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Proposal:	Outline Application for demolition of old social club premises and provision of new facilities for recreational use
Location:	Wouldham Social Club Knowle Road Wouldham Rochester Kent
Applicant:	Wouldham Parish Council

1. Description:

- 1.1 This is an outline planning application for the demolition of a former social club and its replacement with a new recreational use premises for Wouldham Parish Council. All matters are reserved apart from means of access, which is to be via the recreation ground car park off Knowle Road.
- 1.2 The application site incorporates the recreation ground car park, as the PC wishes to have opportunity to site the new building in a different location. This is partly due to the PC exploring the possibility of providing a service road to the rear of the residential properties in the High Street to ease existing parking problems. The PC envisages that if the service road is needed, then it would encroach over the site of the current social club, rather than the recreation ground car park. Therefore, the replacement building would be likely to encroach into the car park.
- 1.3 The PC has stated that the replacement building will be suitable for recreational and youth purposes, with the building being adaptable for sports use but also able to be used for youth purposes on some evenings.

2. The Site:

- 2.1 The application site lies partly within the Rural Settlement confines of Wouldham and partly within the Strategic Gap and an Important Green Space. The existing social club lies within the confines, whilst the car park lies within the Strategic Gap and IGS. The site lies on the northern side of Knowle Road. To the north and east lies the recreation ground, whilst to the west and south lie residential properties and a public house.
- 2.2 The former social club is a single storey building in a very poor state of repair. The rear section of the building has already been demolished and the rear elevation of the remaining part of the Social Club has not been made good since the demolition works. The ground within the car park and former social club site is relatively level, whilst the land to the east rises up across the recreation ground.
- 2.3 The relevant policies are P2/18, P4/10, P6/2, P6/12 & P6/22 of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Local Plan 1998 and SS3 and QL1 of the Kent & Medway Structure Plan 2006.

3. Planning History:

- 3.1 TM/91/0039 Planning Permission Not Required
Section 64 Determination: Refurbishment of existing car park.
- 3.2 TM/90/0424 Approved 08.06.1990
Retention of free standing portacabin.
- 3.3 TM/86/1736 Approved 26.01.1987
Free standing portacabin.
- 3.4 TM/85/0838 Approved 30.09.1985
Use of part of recreation ground to provide rear access road to serve properties east of the High Street.
- 3.5 TM/85/0032 Approved 28.02.1985
Extension of existing car park for use in association with recreation ground.
- 3.6 TM/78/46 Approved 07.03.1979
Rebuilding of part and extension to Wouldham Social Club.
- 3.7 MK/4/73/908 Approved 18.02.1974
Use of Wouldham Social Club for a playgroup.
- 3.8 MK/4/72/702 Approved 18.09.1972
Extension to form bar.
- 3.9 MK/4/63/103 Approved 04.02.1963
Social hall and changing rooms on site of demolished Jubilee Hall.
- 3.10 MK/4/50/346 Approved 23.11.1950
Tractor and store shed for Recreation Ground.
- 3.11 MK/4/49/223 Approved 31.08.1949
Sanitary accommodation to Jubilee Hall.

4. Consultees:

- 4.1 DHH: No objection.
- 4.2 DL: This application is supported and should assist the PC in delivering improved sports facilities within this area. It is also hoped that the proposal assists in the delivery of the target within the Borough Council's Playing Pitch Strategy to establish secured, regular use of the football pitch on Wouldham Recreation Ground.

4.3 KCC (Highways): The exact position of the proposed building is not shown. The proposal will have the same use as the existing. In principle, I raise no objections to this proposal, which is likely to have use of the existing parking facilities.

4.4 SW: No objection.

4.5 GEC: No response.

4.6 Private Reps: 19/0X/0S/0R.

4.7 Press Notice: No response.

4.8 A8 Site Notice: No response.

5. Determining Issues:

5.1 The main issues to be considered are whether the principle of the proposal is appropriate, whether the proposal will detract from the visual amenity of the locality and whether the proposal will result in hazardous highway conditions.

5.2 The principle of redeveloping the existing social club site with a replacement recreational building for the Parish Council would be acceptable if the development were to take place within the village confines of Wouldham. However, the PC is seeking consent to erect the replacement building either on part of the existing car park, or on the site of the existing social club or over a combination of both sites. The erection of a building on the recreation ground car park would constitute a departure from the TMBLP, as it lies outside the rural settlement confines of Wouldham, within the Strategic Gap and an Important Green Space.

