

East Malling & Larkfield **570374 159382** **30 October 2006** **TM/06/03528/DR3**
Larkfield North

Proposal: Extension to existing building to provide new stores for sports hall (internal existing stores will be lost due to works to improve access)
Location: Larkfield Leisure Centre New Hythe Lane Larkfield Aylesford Kent ME20 6RH
Applicant: Central Services Director

1. Description:

1.1 Permission is sought to construct an extension for storage purposes on the north side of the building. This would measure approximately 20.4m in length by 6.3m in depth and would reach a maximum height of 5.1m adjacent to the main building. The extension is designed with a mono-pitched roof and finished in brick work with cladding to match the existing. The extension is to be constructed in association with internal alterations to make the building more easily accessible to wheelchair users. This involves removing an elevated walkway under which there is a storage area. The extension is therefore required in order to replace the lost storage space.

2. The Site:

2.1 Larkfield Leisure Centre lies on the western side of New Hythe Lane, to the north of the M20 and to the south of houses in Brooklands Road. The complex falls within the urban area and is identified on the Local Plan as being safeguarded for the expansion of leisure facilities under policy P8/5.

3. Planning History:

TM/01/00741/DR3 Grant With Conditions 14 May 2001

Store extension to existing dance studio

TM/78/10232/OUT No Objection 5 September 1978

Outline application for indoor sports centre.

TM/79/10857/FUL No Objection 3 April 1979

Details of overspill car park.

TM/82/11086/OLD grant with conditions 26 April 1982

Regulation 4 application by Tonbridge & Malling District Council 'siting of portable building to provide additional offices for temporary period of 3 years'.

TM/83/11105/OLD grant with conditions 18 May 1983

Regulation 4 application by Tonbridge and Malling District Council for erection of prefabricated building for use as a mini-gym for temporary five year period.

TM/84/10517/FUL grant with conditions 20 December 1984

Regulation 4 application by Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council for single storey extension for health & fitness studio and upgrade and extend car parking area.

TM/85/10331/OLD grant with conditions 22 May 1985

Regulation 4 application for continued stationing of portable building for 1 year to provide additional office accommodation

TM/85/10826/FUL No Objection 3 October 1985

Alterations and extension of administration and catering facilities and provision of combat/functions room.

TM/90/10386/OLD grant with conditions 6 July 1990

Application under Reg. 4: Erection of detached building for use as store.

TM/93/00767/DR3 grant with conditions 28 February 1994

Extend existing leisure facilities comprising two glass backed squash courts and to refurbish the existing fitness room, convert existing squash court to fitness room and add a conservatory extension for a new fitness

TM/94/00805/DR3 grant with conditions 28 June 1994

Extension to existing leisure facilities to provide a 25m swimming pool, plant room, new lounge and children's area, and refurbishment of existing pool

TM/98/00231/DR3 Grant With Conditions 16 March 1998

extension to existing creche to form under 2's area with toilets

TM/04/01706/DR3 Grant With Conditions 28 June 2004

Extension to existing building to form childrens "soft play" area

TM/04/03010/RD Grant 14 October 2004

Details of materials pursuant to condition 2 of TM/04/01706/DR3 (extension to existing building to form childrens 'soft play' area)

4. Consultees:

- 4.1 DHH: No comment as TMBC is the applicant.
- 4.2 Parish Council: supports the application and raises no objections. Notes the path should be kept clear during construction.
- 4.3 Reps: no letters received.
- 4.4 KCC Highways Engineer: No highway issues to address.
- 4.5 KCC: PROW Officer: Originally noted that the proposed extension would require the excavation of part of the grassed embankment on which Public Footpath MR93 runs and that the proposed work will either reduce this width or put the path too close to the edge of the steep bank. The existence of MR93 is a material consideration and appropriate weight should be given to this fact when determining this application. Confirmation has now been received that the amended plans are acceptable in terms of the PROW.

5. Determining Issues:

- 5.1 As the site lies within an area covered by policy P8/5 of the Local Plan the principle of extending the Leisure Centre is acceptable. It is noted that no new sports facilities will be provided and that the extra internal space created by the removal of the sports hall storage area will be used to make the centre more easily accessible for wheelchair users.
- 5.2 The proposed storage area having a floor area of approximately 128.5 square metres represents a fair sized addition but is relatively modest when compared to the overall size of the centre. Although it may appear as an add on, the addition will be finished in materials to match the existing and the functional appearance should not materially harm the appearance of the building.
- 5.3 It is important to consider the impact of the extension on the residential amenities of the occupants of the houses in the southern part of Brooklands Road. These properties have a slab level approximately 2.2m higher than that of the Leisure Centre, according to the submitted plans. The roof of the proposed extension is likely to be visible above the boundary fences against the backdrop of the main building. The plans show the extension being set approximately 7.5m away from the boundary at the nearest point. It is considered that whilst the outlook will alter from the houses in Brooklands Road, this should not be detrimental to existing residential amenities.
- 5.4 The plans have been considered by the KCC PROW as footpath MK93 runs around the perimeter of the site. The PROW Officer noted on the original plans that the extent of the addition would affect the 2m recorded width of the footpath. The plans have been amended to show the retention of the 2m wide footpath

which is acceptable to the PROW Officer. This amendment involves an increase in the gradient of the bank leading up to the footpath. A galvanised steel pedestrian barrier has been provided along part of the top of this bank in the interest of safety. The Building Control Officer has indicated that the height of the safety rail at the top of the slope would not be controllable under their legislation.

5.5 It is concluded that the proposal in the amended form is acceptable in terms of policies P8/5 and 4/11.

6. Recommendation:

6.1 Grant Planning Permission as outlined on drawings numbered L-01 revision P1 received 30.10.06 and drawing A-01 P2 received 18.12.06 subject to the following conditions:

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 match those of the existing building.

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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