



REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT

17 November 2011

Subject Heading:

P0769.11 – Raphael Park and Lodge Farm Park, Main Road, Romford

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. New service yard with vehicular access from Main Road. Provision of 5 metre high lighting columns and additional fencing in Lodge Farm Park car park (Application received 24th May 2011, revised plans 31st May 2011 and additional plans received 7th September 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

Ensuring a clean, safe and green borough	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Championing education and learning for all	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing economic, social and cultural activity in thriving towns and villages	<input type="checkbox"/>
Value and enhance the life of our residents	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delivering 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. This application seeks planning permission for the construction of a single storey extension to the existing Park Lodge adjacent to Main Road. The proposed extension would house new public toilets together with a café. Permission is also sought for a new service yard with vehicular access from Main Road. The proposed café would rely upon parking within Lodge Farm Park car park therefore the application proposes additional fencing and lighting so that car park can be used in the evening period.

The main issues to be considered by Members in this case are the principle of development, design/street scene issues, heritage implications, sustainability, impact on amenity and parking and highways issues. These issues are set out in the report below. 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 application 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 accordance 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. Materials – Before any of the development hereby permitted is commenced, samples of all materials to be used in the external construction of the extension and the service yard shall be submitted to and approved in writing

by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be constructed with the approved materials.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the proposed development will harmonise with the character of the surrounding area and in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policies DC61 and DC68.

4. Hours of construction - No construction works or construction related deliveries into the site shall take place other than between the hours of 08.00 to 18.00 on Monday to Friday and 08.00 to 13.00 hours on Saturdays unless agreed in writing with the local planning authority. No construction works or construction related deliveries shall take place on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

5. Construction methodology - Before development is commenced, a scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority making provision for a Construction Method Statement to control the adverse impact of the development on the amenity of the public and nearby occupiers. The Construction Method statement shall include details of:

- a) parking of vehicles of site personnel and visitors;
- b) storage of plant and materials;
- c) dust management controls
- d) measures for minimising the impact of noise and, if appropriate, vibration arising from construction activities;
- e) predicted noise and, if appropriate, vibration levels for construction using methodologies and at points agreed with the local planning authority;
- f) scheme for monitoring noise and if appropriate, vibration levels using methodologies and at points agreed with the local planning authority; siting and design of temporary buildings;
- g) scheme for security fencing/hoardings, depicting a readily visible 24-hour contact number for queries or emergencies;
- h) details of disposal of waste arising from the construction programme, including final disposal points. The burning of waste on the site at any time is specifically precluded.

And the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme and statement.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

6. Works affecting the public highway - Prior to the commencement of the development, details of the proposed works affecting the public highway shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and all necessary legal agreements secured. The works shall be carried out in full and in strict accordance with the approved details prior to the first occupation of the development and thereafter permanently retained.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

7. Visibility splays to new access road - The proposals should provide a 2.1 by 2.1 metre pedestrian visibility splay on either side of the proposed access road from Main Road, set back to the boundary of the public footway. There should be no obstruction or object higher than 0.6 metres within the visibility splay.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, and in order that the development accords with the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC32.

8. Laying out of service yard – Prior to the first use of the extension hereby permitted, the service yard and car parking area shall be laid out and surfaced to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority. The service yard and parking area shall be retained permanently thereafter for the accommodation of vehicles visiting the site and shall not be used for any other purpose.

Reason: To ensure that on site servicing facilities are available in the interest of highway safety and in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC36.

9. Sound insulation - Before the development hereby permitted commences details of a scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority which specifies the provisions to be made for the control of noise emanating from the extension. Such scheme as may be approved shall be implemented prior to first occupation and thereafter retained in accordance with such details to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To prevent noise nuisance to adjoining properties in accordance with the recommendations of Planning Policy Guidance Note 24 Planning & Noise 1994.

10. Details of new plant and machinery - Before any works commence a scheme for any new plant or machinery to be provided to the retail unit shall be submitted to the local planning authority to achieve the following standard. Noise levels expressed as the equivalent continuous sound level LAeq (1 hour) when calculated at the boundary with the nearest noise sensitive premises shall not exceed LA90 -10dB and shall be maintained thereafter to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To prevent noise nuisance to adjoining properties in accordance with the recommendations of Planning Policy Guidance Note 24 Planning & Noise 1994.