5.3 In particular, policy P2/18 of the TMBLP 1998 will not permit development within the Strategic Gap, if this were to significantly extend the built confines of an existing rural settlement. Whilst the replacement building might be sited within the Strategic Gap, in my opinion, it would not have a materially greater visual impact on the Strategic Gap than the existing building, as no additional building is proposed, although I acknowledge that the built form of the village would be slightly extended. I do not consider that this a significant extension of the built confines, such as to harm the function of the Strategic Gap and, on this basis, I conclude that it would not be contrary to policy P2/18.

5.4 The site also lies partly within an Important Green Space and is subject to policy P4/10, which will not permit development unless the need for the development is overriding and the proposals would not adversely affect the contribution which the space makes to the character and quality of the townscape. Whilst the site does include part of the Important Green Space, this part of the application site is currently the car park, rather than the recreation ground itself. The car park does not significantly contribute to the quality of the open green space and development

on this space will not significantly harm the quality of the Important Green Space overall, subject to the provision of enhanced landscaping on the boundaries of the car park.

- 5.5 The PC has requested a more flexible approach for this outline application for a replacement recreational building, as they are exploring the opportunity for providing a rear service road to ease existing parking problems for the residential properties to the east of the High Street. Should the PC resolve to provide the rear access road (and subject, of course, to any necessary planning permission being granted), then it is likely to be sited over part of the Social Club site, which would mean the replacement building being potentially relocated onto the car park. Members will note from the planning history, that planning permission was previously granted for a rear access road in 1985, which was to be accessed through the existing car park. Whilst this permission was not implemented and it is more than 20 years since it was last granted, I consider the principle of rear access should be considered as a factor in the determination of this application, given its potential community benefits.
- 5.6 The replacement building will be used for recreational and community facilities, including sports facilities to serve the adjoining recreational fields, (which are strongly supported by the DL) as well as providing youth facilities. The proposed replacement building will also serve the whole community, rather than just the private members of the former Social Club. The principle of such recreational and community facilities in a rural area is also supported by policies P6/12 & P6/22 of the TMBLP 1998 subject to meeting detailed criteria. However, given the outline nature of the application and the circumstances present, I consider special circumstances do exist to allow for the replacement, even though this might be located outside the confines and within a rural area.
- 5.7 In highway terms, KCC Highways raises no objection to the proposed development, which will potentially impact on the current parking provision. However, dependant upon on the size and siting of the new building, KCC Highways does not consider that the development will result in adverse parking conditions. Such matters of the size and siting of the building, along with parking provision will be Reserved Matters, for future consideration.
- 5.8 The replacement building and its potential resiting will not adversely affect the residential amenity of any nearby dwellings. The proposed replacement building is replacing a private social club, which did not have any restrictions on hours of use.
- 5.9 In light of the above considerations, I am satisfied that the proposal is an acceptable form of development given the community benefits of a new recreational, sport and youth building. Therefore, I support this proposal.

6. Recommendation:

6.1 **Grant Outline Planning Permission** as detailed by letter dated the 22 May 2006 and by plans received on the 24 May 2006 subject to the following conditions:

1 Approval of details of the siting, design and external appearance of the building(s), and the landscaping of the site (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: No such approval has been given.

2 Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the Local Planning Authority before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In pursuance of Section 92(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3 The development hereby permitted shall be begun either before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission, or before the expiration of two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved, whichever is the later.

Reason: In pursuance of Section 92(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

4 The details submitted in pursuance of Condition 1 shall show land, reserved for parking or garaging in accordance with the adopted County Parking Standards. None of the buildings shall be occupied until this area has been provided, surfaced and drained in accordance with the approved details. Thereafter no permanent development, whether or not permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order amending, revoking and re-enacting that Order) shall be carried out on the land so shown (other than the erection of a private garage or garages) or in such a position as to preclude vehicular access to reserved vehicle parking area.

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

5 The details submitted in pursuance of condition 1 shall be accompanied by a scheme of landscaping and boundary treatment which shall include a tree survey specifying the position, height, spread and species of all trees on the site, provision for the retention and protection of existing trees and shrubs and a date for completion of any new planting and boundary treatment. The scheme as approved by the Authority shall be implemented by the approved date or such other date as may be agreed in writing by the Authority. Any trees or plants which

within 10 years of planting are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Authority gives written consent to any variation.

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

- 6 No development shall take place until details and samples of materials to be used externally have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, and the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

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

- 7 No development shall take place until details of slab levels have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, and the work shall be carried out in strict accordance with those details

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

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