

20/00349/FUL

ASHINGDON PAVILION, ASHINGDON ROAD, ROCHFORD

**PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE OF PAVILION FROM D2 USE
(SPORTS CHANGING ROOMS) TO B1A (OFFICES/
MEETING ROOM SPACE)**

APPLICANT: ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

ZONING: RESIDENTIAL

PARISH: ASHINGDON

WARD: HOCKLEY & ASHINGDON

1 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That planning permission be approved with the following 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(1) of The Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- (2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the following approved plans:

Location Plan, Floor Plan (not numbered), dated 14 April 2020 and 18 May 2020, respectively.

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the development plan.

2 PLANNING APPLICATION DETAILS

2.1 This item is brought to the Committee as the applicant is Rochford District Council.

2.2 The application site is located on the eastern side of Ashingdon Road and its northern access point is some 15m south of the junction of Ashingdon Road and Highcliff Crescent. The application relates to an existing changing room

and storage building located some 25m east of the site's northern access/egress point onto Ashingdon Road.

- 2.3 The building to which this application relates is a flat roofed, single storey building that is L-shaped in form. To its east is King George's Field open green space that is used as sports/leisure pitches which is owned by the applicant (outlined in blue on the submitted site location plan). To the west of the application host building is Ashingdon & East Hawkwell Memorial Hall and associated parking, which again is within the land owned by the applicant. The west boundary would serve as the entire site's (outlined in blue) principal elevation and this contains a narrow strip of soft landscaping between the northern and southern access points onto Ashingdon Road.
- 2.4 To the application host building's north is a residential cul-de-sac named Highcliff Crescent. The building's northern elevation faces Nos.12, 14, 16 and 18 Highcliff Crescent and their respective rear gardens. To the south is more open green space that is owned by the applicant.

This application seeks planning consent for the change of use of an injury room and changing room No.2, as identified on the submitted floor plans, from a D2 use (sports changing rooms) to B1a use (offices/meeting rooms). The submitted floor plans have not been labelled with a scale bar but the application particulars state the floor space involved would amount to an approximate area of 22 square metres in internal floor space.

3 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The site is allocated Metropolitan Green Belt and existing Public Open Space on the Council's allocations plan (2014).
- 3.2 Paragraph 145 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (the framework) states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. One of the exceptions listed to this is:
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
- 3.3 Paragraph 146 to the Framework states that certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt including amongst other things:
- d) the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction.
- 3.4 Policy GB1 of Rochford District Council's Core Strategy (2011) promotes the protection of the Green Belt under all circumstances and will allocate the minimum amount of Green Belt land necessary to meet the District's housing and employment needs. The overarching theme of this policy is to direct any development away from the Green Belt as far as practicable and will not allow

development that significantly undermines the objectives and character of the Green Belt.

- 3.5 Policy GB2 of the Council's Core Strategy (2011) whilst maintaining a restrictive approach within the Green Belt allows for some relaxation for rural diversification that includes the conversion of existing buildings for small scale employment use.
- 3.6 Policy DM12 provides a criteria based approach where rural diversification will in principle be supported, subject to satisfying a number of criteria.

Impact on the Character of the Green Belt

- 3.7 The proposed change of use would not alter the building in regard to its footprint or dimensions or fenestration. Although the change of use is within the Green Belt there would be no increased impact on its character and openness if the change of use were to change to office/meeting rooms (Class B1a). It is also noted that the remaining building provides nine other changing rooms in the facility that is primarily used for sport and leisure events. As a result, the proposal would not have an undue impact upon the openness of the Green Belt or character of the countryside and would thus not conflict with part (i) to Policy DM12.
- 3.8 The proposal would be a low key use involving limited floor space of around 22 square metres. The site is situated adjoining the car parking area serving the wider use of the site and playing fields. Use class B1 is noted for allowing uses usually considered appropriate to a residential area by way of not being likely to give rise to conditions of noise, dust or grit. The limited floor space close to Ashingdon Road would not give rise to an intensity of activity adversely affecting the local highway network or proving insensitive to the site surroundings. The proposal would thus satisfy parts (ii) and (iii) to policy DM12. The location adjoining Ashingdon Road would provide good links with the highway network in accordance with part (v) to policy DM12.
- 3.9 The site location is not situated where the proposal can impact upon the agricultural value of the land and does not involve a building that is either nationally or locally listed. Parts (iv) and (vi) to policy DM12 do not therefore apply.

Design Issues

- 3.10 Policy CP1 of the Rochford District Council Core Strategy (2011) promotes high quality design, which has regard to the character of the local area. Design is expected to enhance the local identity of an area. This point is expanded in policy DM1 of the Development Management Plan (2014) which states that 'the design of new developments should promote the character of the locality to ensure that the development positively contributes to the surrounding natural and built environment and residential amenity, without discouraging originality, innovation or initiative'. The proposal would leave the

exterior of the building largely unchanged and as such there would be no conflict with these policies.