11. Extraction and ventilation equipment - Before the use commences suitable equipment to remove and/or disperse odours and odorous material should be fitted to the extract ventilation system in accordance with a scheme to be designed and certified by a competent engineer and to be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. After installation a certificate shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and the equipment shall be properly maintained and operated within design specifications during normal working hours.

Reason: To protect the amenity of occupiers of nearby properties and in order that the development accords with the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

12. Noise and vibration from extraction and ventilation equipment - Before the use commences a scheme to control the transmission of noise and vibration from any mechanical ventilation system installed shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and implemented prior to the permitted use commencing. Thereafter, the equipment shall be properly maintained and operated during normal working hours.

Reason: To protect the amenity of occupiers of nearby properties and in order that the development accords with the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

13. Boundary treatment - Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, details of proposed boundary treatment, including details of all boundary treatment to be retained and that to be provided, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the agreed details and the boundary treatment retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of privacy and amenity and to accord with Policies DC61 and DC63 of the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

14. External lighting - Prior to the commencement of the development a scheme for the lighting of external areas of the extended Park Lodge and any lighting of the adjacent service yard shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme of lighting shall include details of the extent of illumination together with precise details of the height, location and design of the lights. The approved scheme shall then be implemented in strict accordance with the agreed details prior to the occupation of the development and retained thereafter to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of public safety and residential amenity. Also in order that the development accords with Policies DC61 and DC63 of the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

15. Lighting columns - The lighting columns hereby permitted within Lodge Farm Park shall not be illuminated after 2300 or before 0800 on any day unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

16. Secure By Design - Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, details of the measures to be incorporated into the development demonstrating how 'Secured by Design' accreditation can be achieved shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details, and shall not be occupied or used until written confirmation of compliance with the agreed details has been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA.

Reason: In the interest of creating safer, sustainable communities, reflecting guidance set out in PPS1, Policy 4B.6 of the London Plan, and Policies CP17 and DC63 of the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

17. Archaeology - No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme for investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme pursuant to this condition. The archaeological works shall be carried out by a suitably qualified investigating body acceptable to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to comply with the requirements of Policy DC67 of the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

18. Cycle storage - Prior to completion of the works hereby permitted, cycle stands of a type and in a location previously submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority shall be provided and permanently retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of providing a wide range of facilities for non-motor car residents, in the interests of sustainability and in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC36.

19. Refuse and recycling - Prior to completion of the works hereby permitted, details of the proposed refuse storage and recycling facilities to be provided

at the site for the use, together with arrangements for refuse disposal and details of recycling and collection shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The facilities as approved shall then be provided at the site prior to the commencement of the use and retained at the site thereafter in accordance with the approved drawings at all times.

Reason: In order to ensure that any such facilities respect the visual amenity of the locality, and the amenity of surrounding residents.

20. Hours of use - The café shall not be used for the purposes hereby permitted other than between the hours of 0900 and 2230 any day without the prior consent in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to retain control in the interests of amenity, and in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

21. Hours of use of external terrace - The external terrace area shall not be used for the purposes hereby permitted after 1900 hours any day without the prior consent in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to retain control in the interests of amenity, and in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

22. Delivery and servicing hours - No deliveries or servicing shall take place other than between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 any day without the prior consent in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to retain control in the interests of amenity, and in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

23. Lodge Farm car park – During the hours when the café use hereby permitted is open the car park within Lodge Farm Park shall be made available for use by café patrons.

Reason: To ensure that car parking accommodation is made permanently available to the standards adopted by the Local Planning Authority in the interest of highway safety and in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC33.

24. Tree protection - Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved the trees to be retained on site within the vicinity of the proposed works shall be protected in accordance with the appropriate recommendations contained in British Standard 3998:1989 (Tree Works) to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the trees on site in the interests of amenity and to accord with Policy DC60 of the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

INFORMATIVES

1. With regard to surface water drainage it is the responsibility of the applicant to make proper provision for drainage to ground, water courses or a suitable sewer. In respect of surface water it is recommended that the applicant should ensure that storm flows are attenuated or regulated into the receiving public network through on or off site storage. When it is proposed to connect to a combined public sewer, the site drainage should be separate and combined at the final manhole nearest the boundary. Connections are not permitted for the removal of Ground Water. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required. They can be contacted on 0845 850 2777.
2. In aiming to satisfy conditions 13, 14 and 16 the applicant should seek the advice of the Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor. The services of the local Police CPDA are available free of charge through Havering Development and Building Control. It is the policy of the local planning authority to consult with the Borough CPDA in the discharging of community safety condition.
3. The development of this site is likely to damage archaeological remains. The applicant should therefore submit detailed proposals in the form of an archaeological project design for the monitoring of groundworks. This design should be in accordance with the appropriate English Heritage guidelines.
4. Reason for Approval:

