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<b>Platt</b> Borough Green And Long Mill	<b>561777 156899</b>	<b>08.08.2006</b>	<b>TM/06/02631/FL</b>
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Proposal:	Non-compliance with condition 3 of planning permission TM/05/00929/FL (rebuilding of Scout HQ) to allow use by certain non-scout groups
Location:	Stonehouse Field Long Mill Lane Platt Sevenoaks Kent
Applicant:	Platt Parish Council

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## 1. Description:

1.1 This application relates to a proposed replacement scout hut granted planning permission under TM/05/00929. It will be a new hut measuring 23.5m by 8m. It will have a low pitch roof to a maximum height of 4.44m. The roof and walls are to be clad with box profile steel sheeting in "juniper green".

1.2 The new hut as approved included a main activity area, a kitchen, a small meeting room and 3 toilets plus a store for trailers and other equipment.

1.3 That planning permission was subject to a condition replicated from TM/87/0501 which is the planning permission for the hut *in situ*. This stated:

*The premises shall be used only by a scout group and associated activities.*

*Reason: To justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt.*

1.4 On behalf of the local Scout Group, the Parish Council has sought to vary this condition as follows:

- *To permit the use of the premises to those organisations whose activities are principally centred in Platt Parish Recreation Ground*
- *Restricting use in this manner will prevent increases in vehicular traffic and avoids poaching users from Platt Memorial Hall*
- The condition will exclude the following organisations which use the current building and leave a much needed facility underused:

1.5 Additional information on the usage of the existing scout hut which it is intended to continue on the replacement scout hut has been submitted as follows:

*Current usage is*

*Scouts: Three evenings a week*

*Guides: One evening a week*

*Football Club: For post match hospitality only.*

*Platt Junior Cricket club: For post match hospitality and for training sessions for the younger members when the weather is inclement.*

*Ramblers Association :As a meeting place prior to setting off on a walk. (Once or twice a year)*

*Birthday Parties: For children of primary school age who are members of the Scout Group ( Approx. five time a year)*

*Platt School PTA: HQ facilities are used when PTA hold fund raising activities in the Recreation ground. For example Summer Ball in a Marquee and Firework displays. (Approx. three times a year).*

## **2. The Site:**

- 2.1 The site is in the MGB, Green Wedge and ALLI.
- 2.2 The site is a raised area of grass on the SW corner of Stonehouse Field. Access is via a track from Long Mill Lane. There is a drop off area and limited car parking on an area of gravel.
- 2.3 To the north, south and east is recreational land owned by the Parish Council. To the west is a garden to a dwelling called Rowan Wood which has a number of mature trees close to the common boundary, subject to a TPO.

## **3. Planning History (selected):**

- 3.1 TM/05/00929/FL Grant With Conditions 27.07.05  
Rebuilding of Scout HQ
- 3.2 TM/94/1410FL Grant with conditions 12.01.095  
Renewal of planning permission TM/89/0873 (use of barn for recreational and sports facilities) due to expire 30.11.94
- 3.3 TM/89/873 Grant with conditions 06.12.89  
Renewal of permission TM/87/1535 - use of barn for recreational and sports facilities for further period of five years from 30 November 1989.
- 3.4 TM/87/501 Grant with conditions 28.09.87  
Scout Headquarters
- 3.5 TM/82/490 Grant with conditions 29.07.82  
Change of use of land to open recreational use.
- 3.6 TM/78/163 Grant with conditions 1.06.78  
Change of use of agricultural land to recreational area incorporating a car park.

**4. Consultees:**

- 4.1 PC: The PC is the applicant. The relaxation sought will benefit both the scouts and the parish.
- 4.2 KCC (Highways): The application site is located some distance, from the public highway. The site plan shows an access and parking area within the site that could accommodate four or five cars as shown. The access to Long Mill Lane is existing and in current use, therefore although it is not ideal I feel that the use will be limited by the site limitations and is unlikely to have a material affect. I would raise no objections to this proposal.
- 4.3 DHH: An hours of use condition may be appropriate, especially as the scout hut does not necessarily require a specific licence under the Licensing Act 2003 which can better control noise. I would suggest a last use of 21:30 would enable functions to go on to a suitable time, without adversely affecting local residents.
- 4.4 DL: It would be useful to clarify the extent to which football players would be able to use the building as there is considered to be a need for the junior football teams to access changing accommodation here and if the scout hut could be used, this would be advantageous.
- 4.5 Private Reps + Departure press and site notice (10/0S/1X/2R); One letter has been received, summarised below:
- it seems appropriate to allow the existing users of the Scout Premises to continue to do so. On a more positive note, we feel that any support and assistance that the Scout Group can be given in terms of having a new HQ is extremely worthwhile and will boost the moral of both the adults and the young people attached to the Group. However we had no idea that the football teams used the Scout hut but assumed they used the changing rooms on the field. The Borough Green junior football club generate a lot of noise on occasion at matches and their training sessions. We wish to mention it in case at a later date we have reason to complain about the noise/swearing and we are then told we should have commented on this in our reply to the planning application. We would also oppose any permission to allow the premises to be hired out for any regular events which will generate unreasonable noise of an evening e.g. discos, band practice etc. We know that it is not the Group's intention to allow the premises to be used in such away; however a Group is only as good as its Leaders. It could be that in a few years time the whole of the Leadership team may have changed and the new team may not be so considerate to its neighbours, so thought for the future needs to be given to the application in question.
- 4.6 Three objections make the following points:
- The access is totally unsuitable, being very restricted and dangerous.

