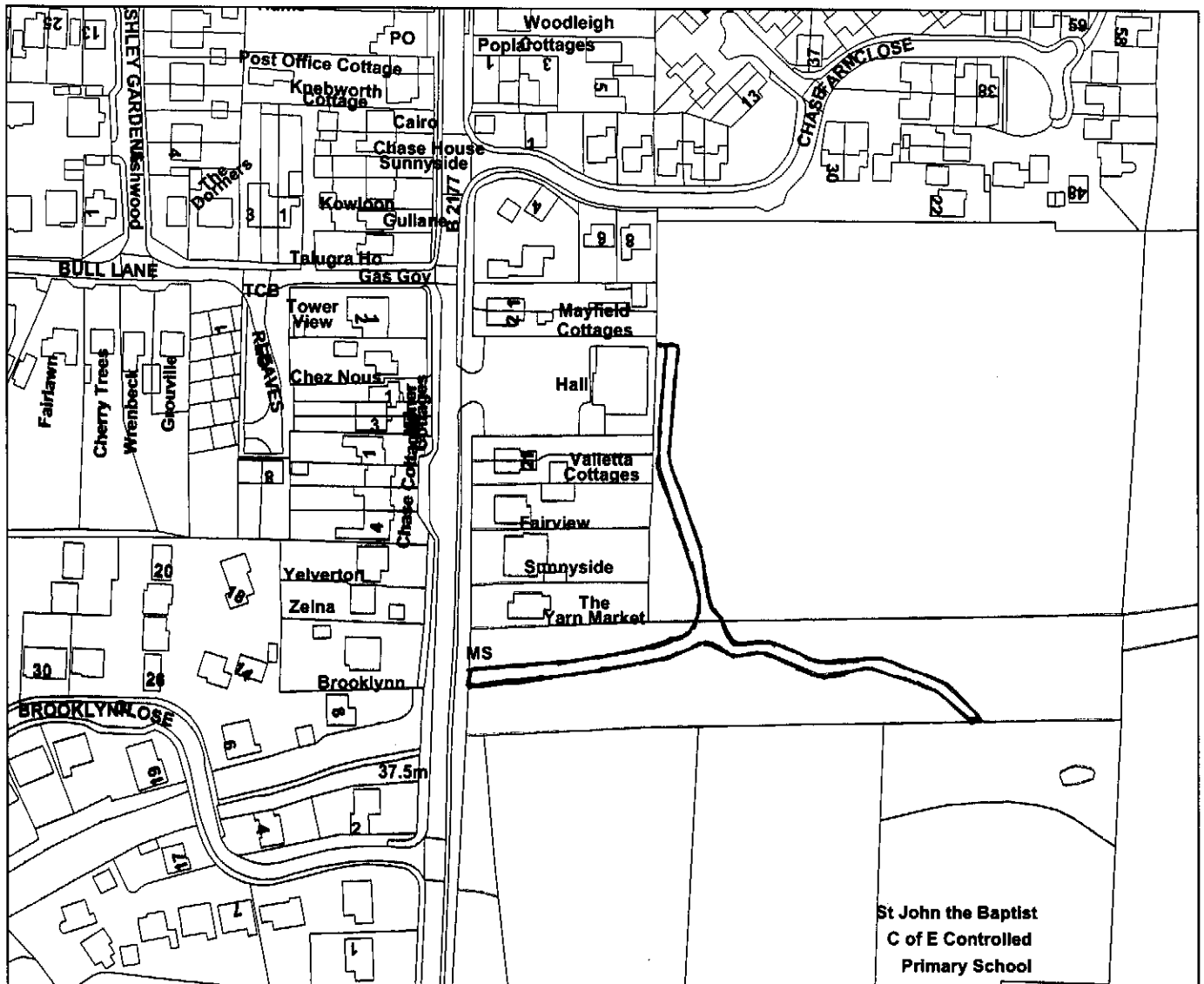


Land adj to Village Hall, Waltham Chase

11/01247/FUL



Legend



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Scale:

Organisation	Winchester City Council
Department	Development Services
Comments	
Date	05 September 2011
SLA Number	00018301

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA 15 September 2011

Item No: 3 WCC
Case No: 11/01247/FUL / W22271
Proposal Description: Timber boardwalk and gravel path to provide a permissive access route to St John the Baptist Primary School as part of a Natural England environmental stewardship scheme
Address: Land Adjacent to Village Hall Winchester Road Waltham Chase Hampshire
Parish, or Ward if within Winchester City: Shedfield
Applicants Name: Elliot Brothers Ltd
Case Officer: Mr Simon Avery
Date Valid: 6 June 2011

Recommendation: Application Permitted

General Comments

This application is reported to Committee because of the number of objections received.