It is considered that the proposal satisfies the relevant criteria of Policies CP5, CP7, CP8, CP9, CP10, CP15, CP16, CP17, CP18, DC20, DC34, DC35, DC48, 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 comprises two separate land parcels. The first is located on the northern side of Main Road opposite the junction with Lodge Avenue and forms part of Raphael Park. The second is located on the southern side of Main Road and comprises the car park of Lodge Farm Park.

- 1.2 The portion of the site to the northern side of Main Road, within Raphael Park, is centred on the existing former park keeper's lodge building. The Park Lodge has recently undergone some refurbishment internally for the Park's Protection Team. There is also a meeting space, which is used by the Friends Group. Park Lodge is an attractive two-storey Arts and Crafts style building with pebbledash coatings on the upper storey and red-orange bricks on the lower. Ground levels across the site fall gently from east to west. There is also a change in ground level between Main Road and the site with the existing former park keeper's lodge being located at a higher level. A number of mature trees are to be found within the site the majority of which are located adjacent to the southern boundary with Main Road.
- 1.3 The portion of the site to the southern side of Main Road is formed by the existing Lodge Farm Park car park. The car park, which is accessed from Main Road, is capable of holding 40 cars. Soft landscaping and metal railings presently bound the car park.
- 1.4 The character of the surrounding area is drawn for the most part from 20th century suburban housing. The northern application site is located within the Gidea Park Conservation 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. Three other planning applications have previously been approved for works in connection with the Heritage Lottery funding as detailed in the history section of this report. This application concerns the provision of a new extension to the former park keeper's lodge to provide a new café and toilet facilities to replace those, which presently exist elsewhere in the park.

3. Description of Proposal:

- 3.1 This application seeks planning permission for the restoration and extension of the former park keeper's lodge to form a facility for park visitors, including a café, public toilets, community meeting space and accommodation for park staff. Planning permission is also sought for the creation of a service yard with a new vehicular access point from Main Road together with the provision of lighting columns and additional fencing in Lodge Farm Park car park.
- 3.2 The proposal would see the construction of a single storey side extension of modern appearance to the existing Park Lodge on the northern side of Main Road. In order to facilitate the proposed extension the existing single component to the eastern side of the building would be demolished. The proposed extension would project out from the flank of the existing Park Lodge by 26 metres. The extension would have a varying depth of between

6 and 11.8 metres. A flat roof and a mono pitch roof would cover the extension with the overall height being 5 metres. The proposed extension would be finished with predominantly glazed panels facing onto the park. The remainder of the building would be finished in a terra cotta render with dark stained vertical timber boarding. The layout of the proposed extension is such that the café and external seating area would be located on the park side of the building with the kitchen and toilet facilities situated to the rear. To the area behind the proposed extension a service yard is proposed with a new 4 metre wide vehicular access from Main Road. The proposed service yard would provide a dedicated turning and loading/unloading area for service and delivery vehicles together with a small parking area. The proposed service yard would have a width of 21.5 metres by 11.5 metres in depth. The pedestrian areas surrounding the proposed extension including the terrace area would be finished in York stone paving with the service yard being black tarmac.

- 3.3 The proposed café is intended to be primarily used by park visitors however the applicant has advised that it would be capable of use outside of normal park hours. The applicant has indicated that the café could be used as a destination in its own right for evening meals and as such hours of 0900 till 2330 are sought with opening until midnight on a Saturday. The café would be capable of holding 40 covers internally with 44 covers to the external terrace area.
- 3.4 Raphael Park does not have a dedicated car park. Mindful of this the applicant is proposing that Lodge Farm Park car park would be available for use by café patrons outside of normal park hours. In order that the car park can be suitably closed off from the remainder of Lodge Farm Park this application proposes additional boundary fencing. The proposed fencing would comprise of 1.5 metre high metal railings. Five new lighting columns are proposed within the car park so that it would be capable of illumination during the evening period. The proposed lighting columns would be 5 metres in height and of a slim bowl top design.

