearance of the locality. These policies are consistent with paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that development should be sympathetic to the local character, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.
- 7.3.2 Policy EN1 provides protection for the landscape character of the area, whilst Policy EN3 requires all development to be of a high-quality design.
- 7.3.3 St. Mary's Lane is rural in character with scattered residential properties which generally occupy large sites. The lane is lined with hedges and trees. The recreation ground is a large open space with trees lining the boundary of the ground, an area of grassland with a small section of fenced hard standing to the southwest providing visitors parking.
- 7.3.4 The application relates to an existing recreation ground and no loss of the area of the recreation ground would be proposed under this application. The proposed facilities would not impact on the existing areas on the recreation ground.
- 7.3.5 The area of land where the portable changing facility would be positioned would be located 30m north of the existing car park on the western boundary of the ground. The facility would measure 9.75m by 3m with a flat roof ridge height of 2.4m. The external materials would feature steel with wooden cladding for the walls which would match that of the shipping container approved at the site under planning ref: RR/2021/2252/P.
- 7.3.6 The structure would be positioned just to the south of the structures approved for 1066 racing under ref: RR/2021/2252/P and would be read as associated infrastructure and would not be read as an encroachment into the countryside. The area of land would be served by the existing access to SMRG. The scale and design of the structure proposed is of a simple nature, in keeping with the locality and of sympathetic materials as to not have a harmful impact visually or physically on the character and appearance of this rural location. Should the application be recommended for approval, a condition will be placed on the decision notice requesting elevation drawings of the structure as well as samples/details of the external finish to ensure the facility is in keeping with its surroundings.
- 7.3.7 Overall, it is considered that the structure would be appropriately sited and would be of an acceptable use, scale and design as to not adversely impact the character and locality of the recreation ground and surrounding area.

7.4 Impact on neighbour's amenity

- 7.4.1 Policy OSS4 (ii) of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy states that all development should not unreasonably harm the amenities of adjoining properties.

- 7.4.2 The site is within a recreation ground environment with residential dwellings scattered along St. Mary's Lane, its nearest dwelling being approximately 58m in distance to the site (High Beeches). The existing use of the site is as a recreation ground and therefore neighbouring residents will be aware of existing activity and background noise characteristics associated with the existing uses. These may be more noticeable at times than others, such as when a football/cricket match is being held. There is no external lighting proposed, and by the nature of the sporting activity, the facility would only be used during daylight hours.
- 7.4.3 Environmental Health have been consulted on the application and make the following comments: "I refer to the above planning application, which seeks to install a mobile changing room on playing fields. This department has no concerns and no recommendations to make regarding this application. In conclusion, this department would support this application." Therefore, it is considered that there would be no significant detrimental effect on neighbouring amenity from noise or light emitted for the proposed development.
- 7.4.4 It is noted that the application proposed to install toilet facilities in the form of a chemical toilet whereby waste is collected and disposed off-site. A condition will be placed on any decision notice to ensure that waste is safely deposited off site and no connection is made to the main sewer.

7.5 Highways and parking

- 7.5.1 Policy CO6 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy facilitates a safe physical environment by (ii) ensuring that all development avoids prejudice to road and/or pedestrian safety.
- 7.5.2 Policy TR4 (i) of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy requires development to meet the residual needs of the development for off-street parking having taken into consideration localised circumstances and having full regard to the potential for access by means other than the car, and to any safety, congestion or amenity impacts of a reliance on parking off-site whether on-street or off-street.
- 7.5.3 The site is served by an existing vehicular access. Traffic speeds are generally low along the lane and therefore the operating use proposed should not increase hazards on the highway. There is adequate space on site to park and turn multiple vehicles.

8.0 **PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The proposal to site a portable changing facility would not detract from the locality of the Recreation Ground and would not adversely impact on the nearby neighbouring residential properties and would not prejudice highway safety. The proposal complies with Rother Local Plan Core Strategy policies together with the various provisions contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and can therefore be supported and granted full planning.

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT (FULL PLANNING)

CONDITIONS:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
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 and details:
Site Location Plan, Drawing No. 4775.LP. A, dated 14 March 2022
Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
3. No development shall commence until full elevational drawings of the portable changing facility have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This drawing should include details/samples of the external finish of the structure including the wood cladding to be used.
Reason: To ensure that the development reflects the character and/or appearance of the existing building and to preserve the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policy OSS4(iii) of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy.
4. No floodlighting or other external means of illumination of the portable changing facility hereby permitted shall be provided, installed or operated at the site.
Reason: To protect the residential amenities of the locality and to protect the special character of the rural area, in accordance with Policies OSS4 (ii and iii), RA3 (v) and EN1 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy.
5. There shall be no on-site discharge of sewage, solid or liquid, from any chemical toilets; all sewage shall be collected for disposal by an appropriately registered contractor.
Reason: To protect the amenity of the locality and for people living and/or working nearby, in accordance with local planning Policy SRM2 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK: In accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 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.