

COMMITTEE REPORT

Planning Committee on
Item No
Case Number

13 January, 2016

15/3572

SITE INFORMATION

RECEIVED: 22 July, 2015

WARD: Willesden Green

PLANNING AREA: Willesden Consultative Forum

LOCATION: ROUNDWOOD PARK, Harlesden Road, London

PROPOSAL: Proposed concrete skatepark within the grounds of Roundwood Park (to the north of Roundwood Youth Centre) with associated seating areas and soft landscaping

APPLICANT: Brent Council

CONTACT: Wheelscape Ltd

PLAN NO'S: See condition 2

SELECTED SITE PLANS SELECTED SITE PLANS

SITE LOCATION PLAN



3D VISUALISATION



RECOMMENDATIONS

Approval

, subject to the conditions set out in the Draft Decision Notice.

A) PROPOSAL

The proposal is a concrete skate park of 488sqm within the southern part of the Roundwood Park annexe. Grass bunds are proposed to be built up to the raised edges.

B) EXISTING

The site is the southern end of Roundwood park in the park 'annexe'. A path runs east to west across the site and the proposed location for the skate park is on the southern side of this path, north of Roundwood Youth Club.

Roundwood Park to the north is a Grade II Listed Park, laid out and opened in the 1890's and added to the register on 24th September 2001. The annexe to the south is not part of the listing.

The annexe is identified as a public open space but while the park to the north is a site of importance for nature conservation the annexe is not. It is approximately 3.5 hectares and consists of an open grass area with a tree lined perimeter and a path through the centre.

D) SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

The key issues for consideration are:

- The principle of the proposed location in the annexe of Roundwood Park.
- The level of demand for this facility for older children and teenagers.
- The location and visibility of the skate park and the possibility of anti social behaviour.

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

No relevant planning history

CONSULTATIONS

A site notice was put up on the gates at either end of the park on 17th September 2015.

8 individuals have objected to the application from 6 addresses on Longstone Avenue. One of these residents with mixed views about the proposal also submitted comments under 'support'.

Concerns raised include the following:

- The consultation on the application was insufficient and the site notice was not in place from the 17th Sept as is claims.
- The proposal is too close to the houses on Longstone Avenue and the noise of skateboards on concrete would be a nuisance
- The park is not closed at night so noise could be at any time
- It is right in the middle of an area used for football and other sports
- Other sites would be more suitable e.g. adjacent to the basketball courts or replacing the derelict theatre in the main part of the park which is closed at night, further from houses, better screened and has facilities
- Concern that points raised during consultation process have not been addressed, particularly the chosen location
- The space is used for temporary activities and events and this status would be lost to a permanent and irreversible concrete structure.
- When used by the funfair the space will be crucial to maintaining a right of way through the annexe
- The air ambulance has been able to land here as it can be kept safely clear
- The skate park will not enhance the open space and is not currently an activity associated with the annex
- The application should include an option appraisal, a cost benefit analysis, an analysis of the social and environmental impact on the neighbourhood

- No discussions have taken place with the police or other London Boroughs with experience of skateparks
- The skatepark is a risk to health & safety by not having immediate emergency access
- The provision of seats in an area currently of wet grass will encourage gatherings, drug deals are usually only observable by the gate
- Have seen no evidence of skateboarders in either part of the park
- No empirical justification for proceeding with what must be a costly scheme
- No information provided regarding likely numbers and use demonstrating demand
- If it is highly used what research has been undertaken regarding parking
- The skatepark will be an eyesore in what is currently a pleasant piece of parkland used by footballers, joggers and other leisure pursuers, dog walkers, etc
- The skatepark is poorly designed
- Will there be security lights and will there be a gate that can be locked?
- Neighbours were expecting further consultation before the application
- At Greyhound Road residents fought for a gate on the basketball court as the repetitive noise resulted in disturbance and noise pollution
- There is almost no interest in skating in the UK
- The funding could be used for apprenticeships for jobs or funding for the youth club
- It will be intimidating for school children to walk through the park

Ward Cllrs were consulted, Cllr Collier and Cllr Jones both responded in support of the application:

- Positive that it is aimed at older children and teenagers as other groups seem to have facilities specifically for them
- Contributing to much needed play and exercise facility for young people in the area
- Expect the residents concerns can be addressed in the planning process

Landscape officer - discussed in remarks

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Core Strategy

CP18 - Protection and Enhancement of Open Space, Sports and Biodiversity

Open space (including waterways) of local value will be protected from inappropriate development and will be preserved for the benefit, enjoyment, health and well being of Brent's residents, visitors and wildlife. Support will be given to the enhancement and management of open space for recreational, sporting and amenity use.

London Plan 2015 (Further Alterations)

3.19 - Sports Facilities

Development proposals that increase or enhance the provision of sports facilities will be supported.

Where sports facility developments are proposed on existing open space they will need to be considered carefully in light of policies protecting open space as well as the borough's own assessment of needs and opportunities for both sports facilities and for green multifunctional open space.