4. Relevant History:

- 4.1 The following planning applications have recently been approved for various works within the park. Each of these applications are also connected to the funding secured through the Heritage Lottery Fund.

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

P0770.11 - 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

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 71 local addresses and the application advertised in the local press. A site notice has also been displayed at the Main Road park entrance. Two letters of representation have been received. One of the letters questions whether the proposed café will be a viable business proposition and states that the funding could have been better spent on other parks in the Borough. The remaining letter provides a number of observations about the past and present running of the park but raises no actual grounds of objection against this application.
- 5.2 The Gidea Park and District Civic Society welcome the proposed upgrading of the café and toilet facilities in the park but would prefer to see the existing facilities upgraded in their current location. The Society also question the viability of a café of the size proposed given that the park is well removed from the town centre and business premises. The Society also request that if the proposal is to be approved that the proposed roof mounted solar panels are not visible from Main Road or from within the park.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 The Greater London Archaeology Advisory service raise no objection subject to the imposition of a planning condition.
- 5.6 The Environment Agency raises no comments.
- 5.7 Natural England welcome the proposed enhancement measures to the park.
- 5.8 The London Fire Brigade have given consideration to the provision of fire hydrants and advise that it will be necessary for a new private hydrant to be installed adjacent to the front of the building.
- 5.9 The Borough Crime Prevention Design Advisor has put forward a number of recommendations and requests that the planning conditions covering external lighting, cycle storage, boundary treatment and the Secure by Design award scheme be imposed should permission be granted.
- 5.10 Transport for London advises that the proposal is unlikely to result in an unacceptable impact to the road network.
- 5.11 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. Relevant Policies

- 6.1 Policies CP5 (culture), CP7 (recreation and leisure), CP8 (community facilities), CP9 (reducing the need to travel), CP10 (sustainable transport), CP15 (environmental management), CP16 (biodiversity and geodiversity), CP17 (design), CP18 (heritage), DC18 (protection of public open space, recreation sports and leisure facilities), DC20 (access to recreation and leisure), DC32 (the road network), DC33 (parking), DC34 (walking), DC35 (cycling), DC36 (servicing), DC40 (waste recycling), DC49 (sustainable design and construction), DC50 (renewable energy), DC55 (noise), DC56 (light), DC58 (biodiversity and geodiversity), DC61 (urban design), DC62 (access), DC63 (safer places), DC68 (conservation areas) and DC71 (other historic landscapes) of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Documents are material planning considerations.
- 6.2 Policies 6.13 (parking), 7.3 (designing out crime), 7.4 (local character), 7.6 (architecture), 7.8 (heritage assets and archaeology), 7.18 (protecting open space and addressing local deficiency), 7.19 (biodiversity and access to nature) and 7.21 (trees and woodland) of the London Plan are relevant.
- 6.3 National policy guidance set out in Planning Policy Statement 5 “Planning for the Historic Environment” and Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 “Planning for open space, sport and recreation” are also relevant.

7. Staff Comments

- 7.1 This proposal is put before the Committee due to the application being submitted by and for land in Council ownership. The main issues to be considered by Members in this case are the principle of development, design/street scene issues, heritage implications, sustainability, impact on amenity and parking and highways issues.
- 7.2 Principle of Development
- 7.2.1 In preparing supporting documentation to accompany the Council’s bid for Heritage Lottery Funding an audit of the existing park and its facilities was undertaken. The applicant also undertook consultation with members of the public and with various public bodies. The headline result of this research was that certain aspects of the park are deteriorating and that people do not fully appreciate the value of the park. In being awarded Heritage Lottery Funding the Council hopes to fully restore the park and to provide new facilities that will create greater awareness of the park and encourage increased visitor numbers. The proposed extension of Park Lodge to provide much needed modern facilities for park visitors is seen as an important aspect of the park’s rejuvenation. Policy DC18 of the LDF states that the Council will seek the enhancement of existing leisure and recreation facilities and will encourage the provision of additional such facilities. Staff are of the view that the proposal is acceptable in principle and that it would assist in the Council's aim of enhancing existing leisure facilities.
- 7.2.2 Policy DC22 of the LDF and Policy 7.18 of the London Plan seek to retain existing public open space. The proposed extension would be constructed

to the eastern side of the existing building on part of the parkland, which is currently either hard surfacing, or open grass. The proposal would result in the loss of 605 square metres of grassed area. The grassed area, which would be lost whilst presently contributing to the character and openness of the parkland does not form part of a designated sports pitch. As part of the wider Heritage Lottery Fund works proposed within the park the existing toilet block and café buildings are to be demolished and the park in these locations restored to grass. The total area of green space proposed in these areas totals 740 square metres resulting in a net gain of 140 square metres. Staff are of the view that the loss of the open space is acceptable in this instance having regard to the fact it can be replaced elsewhere in the park.

