



**REGULATORY  
SERVICES  
COMMITTEE**

**REPORT**

25 August 2011

**Subject Heading:**

**C0001.11 – Raphael Park, Romford**

**Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of the existing café and toilet block and restoration of land to park (Application received 24<sup>th</sup> May 2011)**

**Report Author and contact details:**

**Helen Oakerbee (Planning Control Manager) 01708 432800**

**Policy context:**

**Local Development Framework  
London Plan  
National Planning Policy**

**Financial summary:**

**None**

**The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives**

Clean, safe and green borough	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellence in education and learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities for all through economic, social and cultural activity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Value and enhance the life of every individual	<input type="checkbox"/>
High customer satisfaction and a stable council tax	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SUMMARY**

The Council has been successful in securing funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund under the Parks for People Programme to be used towards the restoration of Raphael's Park. Several planning applications have been made seeking consent

for the provision of new park facilities in connection with the funding award. This application seeks conservation area consent for the demolition of the existing toilet block and café building. A separate planning application has been submitted to re-provide these facilities elsewhere within the former park keeper's lodge building adjacent to the park's Main Road entrance.

The planning issues are set out in the report below and include issues relating to the Gidea Park Conservation Area. Staff are of the view that the proposal is acceptable and it is recommended that conservation area consent be granted subject to conditions. As the land is in Council ownership, it must be referred to the Secretary of State for decision.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee delegate to the Head of Development and Building Control authority to grant Conservation Area Consent subject to referral of the application to the Secretary of State under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990 and no contrary determination by the Secretary of State being received, subject to the following conditions:

1. Time limit - The development to which this permission relates must be commenced not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. Accordance with plans - The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accord with the approved plans, particulars and specifications.

Reason: The Local Planning Authority consider it essential that the whole of the development is carried out and that no departure whatsoever is made from the details approved, since the development would not necessarily be acceptable if partly carried out or carried out differently in any degree from the details submitted. Also, in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

## INFORMATIVES

1. Reason for Approval:

It is considered that the proposal satisfies the relevant criteria of Policies CP18 and DC68 of the LDF Core Strategy and Development control Policies Development Plan Document as well as the provisions of Planning Policy Statement 5 and Policy 7.8 of the London Plan. It is considered that the proposal is in conformity with guidance in PPS 5: Planning for the Historic Environment Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide.

## REPORT DETAIL

### **1. Site Description:**

- 1.1 The application site comprises two separate parcels of land within Raphael Park. The application site comprises the brick built toilet block and café. Both of these buildings are relatively recent additions to the park and are of modern construction. Raphael Park is bounded by Main Road to the south and runs in a northerly direction to Brook Road. The park is bounded predominantly by 20<sup>th</sup> century suburban housing. The southern half of the park is dominated by Black's Lake with its two islands and promenade along the eastern edge. The landscape of the southern portion of the park, known as the Pleasure Grounds, comprises areas of grass, shrubs and trees. The northern portion of the park comprises an area of woodland, various sports pitches, tennis courts and a children's play area.

### **2. Background Information:**

- 2.1 The Council has been successful in securing funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund under the Parks for People Programme to be used towards the restoration of Raphael's Park. The money will fund a complete refurbishment of the park and will involve improving and restoring the entrance gates, benches, walkways and protecting the parkland and the wildlife. The proposed works would also see the alteration and extension of the former park keeper's lodge building to accommodate a new café, park offices and community facilities. Three separate planning applications have been made in connection with the Heritage Lottery Fund works for various aspects within the park as outlined within the history section of this report.

### **3. Description of Proposal:**

- 3.1 This application seeks conservation area consent for the demolition of the existing public toilet block and café building. A separate planning application has been submitted for the alteration and extension of the former park keeper's lodge building to form a new café and toilet facilities. In the event that planning permission is granted then the existing facilities would no longer be required hence this application has been made for their demolition.
- 3.2 The toilet block and café buildings are located to the south of the bandstand adjacent to the park's pedestrian access from Gidea Close. The toilet block is a brick built flat roof building, which covers an area of 7.6 metres in width by 6.3 metres in depth. The building is constructed on sloping ground level and as such its overall height varies between 2.4 and 2.9 metres. The café is a brick built building with a clay tiled pitched roof. The building has a serving hatch in the north east elevation. The building measures 7.8 metres in width by 4.1 metres in depth and is 2.2 metres in height to the eaves and 4.8 metres to the ridge. The land to the north of the building is presently

concrete and is used for the siting of tables and chairs. To the rear of the building is a metal storage container, which is also, to be removed.