- It is miraculous that it is accident free with the volume of traffic which uses it, particularly on Thursday evenings.
- Additional functions will only aggravate the situation- it should have been used solely for scouts, cubs and guides only.
- Large lorries which try to deliver to the site have damaged boundary fencing.
- The decision to restrict the use was correct and should not be changed.
- Extra traffic will be drawn to the area which will need more car parks, improved roads and other services.
- The use is not needed- there are changing facilities, a pavilion a warehouse and the memorial hall could be utilised.
- The use of the hut by other groups will further weaken the scout movement, which is in decline.
- Platt PC has used local taxpayers money to pay for these planning applications on Green Belt land.
- It is understood that WREN will pay for the rebuilding of the scout hut (using landfill tax revenue).
- It seems there is a price to pay for taking money from a mystery donor, the influx of outside organisations.
- I have never witnessed the hut being used for post match hospitality.
- Potentially there are 620 footballers and cricketers using Stonehouse Field at one time or another so the suggestion that there will be no increase in traffic is utter nonsense.
- There is lots of crime on the site.
- If there are only 19 scouts, why is a building costing £80,000 being proposed?
- Every organisation mentioned will have a chairperson who does not live in Platt and they will not be willing to police Platt as if it were their own parish.

## **5. Determining Issues:**

- 5.1 The relevant policies in terms of the MGB location are P2/16 and MGB3 and RS5 of the KSP. In terms of the traffic and amenity impact of the request to vary the condition, Policy P4/11 of the TMBLP applies.

- 5.2 The erection of a scout hut is not an appropriate use as defined in PPG2. The 2005 proposal was a departure from the development plan. However, it was considered that the replacement *in situ* of an existing scout hut in existence since 1987 was a special circumstance in favour of this development.
- 5.3 The key issue in this current application is therefore whether when the new hut is in place; there would be any more harm to the Green Belt from its additional use by a limited number of recreational etc groups that already use the playing field. It appears from the applicant's supporting statement that these are pre-existing uses of the hut which would have been contrary to the condition on TM/87/501. However, no complaints have been received relating to that breach and I am satisfied that subject to the restrictions referred to in the supporting statement, that any harm will not be significant enough to warrant refusal.
- 5.4 The objectors mention concerns with traffic safety and congestion at the site entrance to Long Mill Lane. It is certainly true that this is single width and visibility is restricted. However, KCC (Highways) does not object on the basis that the access is long established and significant traffic increases are not envisaged
- 5.5 On the basis that the use of the hut is restricted as suggested, there should not be a significant increase in traffic and there is an argument that the intensity of traffic use of the access may be reduced if groups such as the cricket teams and football teams have a place for post match hospitality because this may elongate the period of time during which the same number of vehicles will use the site.
- 5.6 In conclusion, it is considered that this revised scheme with a limited variation of the permitted use is supported subject to an hours of use condition as suggested by DHH.

**6. Recommendation:**

- 6.1 **Grant Planning Permission** as detailed by supporting letter and enclosures date stamped 08.08.09; emails dated 09.09.06 and 26.09.06; site location drawing 0409-10 subject to the following conditions:

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 2 All materials used externally shall accord with the approved plans, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. (D003)

Reason: To ensure that the development does not harm the character and appearance of the existing building or visual amenity of the locality.

- 3 The premises shall be used only by the scout group and other groups currently associated with Platt Recreation Ground and use shall be limited to specific activities as detailed in the supporting statement date stamped 08.08.09 and email received 26.09.06.

Reason: To justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

- 4 The scout hut hereby approved shall not be used in the evening after 2130hrs unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. (I003\*)

Reason: To avoid unreasonable disturbance to nearby residential properties.

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