

REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE

31 July 2014

REPORT

Subject Heading:

P0484.14 – Rise Park Infant School, Annan Way, Romford - Installation of an external play area with the construction of timber play apparatus surrounded by rubber floor surfacing (received 23/04/14)

Report Author and contact details:

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Policy context:

Local Development Framework
The London Plan
National Planning Policy Framework

Financial summary:

None

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

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

SUMMARY

This application is put before Members as the premises relates to a Council owned school. The planning application is for retrospective permission for an external play area with a timber play apparatus surrounded by rubber floor

surfacing. The planning issues are set out in the report below and cover the impact on streetscene and residential amenity. Staff consider the proposal to be acceptable.

REPORT DETAIL

1. Site Description

- 1.1 The application site comprises Rise Park Infant School located off Annan Way. Rise Park Junior School is located to the south of the Infant School. There are residential properties located to the north, east and west of the site. The site is Council owned land. A number of mature trees are situated on the eastern boundary of the site.

2. Description of Proposal

- 2.1 The Council is in receipt of a retrospective planning application seeking permission for a timber play apparatus surrounded by rubber floor surfacing.
- 2.2 The wooden play apparatus is in the form of a “ship” and measures 7.4m in length, 4.2m in width and 1m in height to the top of the decks. There are ramps giving children access to the deck area. The overall height measures 3m. The structure is surrounded by a 40m² wet pour sky blue rubber safety floor around the structure and a further 64m² wet pour black rubber safety floor in the form of a circular pathway.
- 2.3 The structure is located to the east of a recently constructed single storey building and approximately 10m from the eastern boundary. There will be a separation distance of approximately 33m from the structure to the nearest residential dwelling at 23 Ayr Way.
- 2.4 The applicant has stated that the outdoor play area and timber apparatus would be used once a day for approximately 30 – 40 minutes by 30 No. 4-5 year old children.

3. History

- 3.1 P1443.12 - Single storey classroom building with external play area with canopy over and 6 extra car parking spaces close to the Annan Way entrance - Approved.
- 3.2 P0743.09 - Erection of a steel ‘box hoop’ canopy within the school playground - Approved.

4. Consultation/Representations

4.1 Notification letters were sent to 23 neighbouring properties, 2 letters of comments and 1 letter of objection were received raising the following concerns:

- increase in the potential runoff of water as a result of the rubber hardstanding.
- increase in noise nuisance as a result of children playing on the raised structure
- loss of privacy as children can look into the back of nearby residential properties when standing on the “Rig” structure.

5. Relevant Policies

5.1 Policies CP17 (Design), DC29 (Educational Premises), DC55 (Noise) and DC61 (Urban Design) of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Documents are material planning considerations. In addition, Policies 3.18 (Educational facilities), and 7.4 (Local character) of the London Plan and Chapters 7 (Requiring good design) and 8 (Promoting healthy communities) of the National Planning Policy Framework are relevant.

6. Staff comments

6.1 Impact on Local Character and Street Scene

6.1.1 It is considered that play apparatus and hardstanding would not be harmful to the streetscene or the surrounding area. Notwithstanding the ground level of the subject site being higher than that of the neighbouring gardens, the structure will not be visible from Ayr Way and is set approximately 44m to the north of the school’s access road. The play apparatus is of modest height and size, is set approximately 10m off the eastern neighbouring boundary and is partially screened by mature trees to the east.

6.2 Impact on Amenity

6.2.1 Policy DC61 considers that new developments should not materially reduce the degree of privacy enjoyed by the occupants of adjoining properties or have an unreasonably impact on noise and disturbance.

6.5.2 The subject play apparatus has two decking areas which are located approximately 1m above ground level. Staff acknowledge that the structure would allow children to overlook the wooden fencing on the boundary with properties in Ayr Way, however do not consider this to have a material impact on neighbouring amenity as the distance to the nearest dwelling is approximately 33m and a distance of approximately 25m from the structure to the most private parts of the rear garden areas. Any overlooking to the rear gardens would not be any different than that of first floor rear windows of neighbouring dwellings. There is also a degree of screening by existing

vegetation although it is acknowledged that this would decrease in winter. It should also be noted that the play apparatus would be used on a limited basis, once a day for approximately 30 – 40 minutes by infant school pupils which would further mitigate any harmful impact.

6.5.3 In terms of general noise and disturbance, it is not considered that pupils playing 1m above ground level would not give rise to unacceptable daytime levels of noise above that which would normally be associated with a school play area. Any potential impact in terms of noise and disturbance would further be mitigated by the frequency (once a day) and duration (30-40 minutes) of the use of the apparatus.

6.5.4 Having regard to the existing use of the site as a school playground, the distance of the structure from the boundary and the limited duration/times of use of the play equipment, it is considered that the apparatus does not result in a material harmful impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties. The development is therefore considered to comply with the aims and objectives of Policies DC55 and DC61 of the LDF Development Control Policies DPD in respect of its impact on neighbouring amenity.

6.6 *Highways / Parking Issues*

6.6.1 The application would not raise highways or parking concerns.

6.7 *The Mayor's Community Infrastructure Levy*

6.7.1 The subject premises is a school and the application would therefore not be CIL liable

6.8 *Other Issues*

6.9.1 With regards to water runoff and flood risk, Staff do not consider the potential impact to be sufficient to justify a refusal. Approximately 104m² of the 500m² of play area would be covered in hardstanding. Staff consider the remaining permeable surface and the 10m wide permeable strip of land between the hardstanding and eastern boundary to be sufficient to mitigate any issues relating to water runoff.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Having regard to all relevant factors and material planning considerations staff are of the view that this retrospective proposal for an external play area with a timber play apparatus and rubber floor surfacing would be acceptable. Staff are of the view that the proposal would not have an impact on the streetscene and surrounding area or result in a loss of amenity to neighbouring occupiers. The resultant impact of water runoff is not considered to cause a harmful impact. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in all other respects and it is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial Implications and risks:

None.

Legal Implications and risks:

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

Human Resource Implications:

None

Equalities and Social Inclusion Implications:

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

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Application forms and plans received 23/04/14.