Amended plans have been received, showing passing bays on the boardwalk.

Site Description

This site consists of a field on the east side of the B2177 in Waltham Chase. The land is classified as a SSSI. It runs behind properties on Chase Farm Close and the B2177 itself, including the village hall. The land also fronts the B2177 to the south of a property on this road, called The Yarn Market. To the south, the site adjoins land in the ownership of St John the Baptist Primary School. The southern section of the site, between the point where it fronts the B2177 and the school boundary, is wooded. The majority of the land to the north and north east of this is meadow, with a high ecological significance. A strip of land immediately to the rear of properties on the B2177 is overgrown with brambles.

Proposal

This proposal is for a boardwalk and footpath to provide access from the Waltham Chase Village Hall to the nearby primary school. The footpath will also link onto the pavement on the B2177.

Relevant Planning History

None.

Consultations

Natural England: Support

The proposed boardwalk and path will not have an adverse impact on the SSSI. Part of the work to install the boardwalk will entail an area of dense brambles to be cleared, allowing an enhanced ecological area to the SSSI species-rich grassland.

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Environment Agency:
No comments.

Highway Engineer:
No objection.

HCC Ecology:
No objection.

Landscape:
No objection.

Representations

Shedfield Parish Council

The Council fully supports this application, but has concerns about possible issues that may arise from overuse of the village hall car park where parents would drop off/pick up their children and the fact that the area is prone to flooding.

6 letters received objecting to the application, for the following reasons:

- Concerns about the safety of the Waltham Chase Village Hall users, when the children are being dropped off and picked up;
- Danger to other road users from cars entering and exiting the hall car park;
- Danger to the children accessing the boardwalk, as they will have to cross a busy car park that has no pedestrian access;
- Concern about security of back gardens and littering;
- Adverse impact on nearby dwellings/impact on residential amenity;
- Vandalism;
- Increase in vehicular and pedestrian movements and associated noise;
- Loss of hedgerow behind hall and need to pipe ditch;
- The boardwalk relies on access via the Village Hall, which is not part of the application site;
- Proposal is effectively to obtain overflow parking for the school;
- Conflict with legitimate car parking for patrons of the village hall;
- The boardwalk would urbanise an already reduced meadow;
- Failure to consult with wider community and with residents of properties bordering the proposed boardwalk;
- Damage to the SSSI through construction work;
- Lack of ecological surveys;
- Lack of detail as to who will be responsible for the cleaning and upkeep of the walkway and adjacent ditch;
- Safety of children on the walkway.

8 letters of support received from 7 households.

- This proposal is an opportunity to increase the safety of children walking to school;
- It would facilitate conservation/environmental education for children;
- It will not be detrimental to houses built nearby;
- The boardwalk would provide a fantastic local resource;
- The proposal may aid in reducing the heavy school drop off and collection congestion that currently occurs.

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1 letter of comment:

- Concern about development of the site in the future;
- Flooding;
- Control and responsibility for access to the boardwalk.

Relevant Planning Policy

South East Plan 2009:
BE6, CC6

Winchester District Local Plan Review
DP3, DP4, CE5, CE10

National Planning Policy Guidance/Statements:
PPS 1 Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS 7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
PPS 9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

Planning Considerations

- Principle of development
- Impact on character of area
- Impact on residential amenity
- Highways
- Ecology

Principle of development

It is considered that the proposed boardwalk and path would not conflict in principle with the countryside policies set out in the Local Plan. The detailed elements of the scheme are assessed below.

Impact on character of area

The proposed footpath and boardwalk will have little visual impact, as they will be mainly screened from public view within the field, which is enclosed by hedgerows and trees. The boardwalk will only be 300mm above ground level and will be enclosed by post and rail fencing on either side, but it is not considered that this will appear unduly intrusive or out of character. Some small trees and planting will have to be removed within the wooded area, where the gravel footpath is to be located and other larger trees crown lifted, but this will not have a significant impact due to the relatively small size of the plants removed and the amount of vegetation to be retained. A break will also need to be created in the hedge behind the village hall to allow access to the boardwalk, but this will have little visual impact, as it will only be a small section of hedgerow removed, which is not particularly visible due to its position to the rear of the building. The boardwalk will result in scrub being cleared from the western edge of the field, but this will actually benefit the SSSI (see Natural England's comments above). Gates will be provided at each access point and details of these are required by condition (Condition 2), but these would only be small structures and it is not considered that they would be visually harmful.