Parking Issues

- 3.11 The existing injury room and changing room would not have a nominal parking figure as the standard is geared towards the number of playing pitches. The use proposed would require the provision of one car parking space which would be generally available in the wider public car park serving the site.

4 CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

Ashingdon Parish Council

- 4.1 No representation made at the time of writing.

Neighbours

- 4.2 Nine neighbouring addresses were notified about this change of use planning application; none have responded at the time of writing with any comments of support or objection.

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need:
- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
 - To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - To foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and found there to be no impacts (either positive or negative) on protected groups as defined under the Equality Act 2010.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 In conclusion, the proposed scheme would not cause a significant detrimental impact on the character and openness of the Green Belt. The change of use is modest and would not have any proposed development works and is therefore considered to be acceptable.

Marcus Hotten



Assistant Director, Place & Environment

Relevant Development Plan Policies and Proposals

Rochford District Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy (December 2011)

Policies GB1, GB2, CP1.

Rochford District Council Local Development Framework Development Management Plan (December 2014)

Policies DM1, DM12, DM30.

Parking Standards: Design and Good Practice Supplementary Planning Document adopted December 2010

Background Papers

None.

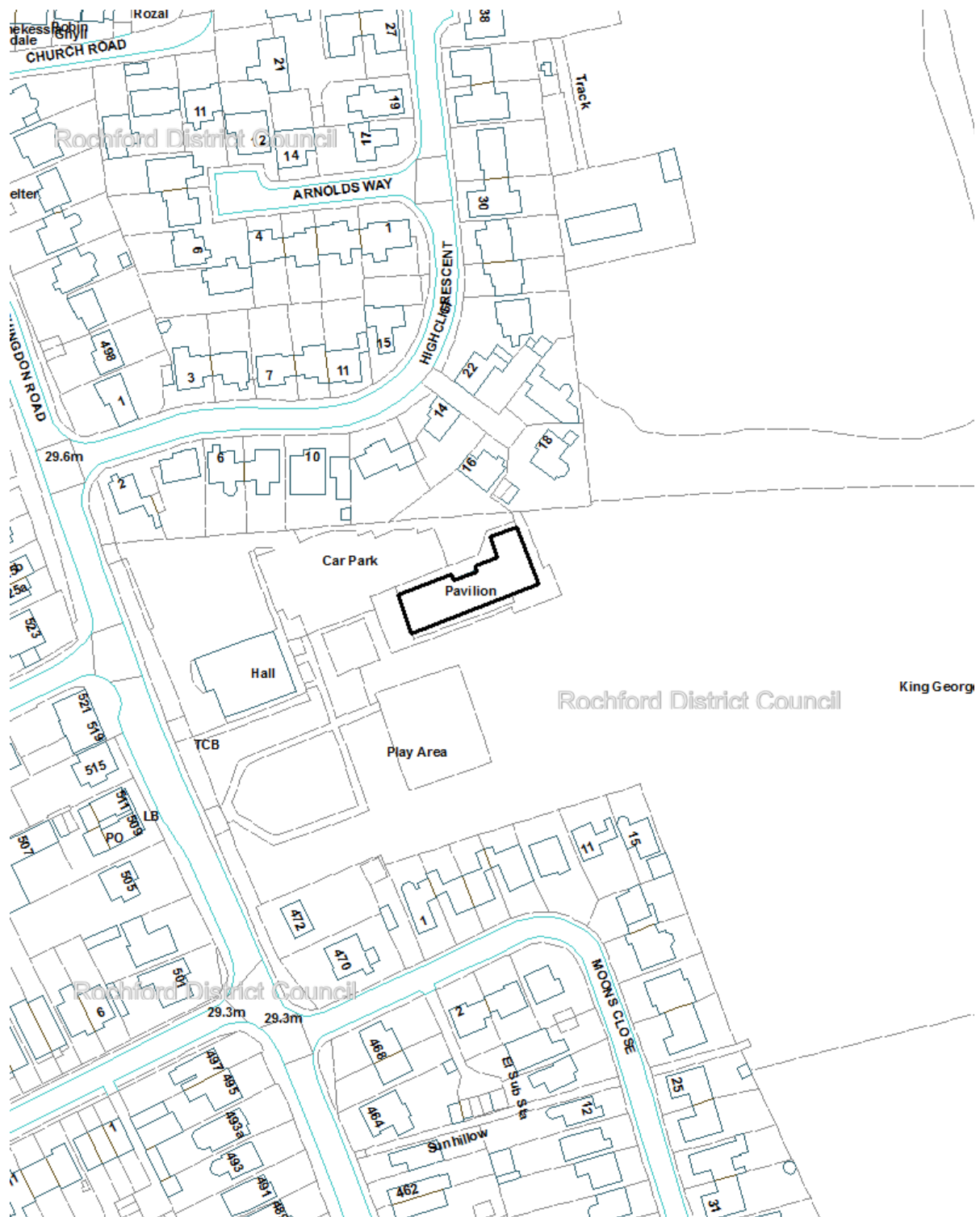
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