
Aylesford **573244 159038** **10.01.2005** **TM/05/00084/FL**
Aylesford

Proposal: Erection of changing rooms with associated facilities
Location: 23 Forstal Road Aylesford Kent ME20 7AU
Applicant: Aylesford Football Club

1. Description:

- 1.1 Full planning permission is sought to remove the existing building (the former parish council office) and erect a single storey building incorporating changing rooms and associated facilities for use in association with the adjacent sports field.
- 1.2 The building would be positioned in a similar location to the existing structure but would have a footprint of approximately twice the size. Several trees would need to be removed in association with the development, although there would be some new tree planting.
- 1.3 The proposed siting of the building has been adjusted since the application was originally submitted in order to achieve a more satisfactory relationship to those trees which are now the subject of a TPO.

2. The Site:

- 2.1 The site is located just outside the built confines of Aylesford and the Conservation Area in an Area of Local Landscape Importance. It also falls within the Strategic Gap. The site is currently occupied by a single storey temporary style building in use by the Parish Council.

3. Planning History:

- 3.1 TM/88/1062 Approved 07.09.1988
Temporary Parish office.
- 3.2 TM/93/0046 Approved 29.10.1993
Renewal of TM/88/1062 for Parish office.
- 3.3 TM/03/02225/FL Approved 10.09.2003
Single storey side and rear extensions to community centre.

4. Consultees:

- 4.1 PC: No objection in principle but the walnut tree should be preserved. The Council also queries if there is enough room for access by the grass maintenance vehicles on to the playing field.

4.2 KCC (Highways): This application is to remove a temporary structure and construct a single storey building to provide new changing rooms, with ancillary facilities for the football club, including a meeting room and small office, the parish council being the land owners.

The site plan shows a parking layout with 48 car parking spaces that will be shared by other users of the site.

I therefore raise no objections to this application subject to a standard condition relating to provision and retention of the parking spaces.

4.3 KCC Archaeological Officer: The site of the application lies within the medieval settlement of Aylesford. Remains associated with medieval activity may be revealed during groundworks and I recommend a standard safeguarding condition.

4.4 Private Reps: 43/0X/0S/2R, two individual letters and a petition containing 10 signatures from 8 households have been received. Objections have been raised for the following reasons:

- Further building is unnecessary and unwanted.
- The site of the temporary parish council building should revert of offices.
- Height of the building.
- Changing facilities already exist within the Community Centre and there is a lack of need for further facilities.
- Lack of parking provision.

5. Determining Issues:

5.1 The proposal represents a Departure from adopted policy as it involves development in the Strategic Gap and outside the defined confines of the village. The proposal involves development in the rural area. As such it needs to be assessed against policy RS5 of the Kent Structure Plan which prohibits development outside rural settlements unless it can be classed as one of the justified exceptions. The main issue therefore is whether the proposed development is acceptable in terms of Kent Structure Plan policy RS5 and TMBLP policy P6/12 (relating to recreational development in the countryside) and whether these considerations successfully overcome any potential objections relating to development in the Strategic Gap (policy P2/18 refers).

5.2 There is undoubtedly a much larger building than that which currently exists on the site and due to its size and ridged roof will be noticeable to those living nearby. The scale of the facilities to be provided would seem appropriate for the users of the adjacent sports ground.

- 5.3 In terms of policy RS5 although the proposal does not readily fall into any of the identified "exception" categories, it could in my view be regarded as the provision of a facility for which a rural location is justified. It could be argued that the location at the edge of the village adjacent to other development is less damaging to the rural landscape than if the building were to be located further away from the village. The application has also been considered in relation to TMBLP policy P6/12 concerning proposals for new recreation-related development in rural areas. This policy identifies circumstances in which such development can be justified. In this case the scale of the development is small scale and the minimum practical size required to serve the intended purpose regarding use of the playing field.
- 5.4 The building has a relatively low profile and would be of a similar scale to the existing Community Centre building. The location on the edge of the playing field would mean that it would be seen in association with the existing buildings and would not stand out in the landscape. I do not therefore consider that it would materially harm the landscape character of the ALLI or the adjacent Conservation Area. For similar reasons I do not think this building would be perceived as materially extending the built-up area into the Strategic Gap in such a way as to prejudice the objective underlying policy P2/18.
- 5.5 A further issue in the determination of the application has been the relationship of the proposed building with the adjacent trees, 3 of which are now protected. Following a visit to the site it was clear that there was a limited amount of space available in which to accommodate the building. A revised arrangement has been found where the building is closer to the adjacent boundary fence but slightly further away from the protected trees. The revised arrangement is not ideal but represents an acceptable compromise situation which, with appropriate conditions, should not result in harm to the welfare of the trees.
- 5.6 The comments of the neighbours have been given careful consideration but in this instance it is considered that the introduction of a new building in this location would not significantly harm the visual amenities of the area or the residential amenities of the occupants of adjacent properties as to justify withholding consent.
- 5.7 In the light of all these considerations, I conclude that the balance lies in favour of granting planning permission.

6. Recommendation:

- 6.1 **Grant Planning Permission** as outlined in the submitted details received 10.01.2005 as amended by letter dated 05.02.2005 and plans numbered 1223/FRA/03A _ 04A received 06.04.2005, subject to the following conditions:
- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five 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.

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 use shall not be commenced, nor the premises occupied, until the area shown on the submitted layout as vehicle parking space has been provided, surfaced and drained. Thereafter it shall be kept available for such use and no permanent development, whether or not permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order amending, revoking or re-enacting that Order) shall be carried out on the land so shown or in such a position as to preclude vehicular access to this reserved parking space.

Reason: Development without provision of adequate accommodation for the parking of vehicles is likely to lead to hazardous on-street parking.

- 4 The developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to any archaeologist nominated by the Local Planning Authority and shall allow him/her to observe the excavation and record items of interest and finds. The developer will inform the Local Planning Authority of the start date of construction works on site not less than two weeks before the commencement of such works.

Reason: In the interests of archaeological research.

- 5 The development hereby approved shall be carried out in such a manner as to avoid damage to the existing trees, including their root system, or other planting to be retained as part of the landscaping scheme by observing the specification set out in the applicants agents letter dated 05.04.2005 and the annotation on drawing no. 1223/FRA/03/A.

Reason: Pursuant to Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to protect the appearance and character of the site and locality.

Contact: Hilary Johnson