- 3.3 Following the demolition of the toilet block and café it is proposed that the ground be restored to parkland. The concrete foundations of the buildings would be removed and the ground levelled for soft landscaping.

#### **4. Relevant History:**

- 4.1 The following planning applications are currently under consideration:

P0768.11 - The construction of a new kiosk housing public toilets, and a refreshment serving hatch adjacent to the children's play area

P0769.11 - Restoration and extension of the former park keepers lodge to form a facility for park visitors, including a cafe, toilets, community meeting space and accommodation for park staff

P0770.11 - The construction of a timber pedestrian bridge over Black's Brook adjacent to the Parkland Avenue entrance to Raphael Park to replace the existing concrete culvert. Associated soft landscaping and footpath realignment

#### **5. Consultations/Representations:**

- 5.1 Neighbour notification letters have been sent to 31 local addresses and the application advertised. A site notice has also been displayed at the Main Road park entrance. No letters of representation have been received.
- 5.2 In addition to the consultation undertaken through this application public consultation was undertaken with residents and local interest groups by the Council's Parks Service as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund bid.
- 5.3 English Heritage has no comments to make on the application and advise that the application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance.

#### **6. Staff Comments**

- 6.1 This proposal is put before the Committee due to the application site being in Council ownership and the application being submitted by a Council department. The issues raised by this application are; the principle of development, design and visual impact. Policies CP18, DC61 and DC68 of the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document are relevant to the determination of the application. Consideration should also be given to the Gidea Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals. Policies 7.4, 7.5, 7.8 and 7.18 of the London Plan and Planning Policy Statement 5 (Planning for the Historic Environment) are also material considerations.

- 6.2 Government guidance contained within PPS 5 advises that in exercising conservation area controls, local planning authorities are required to pay special attention to the character or appearance of the area in question and where appropriate enhance heritage assets. In the case of conservation area consent account should clearly be taken of the part played in the architectural or historic interest of the area by the building for which demolition is proposed, and in particular of the wider effects of demolition on the building's surroundings and on the conservation area as a whole.
- 6.3 Policy DC68 advises that the character or appearance of conservation areas will be preserved or enhanced. Furthermore conservation area consent for demolition within a conservation area will only be granted where it does not involve the demolition of a building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the area.
- 6.4 PPS 5 sets out a general presumption in favour of retaining buildings, which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. In this case the public toilet block and café are relatively recent additions (circa 1950) to the park and the conservation area. The buildings are of a modern construction and appear at odds with the character of the historic parkland landscape. The buildings are not of any special architectural or historical merit. Staff are of the view that the removal of the buildings would be acceptable and that their removal would not be harmful to the Gidea Park Conservation Area.
- 6.5 PPS 5 advises that consent for demolition should not be given unless it has been demonstrated what is to be put back in place of the building(s) to be demolished. In this case it is proposed that the toilet and café facilities are re-provided elsewhere within the former park keeper's lodge building (subject to a separate planning application). Following the removal of the buildings and their foundations it is proposed to restore the land to parkland with grass and new tree planting. Staff consider these arrangements to be acceptable.
- 6.6 Staff are of the view that the demolition of the buildings would not be harmful to residential amenity.
- 6.7 The proposal would not create any parking or highways issues.

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1 Having regard to all relevant factors and material planning considerations staff are of the view that this proposal to demolish the existing toilet block and café building is acceptable. Staff are of the view that the proposal would not be materially harmful to the character or appearance of the Gidea Park Conservation Area. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in all other respects and it is therefore recommended that conservation area consent be granted subject to conditions.

## **IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

### **Financial implications and risks:**

None.

### **Legal implications and risks:**

This application is considered on merits and independently from the Council's interest as applicant and owner of the site.

### **Human Resources implications and risks:**

None.

### **Equalities implications and risks:**

The Council's planning policies are implemented with regard to Equalities and Diversity.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Application form, plans and supporting statements received on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2011 and additional plan received on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2011.