The use of this route would be limited to those attending the school or other interest

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groups, and it is considered beneficial that this area of land can be opened up in this way.

Therefore, it is not considered that the development itself, or the subsequent use of the route, would be harmful to the character of the area.

Impact on residential amenity

The boardwalk will run behind six properties which front onto the B2177. However, these properties all have fairly long rear gardens of at least 30 metres, providing some separation between the dwellings and the boardwalk. The rear gardens of the properties are screened from the boardwalk by trees and scrub. The most open section is the rear and side boundary of The Yarn Market which is the southernmost property of the six. However, the boardwalk and footpath will be set further away from this property, reducing any impact. The route will only be open during school hours and for other special events, and outside of these times access to it will be restricted by locked gates. Therefore, the route would not be used during unsociable hours, and, as it only provides access to the school, the number of people using the route would be relatively limited. Given the nature of the boardwalk's use, it is not considered that the proposal will result in any materially harmful loss of privacy or undue noise or disturbance for occupiers of the adjacent properties.

Concern has been raised about the potential for littering or vandalism, but such antisocial behaviour would normally be controlled by other legislation, and a reason for refusal could not be substantiated on the basis of the potential for this problem arising from the new route.

Highways

Concern has been raised that, if the proposal is permitted, it will lead to additional parking in the village hall car park by parents dropping off or collecting children from the school, and that this might result in highway safety issues. However, the village hall is a private car park, and therefore the car parking that occurs within it would be controlled by the relevant landowners.

The Highways Engineer has recommended that vegetation either side of the access junction of the gravel path with Winchester Road is trimmed back, to enable clear sight-lines between drivers of approaching traffic and emerging pedestrians, and a condition is attached requiring details of this to be submitted, as well as details of a suitable barrier here to prevent children suddenly exiting out onto Winchester Road (Condition 2).

Ecology

An ecological survey report has been submitted. This has assessed the potential for protected species on the route of the path and boardwalk and has confirmed that the habitat is unlikely to support any such species, and that the proposals will therefore not cause any adverse impacts upon either species or habitats of ecological value. The County Ecologist is satisfied with these findings and Natural England has no objection.

Drainage

A culvert is to be inserted in the ditch at the entrance from the pavement of the Winchester Road, which will ensure this ditch is not adversely affected. The Environment Agency has raised no objections to the proposal.

Recommendation

Application Permitted, 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: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. Before the boardwalk and footpath hereby approved are brought into use the following measures shall be implemented, and thereafter retained (unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority), in accordance with details first approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

- details and drawings of the proposed gates, including details of how they are to be locked and how this will be maintained;
- details of visibility splays to be provided either side of the access junction of the gravel path with Winchester Road;
- details of a barrier at the end of the gravel path where it joins Winchester Road.

Reason: In the interests of local amenity and highway safety.

3. No lighting shall be installed on the site, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the locality.

4. An Arboricultural Impact Appraisal and Method Statement, in accordance with BS5837:2005, shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, prior to any demolition, construction or groundwork commencing on the site.

Reason: To ensure the protection and long term viability of retained trees and to minimise the impact of construction activity.

Informatives

1. This permission is granted for the following reason:

The development is in accordance with the policies and proposals of the Development Plan set out below, and other material considerations do not have sufficient weight to justify a refusal of the application. In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning permission should therefore be granted.

2. The Local Planning Authority has taken account of the following Development Plan policies and proposals:

Winchester District Local Plan Review 2006: DP3, DP4, CE5, CE10

South East Plan 2009: BE6, CC6

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3. All building works, including demolition, construction and machinery or plant operation, should only be carried out between the hours of 0800 and 1800 hrs Monday to Friday and 0800 and 1300 hrs Saturday and at no time on Sundays or Bank Holidays. Where allegations of noise from such works are substantiated by the Environmental Health Department, a Notice limiting the hours of operation under The Control of Pollution Act 1974 may be served.