7.18 - Protecting Open Space and Addressing Deficiency

Open spaces should be protected

DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

Background

1. Groundwork London prepared the Roundwood Park Consultation Report in October 2011. An event was held on 17th September which was attended by 52 people, 179 completed surveys were also received. The idea of improving facilities particularly for teenagers was raised at this consultation with suggestions including a skate park, youth club, adventure playground, lido etc.
2. The idea of a skate park was progressed and a consultation event was held with local residents and skate park users which informed the design, for example resulting in the addition of a small stair set ensuring that it is designed to the specifications desired by future users. A questionnaire was completed at the consultation event and online providing further detailed feedback and the responses showed strong support for the skate park from the wider community. The questionnaire is also a useful measure of the level of interest in the skate park, 48 responses were received to the question of how frequently

individuals would use the park with 36 selecting at least on a weekly basis.

3. Residents, primarily from Longstone Avenue, expressed concerns about the chosen location and possibility of anti social behaviour. These issues are considered in detail below.

Principle

4. Roundwood Park as a Grade II registered park is of historic as well as amenity value and its layout and character are considered to be important. The identification of the annexe as the proposed location of the skate park enables the registered park to be protected and not affected by more modern alterations.
5. In terms of the development of the skate park within an open space the proposal complies with Core Strategy and London Plan policy as it is an enhancement of the area for sporting activities. The proposal will introduce a new leisure facility, diversifying the range of users attracted to the open space and catering particularly for older children and teenagers who are underrepresented in leisure facilities.
6. The 488sqm concreted skate park, within an area of approximately 3.5 ha, represents a very small proportion of the annexe and would not impact on the ability of the park to accommodate other events or to be utilised for other informal recreation and leisure activities. Located directly north of Roundwood Youth Club it would be over 75m to Longstone Avenue and over 120m to Harlesden Road.
7. The skate park is designed to utilise the gradient of the site and grass bunds are proposed around exposed edges. The proposal represents an acceptable development within open space, its size is modest and it does not affect the designation or usability of the annexe as open space.

Neighbouring amenity

8. Objections have been received from 8 neighbours expressing concern about the possible impact on neighbouring amenity.

Noise

9. The issue of noise from skate boards was raised. All residential properties are at least 100m from the proposed site and separated by a line of trees and allotments or a road.
10. Your officers have researched this issue and studies show that a skate park is no noisier than the ambient surrounding noises that exist in parks, including play grounds, and they are not nearly as noisy as other sports (football games are given an example). The type of noise associated with the use is not the repetitive noise associated for example with basketball. It is also highlighted that concrete parks are notably quieter than wooden and metal skate parks.
11. The skate park is proposed to be located within a park used for sports and recreation activities adjacent to two fairly busy roads. A certain level of noise should be expected but will not be such that it would be unusual or unacceptable for the location.
12. *Anti social behaviour*
13. Objectors have expressed concern about anti social behaviour related to the use of the skate park particularly at night.
14. The skate park is set approximately 30m back from the path through the park, so while it will not block the route through the annexe, the space will be in clear sight to all passing members of the public providing passive surveillance which deters anti social behaviour. The gates to the park are not closed at night meaning that the skate park would remain accessible however no lighting is proposed which will effectively prevent its use after dark.
15. The applicant has consulted with other boroughs with experience of skate parks and the feedback, along with other publicly available reports, demonstrate that concerns prior to the development of a skate park significantly over estimate the problems associated with such proposals.
16. In Westminster a skate park under the Westway has experienced some antisocial behaviour due to it being under cover and so providing a shelter for rough sleepers, no problems have been associated with the skaters themselves.

17. Southwark have a skate park which is not closed at night and have not had any major antisocial behaviour issues. They have a warden service which patrols and would report any criminal issues to the police.
18. Croydon Council, while initially experiencing some minor anti social issues, found that the skate park users engaged well with officers organising events and have been involved in mentoring younger skaters resulting in the creation of a family atmosphere.
19. The applicants do not currently propose CCTV but have stated that it can be looked at in the medium term and could be located on the roof of Roundwood Youth Club. As this is not a firm commitment your officers have not given any weight to this statement.

Drainage & Access

20. The council's landscape officer requires further detail of drainage to demonstrate that run off would be acceptably managed. Infiltration trenches and soakaways are shown however there is some concern given the level of permeability of the existing clay soil. It is recommended that final drainage details be conditioned.
21. Access from the footpath to the skate park has not been identified, in order to limit the extent of hardstanding proposed. Concern has been raised about the impact on the grass in wet weather and the agent has pointed out the skate parks are not used in wet weather. It is foreseeable that it could be used while the grass remains wet however and as there is a wide arrival area the agent feels that this will spread out the desire lines meaning that one particular route will not become overly trodden. Users will come from either side further dispersing the route. The applicant would be able to install a hardsurfaced route in future if this became required.

Highways

22. The level of demand for parking would be no more than for other leisure and sporting activities which take place in the park. Pay and display parking is available on Harlesden Road and Longstone Avenue.

