

PLANNING SERVICES COMMITTEE - 23rd January 2003 Item R9 Referred Item

TITLE : 02/01088/FUL
INSTALL CONCRETE HARDSTANDING
KING GEORGE PLAYING FIELD, EASTWOOD ROAD,
RAYLEIGH

APPLICANT: RAYLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

ZONING: EXISTING PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

PARISH: RAYLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

WARD: WHEATLEY

In accordance with the agreed procedure this item is reported to this meeting for consideration.

This application was included in Weekly List no. 658 requiring notification of referrals to the Head of Planning Services by 1.00pm on Tuesday 21st January 2003, with any applications being referred to this Meeting of the Committee. The item was referred by Cllr T Livings

The item which was referred is appended as it appeared in the Weekly List together with a plan.

- 9.1 **Rayleigh Town Council** - unable to comment as they are the applicant.

NOTES

- 9.2 This application proposes a hardstanding measuring some 10.7m x 27.0m situated towards the south eastern corner of King George's Playing Field. It is located just east of the existing Basketball area, granted permission (Ref: 1/651/FUL) in December 2001. Its longer axis is aligned roughly North-South. It is understood from background discussions and a site meeting with the applicant, that the concrete hardstanding is to be the location for a skateboarding facility, including other bespoke equipment and ramps for such use. The particulars of the application do not expressly detail such a use, but it is being considered on this basis.
- 9.3 Members will recall an earlier application for such a hardstanding for skateboarding purposes. That was of a similar size, but positioned much closer to the western boundary of the Playing Field, about 15m from the Doctors' Surgery. That application was recommended for approval by Officers, but refused at Committee, due to the noise and disturbance it would engender in close proximity to the Doctors' Surgery, pedestrian thoroughfare and residential properties.

- 9.4 On Appeal, the Inspector noted the quite distinctive clattering noise of skateboarding activities, together with the general noise of people congregating in numbers. He felt that 70m distance to the dwellings in King George's Close was sufficiently distant that an unacceptable loss of amenity would not arise, but he felt that 14m from the two rose gardens, commonly quiet contemplative areas in recreation grounds, would result in unacceptable noise and associated activity, harming these areas. Similarly, he considered 15m distance from the Doctors' Surgery would lead to an unacceptable degree of noise and disturbance within the Surgery, where a quiet environment is necessary for medical diagnosis and treatment.
- 9.5 Assessing the proposed location, the distance to the Doctors' Surgery is 60m approximately, which is considered sufficiently remote as to not cause unreasonable loss of amenity. The proximity to the rose gardens is very similar at 15m, albeit that these gardens may provide more of a visual entrance way rather than the quiet contemplative area noted by the Inspector. The distance to the maisonettes/flats in King George's Court is approximately 40m at its closest. The occupiers of units on the ground floor have personal semi-private sitting out areas outside their units. It is considered, weighing up these issues, that the combined loss of amenity of those enjoying the rose gardens and to the occupiers of the dwellings to the east, amounts to an unreasonable level of harm of the surrounding area by reason of noise. It is also noted that the **Head of Housing, Health & Community Care** recommends a noise attenuation scheme, but accepts in practice such a scheme may not be feasible.
- 9.6 If a skateboard facility proved popular here, it should be borne in mind that this will help decrease the number of youths that use Rayleigh High Street and Public Footpaths for skateboarding.
- 9.7 **Head of Housing, Health & Community Care** notes, should the area be used for skateboarding ramps, there is potential for noise nuisance. The proposed facility is within 100m of residential properties, whereas there are cases reported elsewhere of noise problems at a distance in excess of 300m. A noise impact assessment should be carried out prior to any works commencing. Discussions to ascertain the applicant's intentions would be beneficial. The following Condition and Informative recommended:
1. No skateboarding ramps shall be erected on the hardstanding until a noise attenuation scheme for protecting surrounding noise sensitive properties has been submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Any works that form part of the approved scheme shall be completed before any skateboarding is permitted and shall be maintained in the approved form while the hardstanding is in use for skateboarding purposes.

Informative

The applicants should be advised that it is difficult to provide noise attenuation for skateboarding areas. The most effective attenuation would be by the provision of barriers, but these will have safety and visual impact implications. It may not be feasible to provide adequate attenuation at the proposed location.

- 9.8 Hence it is important that a noise impact assessment is carried out prior to considering use of the hardstanding as a skateboarding area.
- 9.9 **Highway Authority** - No objection.
- 9.10 Two residents of King George's Court object (one it is stated on behalf of the residents whose retirement flats face the area) to the noisy activity of skateboarders, roller skaters, etc., performing their exercises and using the walkways in the Park, vying with pedestrians and children in doing so. It is suggested such a facility be located elsewhere, say, near the children's playground towards Bull Lane, or on land adjacent Market Lanes. Also, on visual grounds and inappropriateness.
- 9.11 All statutory consultations, including neighbour notification time periods have elapsed, although a discretionary site notice was only recently displayed and does not elapse until 5th February 2003.

