



**REGULATORY
SERVICES
COMMITTEE**

REPORT

25 August 2011

Subject Heading:

P0770.11 – Raphael Park, Romford

Construction of a timber bridge over Black's Brook adjacent to the Parkland Avenue entrance to replace an existing concrete culvert together with soft landscaping works and footpath realignment (Application received 24th May 2011)

Report Author and contact details:

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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

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|--|---|
| Clean, safe and green borough | □ |
| Excellence in education and learning | □ |
| Opportunities for all through economic, social and cultural activity | □ |
| Value and enhance the life of every individual | □ |
| High customer satisfaction and a stable council tax | □ |

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 planning permission for the construction of a small timber bridge over Black's Brook adjacent to the Parkland Avenue park entrance.

The proposed works are judged to be of an acceptable design and would not detract from the Gidea Park Conservation Area. In all respects, the proposal is considered to accord with the relevant policies contained in the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document and The London Plan. Approval of the applications is therefore recommended, subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that planning permission be granted 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.

3. Development in accordance with Flood Risk Assessment - The development permitted by this planning permission shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) dated May 2011 compiled by Chris Blandford Associates, the ATP Scheme 6 Site Plan drawing number 11149_SK06 (May 2011), the Chris Blandford Associates Timber

Bridge Plan, Photograph & Sections drawing 11112901-P-307 (April 2011) and the following mitigation measures detailed within the FRA:

- The natural profile of the bank is to be recreated (FRA section 3.1 and drawing 11112901-P-307).
- Soffit level above the existing bank top (FRA section 3.2 and drawing 11112901-P-307).
- Bridge abutments will not be located in the channel but set back from the bank top).

Reason: To reduce the risk of flooding to neighbouring occupants.

INFORMATIVES

1. Under the Water Resources Act 1991 and the Thames Region Land Drainage Byelaws 1981, the prior written consent of the Environment Agency is required for certain works or structures in, over, under or within 8 metres of the top of the bank of Black's Brook, designated a main river.

2. Reason for Approval:

It is considered that the proposal satisfies the relevant criteria of Policies CP17, CP18, DC20, DC34, DC35, DC48, DC57, DC58, DC60, DC61, DC62, DC63 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 Policies 2.18, 5.12, 6.10, 7.4, 7.5, 7.8, 7.18 and 7.30 of the London Plan.

REPORT DETAIL

1. Site Description:

- 1.1 The application site is located to the north east of the Parkland Avenue entrance to the park. The site comprises a section of the park centred on Black's Brook a small river channel which runs from the north of the park pass the rear of those houses fronting Lake Rise into Black's Lake. The river channel at this point comprises a concrete culvert covered in earth. The footpath from the Parkland Avenue park entrance runs across the existing culvert structure into the park. Black's Brook provides the western boundary of the Gidea Park Conservation Area and as such only the eastern bank of the channel falls within the Conservation Area.
- 1.2 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 20th 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. Two other planning applications and an application for demolition 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 planning permission for the construction of a timber footbridge over Black's Brook. The proposed bridge would be sited 8.5 metres further north of the existing culvert crossing. The proposed timber bridge would be 7.5 metres in length by 2.7 metres in width. The proposed bridge would be constructed on concrete abutments to either side of the channel. The bridge would have an overall height of 1.6 metres. The existing footpath which runs from the Parkland Avenue entrance would be rerouted to cross the proposed bridge. The existing river crossing point, which is a concrete culvert, is to be removed and the river channel reinstated to its natural profile.

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 keeper's lodge to form a facility for park visitors, including a cafe, toilets, community meeting space and accommodation for park staff

C0001.11 - Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of the existing café and toilet block and restoration of land to park

5. Consultations/Representations:

- 5.1 Neighbour notification letters have been sent to 11 local addresses and the application advertised. A site notice has also been displayed at the Parkland Avenue park entrance. No letters of representation have been received.

- 5.2 In addition to the consultation undertaken through this planning 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 The Environment Agency raises no objection to the application subject to planning conditions being imposed.
- 5.4 Councillor Curtin has submitted an email of support for this application setting out the proposal takes full account of the Conservation Area and the park landscape.

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, impact on neighbouring properties, flood risk and biodiversity. Policies CP17, CP18, DC20, DC34, DC35, DC48, DC57, DC58, DC60, DC61, DC62, DC63 and DC68 of the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document are relevant to the determination of the application. Policies 2.18, 5.12, 6.10, 7.4, 7.5, 7.8, 7.18 and 7.30 of the London Plan and Planning Policy Statement 5 (Planning for the Historic Environment) are also material considerations.
- 6.2 A key objective of the Council's Local Development Framework is to improve opportunities for informal recreation. Staff are of the view that this proposal, which would provide a new timber bridge across Black's Brook to improve pedestrian access into Raphael's Park, would contribute to this objective. The proposal would also contribute to the Council's Living Ambitions agenda and the Havering's Community Strategy and Culture Strategy.
- 6.3 The proposed bridge is judged to be of an acceptable design and materials. The siting of the proposed structure is such that it would not appear as a significant addition to the park landscape and would be largely screened by existing trees. The eastern bank of the Black's Brook river channel and parkland beyond to forms part of the Gidea Park Conservation Area. The proposed bridge is judged to be of a design which would not appear at odds with the character of the historic parkland landscape nor the Conservation Area. To this end the proposal is judged to comply with Policy DC68 of the LDF.
- 6.4 The proposed bridge would not have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties. The proposal would also see the rerouting of the existing pathway from the Parkland Avenue entrance across the new bridge. The proposed path would be sited further away from the boundary with the nearest neighbouring property at 118 Lake Rise. The proposal is judged to be acceptable in terms of impact on amenity.
- 6.5 The application site falls within a designated flood zone (3a) and as such a flood risk assessment has been submitted with the application. The present

culvert is formed by an 850mm diameter concrete pipe, which is approximately 6 metres in length with headwalls at both ends. The narrowness of the existing culvert makes it prone to blockage which can result in a restriction to the flow of the river. The proposal would see the existing culvert removed and the channel returned to a natural profile. Staff are of the view that the proposed removal of the culvert and the naturalisation of the river channel at this point would reduce the potential for localised flooding. The proposed bridge would be constructed on abutments which would be set outside of the channel itself and as such the proposal would not impede the flow of the river. The Environment Agency has been consulted on this application and raises no objection to the proposal subject to a planning condition being imposed. Staff consider that the proposal is acceptable in terms of flood risk in accordance with Policy DC48 of the LDF.

- 6.6 In order to facilitate the siting of the proposed bridge two existing trees are to be removed. In order to compensate for the removal of the trees it is proposed to provide new native planting along the banks of the river either side of the bridge. As part of the wider improvement works to be undertaken within the park by the Council following the award of the Heritage Lottery Funding a number of new trees will also be planted. Staff are of the view that the proposed planting together with the naturalisation of the existing river channel would satisfactorily compensate for the trees removal.
- 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 provide a new pedestrian bridge across Black's Brook 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 planning permission 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. The proposed pedestrian bridge would improve access to the park for all members of the community and enable wheelchair access.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Application form, plans and supporting statements received on 24th May 2011.