Neighbour comments

Neighbour comments	Officer response
The consultation on the application was insufficient and the site notice was not in place from the 17 th Sept as is claims.	A site notice was put up at the gate at either side of the park on 17th September so that everyone accessing or passing the site would be informed of the proposal.
The proposal is too close to the houses on Longstone Avenue and the noise of skateboards on concrete would be a nuisance	Para's 9-11
The park is not closed at night so noise could be at any time	Para 14
It is right in the middle of an area used for football and other sports	Para 6
Other sites would be more suitable e.g. adjacent to the basketball courts or replacing the derelict theatre in the main part of the park which is closed at night, further from houses, better screened and has facilities	Para's 4-7
Concern that points raised during consultation process have not been addressed, particularly the chosen location	Pre-consultation reviewed the location and the applicant has remained of the view that this is the preferred location. The reasoning behind the location is set out above.
The space is used for temporary activities and events and this status would be lost to a permanent and irreversible concrete structure.	Para's 5-7
When used by the funfair the space will be crucial to maintaining a right of way through the annexe	The proposal doesn't impact on the footpath through the centre of the site and also does not fill the depth of the southern grassed area.

The air ambulance has been able to land here as it can be kept safely clear	While the site is not protected for this particular use, its ability to be used for landings would not be affected.
The skate park will not enhance the open space and is not currently an activity associated with the annex	Para's 1, 2, 5, 6.
The application should include an option appraisal, a cost benefit analysis, an analysis of the social and environmental impact on the neighbourhood	Pre-consultation reviewed the location and the applicant has remained of the view that this is the preferred location. The role of the planning application is to consider the specific proposal in this specific location.
No discussions have taken place with the police or other London Boroughs with experience of skateparks	Para's 15-18
The skatepark is a risk to health & safety by not having immediate emergency access	The location is accessible from the roads to either side and emergency vehicular access could be enabled through either gate.
The provision of seats in an area currently of wet grass will encourage gatherings, drug deals are usually only observable by the gate	The area will not be lit and no cover is provided so it is not anticipated that this will become an area of activity at night. Wardens will report any criminal activity to the police and CCTV will be considered in the mid term if issues were to arise
Have seen no evidence of skateboarders in either part of the park No empirical justification for proceeding with what must be a costly scheme No information provided regarding likely numbers and use demonstrating demand	Para's 1-2
If it is highly used what research has been undertaken regarding parking	Para 22
The skatepark will be an eyesore in what is currently a pleasant piece of parkland used by footballers, joggers and other leisure pursuers, dog walkers, etc	The skate park is small in proportion to the scale of the existing open space. In terms of its actual appearance it is designed to utilise the existing slope of the ground and where it projects above the ground level grass bunds will surround it.
The skatepark is poorly designed	Para 2
Will there be security lights and will there be a gate that can be locked?	Para 14
Neighbours were expecting further consultation before the application	Officers understand that the Groundwork event was held in 2011 and since that neighbours were consulted directly by the applicant prior to the submission of the application.
At Greyhound Road residents fought for a gate on the basketball court as the repetitive noise resulted in disturbance and noise pollution	Greyhound Road is a compact urban location and the basket ball court is immediately adjacent to terrace houses. Para's 9-11
There is almost no interest in skating in the UK	Para's 1-2
The funding could be used for apprenticeships for jobs or funding for the youth club	The funding of the proposal is not a material consideration for the planning application.
It will be intimidating for school children to walk through the park	The space is and will continue to be utilised by other older children/teenagers playing sports such as football. The space remains publicly accessible and can be used by all age groups. Para 18.



Brent

DECISION NOTICE – APPROVAL

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Application No: 15/3572

To: Mr Matthew Hewitt
Wheelscape Ltd
Unit 46
Easton Business Centre
Felix Road
Easton, Bristol
BS5 0HE

I refer to your application dated 22/07/2015 proposing the following:
Proposed concrete skatepark within the grounds of Roundwood Park (to the north of Roundwood Youth Centre) with associated seating areas and soft landscaping and accompanied by plans or documents listed here:
See condition 2
at ROUNDWOOD PARK, Harlesden Road, London

The Council of the London Borough of Brent, the Local Planning Authority, hereby GRANT permission for the reasons and subject to the conditions set out on the attached Schedule B.

Date:

Signature:

Head of Planning, Planning and Regeneration

Notes

1. Your attention is drawn to Schedule A of this notice which sets out the rights of applicants who are aggrieved by the decisions of the Local Planning Authority.
2. This decision does not purport to convey any approval or consent which may be required under the Building Regulations or under any enactment other than the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

DnStdG

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR APPROVAL

- 1 The proposed development is in general accordance with policies contained in the:-

Core Strategy 2010
London Plan 2015 (Further Alterations)

- 1 No development shall take place until details of the sustainable drainage scheme have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented and thereafter managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure surface water run-off can infiltrate minimising potential for flooding.

- 2 The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning on the date of this permission.

Reason: To conform with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 3 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawing(s) and/or document(s):

0979/101 A
0979/110 B
0979/301 A
0979/701

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact Liz Sullivan, Planning and Regeneration, Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley, HA9 0FJ, Tel. No. 020 8937 5377