7.3 Design/Impact on Street scene

7.3.1 The existing Park Lodge sits on high ground and provides fine views over the lake and down the length of the park. The siting of the proposed extension has been carefully considered to make the most of these views. The proposed extension would project out at an angle from the existing building and would run parallel with the lake following the contour lines across this part of the park. The layout of the proposed extension is such that the café and external seating area would be located on the park side of the building with the kitchen and toilet facilities situated to the rear. To the area behind the proposed extension a service yard is proposed with access from Main Road.

7.3.2 In order to avoid competing with the attractive architecture of the existing Park Lodge the proposed extension has been designed in a manner to keep it as discrete as possible. To this end the proposed extension would be of a single storey form and where possible integrated into the existing landscape features. Within the roof area of the proposed extension a screened ventilation zone is proposed where any kitchen extraction and ventilation equipment can be sited. The design of the proposed extension is such that any equipment located within this area would not be visible.

7.3.3 Ground levels across the site change from east to west therefore in order maintain the floor level of Park Lodge the proposed extension would be cut into the ground to a certain extent. Staff are of the view that the cutting in of the extension into the ground would reduce its visual presence from Main Road. Views of the proposed extension from Main Road would also be partly obscured by existing soft landscaping and mature trees, which can be found along the southern boundary. Staff are of the view that the proposed extension would have an acceptable impact on the Main Road street scene and that the building has been designed in a manner which would ensure it would not appear overly dominant or intrusive.

7.3.4 The most visible elevation of the proposed extension, which would face onto the park, would be predominantly glazed and of a lightweight appearance. The extension would also be partially hidden behind a low hedge and a timber pergola that would extend over the full length of the proposed external terrace area. The proposed pergola would be planted in order to

soften the appearance of the extension from within the park. The roofs of the extension would also be planted with sedum in an effort to further reduce the impact of the extension. Staff are of the view that the design of the proposed extension is such that it would not appear out of character with its parkland surroundings.

- 7.3.5 The existing Park Lodge comprises a light render to the upper floor and red-orange facing brickwork to the ground floor. Materials chosen for the proposed extension would not seek to replicate the existing building however these have provided a suitable reference point. The external walls of the proposed extension are indicated as being terra cotta coloured render to match the red-orange brickwork of the Lodge. The upper portions of the proposed extension would be faced with dark stained vertical timber boarding with rainwater goods being made from zinc. Staff are of the view that the proposed materials would be of an acceptable appearance and quality. Further details of materials including samples is recommended via condition.
- 7.3.6 To the eastern side of the proposed extension a new service yard is proposed which would be accessed via a new roadway from Main Road. Although the proposed service yard would introduce a large area of hard surfacing this would not be readily visible from Main Road or within the park itself. The change in ground level across this part of the site combined with existing and proposed landscaping would largely screen the service yard from view. The proposed roadway linking the service yard to Main Road has been kept deliberately narrow in order to reduce its presence within the street scene and views of the service yard beyond. Staff are of the view that the proposed service yard and access road would have an acceptable impact on the street scene.
- 7.3.7 In order to provide suitable car parking for the proposed café the applicant has indicated that the car park in Lodge Farm Park would be made available for evening use when it would usually be closed. In order to ensure that this car park can be closed off from the remainder of the park additional fencing is proposed through this application. New lighting columns are also proposed in order that the car park can be safely used during the evening period. Staff are of the view that the siting and design of the proposed railings and lighting columns is acceptable.
- 7.3.8 Policy DC62 of the LDF outlines that planning permission for public buildings and toilets will not be granted unless a high standard of inclusive access for employees and visiting members of the public is provided. The proposed extension to Park Lodge has been designed to be fully accessible for all users. Level thresholds would be provided to all external doors and door widths are suitable for wheelchairs and buggies. Toilet facilities including an accessible toilet would be available directly from the entrance lobby. Bulkhead type lighting attached to the building is proposed to enable the extension to be accessed safely during hours of darkness. In addition to this ground recessed flush lighting would be provided to light the external

terrace area. Staff are of the view that the proposals are fully compliant with Policy DC62 and would provide suitable access.

