

Planning Committee Planning Application
Number:
19/01573/REM

12 March 2020

Hobbledown, Horton Lane, Epsom, Surrey, KT19 8PT

Amendment to play structure permitted under 17/00988/FUL to provide new smaller play structure for younger children.

Ward:	Ruxley,
Contact Officer:	Tom Bagshaw

1 Plans and Representations

- 1.1 The Council now holds this information electronically. Please click on the following link to access the plans and representations relating to this application via the Council's website, which is provided by way of background information to the report. Please note that the link is current at the time of publication, and will not be updated.

Link: <http://eplanning.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=Q1OH DNGYGLK00>

2 Summary

- 2.1 This application is referred to Planning Committee for decision as the property is in the ownership of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.
- 2.2 The proposed children play area would include reducing the size of the play equipment and removing the netting. The motivation behind this is that the applicant is seeking to target a younger age group for the play area and a large structure such as that which has been approved is not considered appropriate for an infant demographic.
- 2.3 The proposal would result in a reduction in the size of the play equipment of the approved scheme and would therefore be considered to reduce the impacts to the openness of the greenbelt and would be positive in this regard.
- 2.4 The proposed development is considered acceptable in planning terms.

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3 Site description

- 3.1 The application relates to Hobbledown Children's Farm, previously known as Horton Park Farm, on Horton Lane. The site was formerly a farm associated with the hospitals that was granted planning permission to become an agricultural/educational facility in 1985. The agricultural/educational use has evolved over time through various planning applications and since the planning permission granted in 2011 the leisure attraction has undergone major refurbishment and expansion. It is now a fantasy themed adventure park and zoo comprising a play barn with outdoor areas containing tunnels, mazes, role play areas, giant sandpits, a zip wire, animal zoo and petting farm together with children's play structures.
- 3.2 The overall site is located on the west side of Horton Lane adjacent to the Horton Lane/McKenzie Way roundabout. The whole of the site is in the Green Belt and forms part of Horton Country Park. Immediately to the north of the site on the opposite side of Bridleway 73 is Clarendon Park and to the east on the other side of Horton Lane are the shops and houses of Livingstone Park.
- 3.3 The current application is situated amongst the existing play structures including two 'jumping pillow' trampolines which are provided towards the centre of the park and approximately 150m from the nearest residential properties to the north.

4 Proposal

- 4.1 The original application (17/00988/FUL) sought permission for the creation of a new play structure comprising 4 wooden towers and posts with enclosed netting suspended in between. This amendment would be to reduce the size and massing of the proposed play areas in order to accommodate a younger demographic area.
- 4.2 The tower would be 10 metres in height to the ridge and approximately 8 metres to the eaves. The two smaller towers would be a maximum height of 7 metres to the ridge and 6.5 metres to the eaves. The main castle would be a maximum height of 9 metres and would feature a slide. The proposed structures would be constructed of natural timber materials.

5 Comments from third parties

- 5.1 The application was advertised by means of letters of notification to 9 neighbouring properties. To date (06.02.2019) 0 letters of objection have been received.

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6 Consultations

6.1 There are no external consultations required for this application.

7 Relevant planning history

Application number	Decision date	Application detail	Decision
17/00988/FUL	20.12.2017	Addition of timber and netting outdoor play structure	PER - Application Permitted

8 Planning Policy

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018

Local Development Framework – Core Strategy 2007

Policy CS1 – General Policy

Policy CS2 – Green Belts

Policy CS4 – Open Spaces and Green Infrastructure

Policy CS5 – Built Environment

Policy CS11 – Employment Provision

Development Management Policies Document – 2015

Policy DM3 – Replacement and extensions of buildings in the Green Belt

Policy DM6 – Open space provision

Policy DM10 – Design Requirements

Policy DM25 – Development of employment premises

9 Planning considerations

Principle of Development

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- 9.1 In principle the proposal for a timber outdoor play structure within this area of the children's farm is compatible with national Green Belt policy that allows for provision of appropriate outdoor recreation facilities as long it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
- 9.2 The proposal also accords with condition 19 of 11/00511/FUL (the original consent for Hobbledown) that requires play activities and equipment to only be sited in certain specified areas which includes the current application site notated as Zone B on the approved Master Plan 6773/50 Rev H.

Layout, Design and Scale.

- 9.3 Condition 6 of 11/00511/FUL requires that no part of play structures should exceed a height of 7m above existing ground level other than the turret housing the zip wire launch platform which was allowed to be up to 9.5m above ground level. This permission will override that condition for this piece of equipment only and remains valid and enforceable for planning permission granted under reference 11/00511/FUL.
- 9.4 The proposed new play structure rises 10m above ground level at its highest point.. These structures are similar in scale and design to the existing climbing frame towers within the adjoining Hobbledown village part of the site and it is considered that the tower would not in itself have an unacceptable visual impact from outside the site.
- 9.5 It is considered that given the distance of at least 150m between the proposal and nearest dwellings within the Clarendon Park development together with existing landscaping between the two would mean that there would be only a minimal visual impact and that this would not in itself be harmful to the visual amenities of neighbouring occupiers.
- 9.6 It is accordingly concluded in the light of the facts presented and advice from the Borough Environmental Health Officer regarding noise that the proposed development complies with Policy DM10 in respect of its impact on residential amenity.

Green Belt

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- 9.7 It is considered that the proposal does not conflict with any of the five purposes that the Green Belt is considered to serve as set out in paragraph 80 of the NPPF. The proposed play structure is designed as an outdoor recreational and sport facility for children. Paragraph 89 of the NPPF states that new buildings are inappropriate in the Green Belt other than in certain exception cases. One of these exceptions is the 'provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation... as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it'. The siting and appearance of the play structure would not have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Local economic benefits.

- 9.8 Hobbledown Children's Farm provides in the order of 70-80 jobs and makes a valuable contribution to the local economy both directly and indirectly to other local businesses. The proposed development would assist in providing a diversified offer and increased dwell time for visitors which should lead to additional employment at the park and increased expenditure with local service providers.

Parking and access

- 9.9 Comments from the original proposal state that Surrey County Council has no objection to the proposal. As the structure is almost exactly the same with only minor reductions in scale this application would not be considered as a significant change and Surrey County Council Highways have raised no objections to the proposal.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 9.10 The scheme would not be CIL liable.

10 Conclusion

- 10.1 The application proposal is compatible with Green Belt policy and in terms of design, scale and appearance is considered to have no harmful impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers or upon the visual amenities of the area.

- 10.2 In view of the above, it is recommended that planning permission is granted.

11 Recommendation

- 11.1 The application is recommended for Approval subject to the following condition(s):

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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 as amended by Section 51 (1) 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 documents: Submitted Elevation Plan 1.0 dated 29/10/2019, Proposed Site Plan 1.0 dated 29/10/2019 and agent's letter dated 21/11/2019.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans to comply with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007).

- (3) The development hereby permitted shall be constructed entirely of the materials as detailed on the schedule of materials dated 21/11/2019.

Reason: To secure a satisfactory appearance in the interests of the visual amenities and character of the locality in accordance with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policies DM9 and DM10 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

Informative(s)

- (1) In dealing with the application the Council has implemented the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive way. We have made available detailed advice in the form of our statutory policies in the Core Strategy, Supplementary Planning Documents, Planning Briefs and other informal written guidance, as well as offering a full pre-application advice service, in order to ensure that the applicant has been given every opportunity to submit an application which is likely to be considered favourably.