REFUSE

- 1 The proposed location of the hardstanding for skateboarding is considered to be unsuitable, as it would be detrimental to the amenities currently enjoyed in the area of the rose gardens and the residential properties to the East, by virtue of the noise and disturbance that the use of such a facility would engender.

Relevant Development Plan Policies and Proposals:

LT3, H24, of the Rochford District Council Local Plan First Review

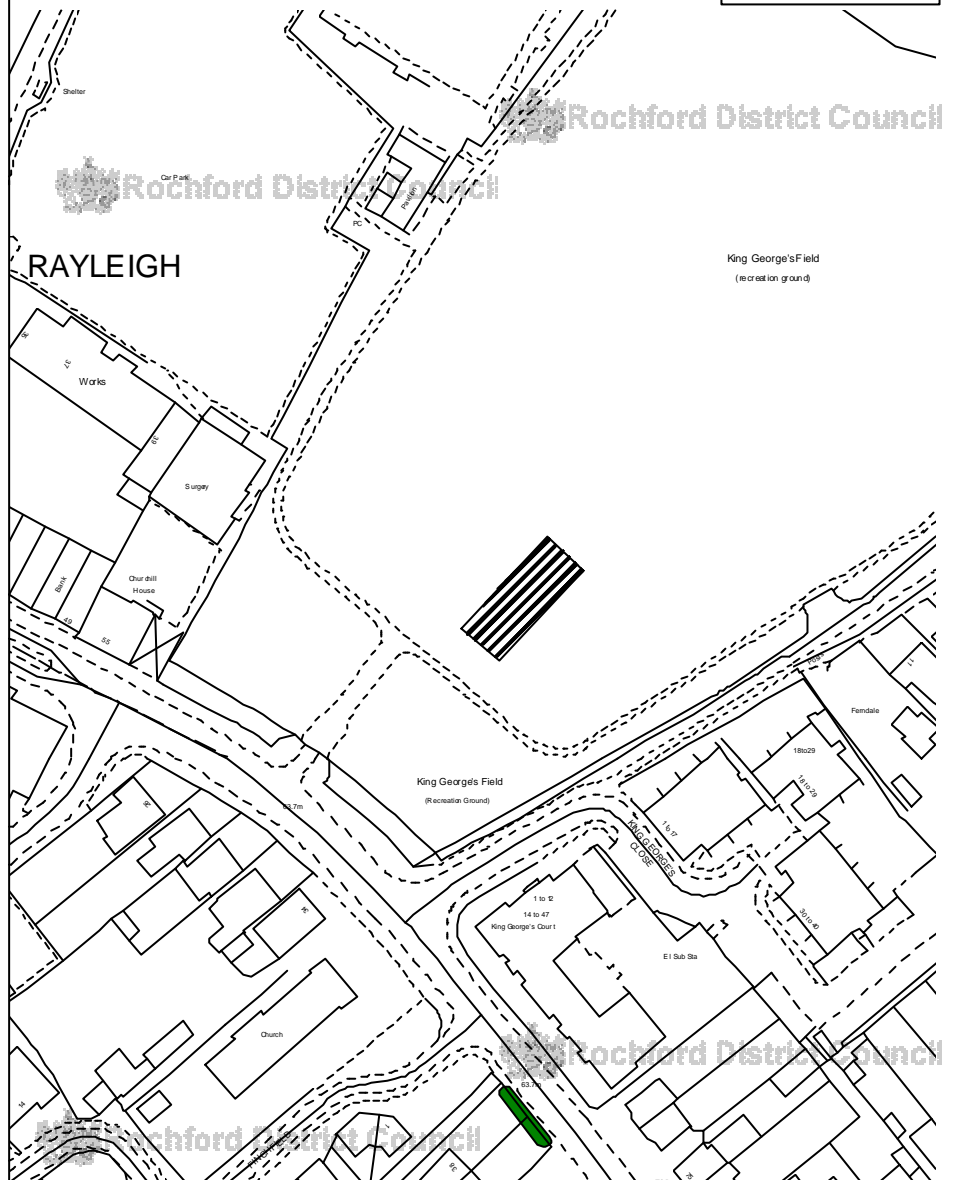


Shaun Scrutton
Head of Planning Services

The local Ward Member(s) for the above application are Cllr. J M Pullen Cllr. Mrs M J Webster

For further information please contact Kevin Steptoe on (01702) 546366.

02/01088/FUL



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