7.3.9 Policy DC63 of the LDF advises that new development should address issues of community safety. When this application was first submitted the Borough Crime Prevention Design Advisor raised concern with regard to the lack of lighting within Lodge Farm Park car park which is to be relied upon for restaurant patrons. Concern was also raised by the potential for vehicle crime given the car park is not presently segregated from the remainder of Lodge Farm Park. In order to address these concerns the applicant has revised the proposal to provide lighting within the car park and additional fencing to provide segregation from the remainder of the park. Staff are of the view that the proposals are acceptable in respect of community safety and Policy DC63 subject to planning conditions.

7.4 Heritage Implications

7.4.1 The application site is located in the Gidea Park Conservation Area and as such, the general consideration is whether a new development would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Government guidance contained in PPS 5 advises, "In considering the impact of a proposal on any heritage asset, local planning authorities should take into account the particular nature of the significance of the heritage asset and the value that it holds for this and future generations".

7.4.2 Raphael Park was one of the key components of the planned Gidea Park Garden Suburb, the remains of which today form the Gidea Park Conservation Area. The Gidea Park Garden Suburb was the first major suburb to be developed outside of Romford and is historically important because it bears evidence of the architectural and social ideals of the time in its composition and layout. The intention of the Romford Garden Suburb was to take a carefully planned approach to landscape, with as much emphasis placed on the parkland and open space, sport and health as on the architecture of the houses built there. Raphael Park played a key role in the overall vision for the layout of the Garden Suburb and was a key component to its overall character.

7.4.3 Raphael Park was Romford's first municipal public park and officially opened in 1904. The development of the park predated the first of the Garden Suburbs houses in 1910/11 and indeed featured heavily in the promotional literature that accompanied the housing development. In addition to increasing the saleability of the houses the park also prevented the urban encroachment of Romford onto the suburb.

7.4.4 Comparatively little has changed to Raphael Park since it first opened, and the overall layout and character of the park remains largely intact. Raphael Park contains remnants of the Gidea Hall Estate, which was in existence during the 12th-19th centuries on the north side of Main Road. Key surviving remnants include Black's Lake, Black's Bridge (Grade II Listed), one of the twin gatehouses onto Main Road and part of the Pleasure Grounds.

- 7.4.5 The proposed development has the potential to impact on the Park's historical value and as such careful consideration needs to be given to the proposals. The proposed development would be centred on the existing Park Lodge at the southern end of the park adjacent to Main Road. The existing Park Lodge dates back to 1904 and was formerly accommodation for the park keeper. It is an attractive detached house with pebbledash coatings on the upper storey and facing brickwork on the lower. The proposed extension would result in the demolition of the existing single storey projection to the eastern side of the building. The proposals would maintain and refurbish the remainder of the building. Staff raise no objection to the demolition of the single storey wing and it is considered that its removal would not be overly harmful to the buildings overall character.
- 7.4.6 As described within the design and street scene section of this report staff are of the view that the proposed extension has been designed in a sympathetic manner which would complement the existing Park Lodge building. Whilst the proposed extension would be of a contemporary design this approach is considered to be the most appropriate for the host building whereas a 'pastiche' approach would compromise the architecture of the original building.
- 7.4.7 The character of the Gidea Park Conservation Area is that of a mature garden suburb with buildings located in spacious plots. The proposed extension whilst infilling some of the open space to the side of the Park Lodge would not in staff's view detract from the verdant character of the Conservation Area. Although the proposed Park Lodge extension and service yard area would have a lasting impact on this portion of the Conservation Area staff consider that the proposals are consistent with the historic traditions of the area. Staff are of the view that design and siting of the proposed extension and service yard is such that any impact on the public realm would not be overly harmful to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposed extension and associated works would not, in staff's view, have an adverse impact on the historic features of the parkland landscape or upon the setting of the nearby Grade II Listed Black's Bridge. Staff therefore consider, as a matter of judgement, that the impact of the proposed development meets the test of preserving the character of the Conservation Area. In this respect it is not therefore considered that there is a conflict with the provisions of Policy DC68 of the LDF or PPS 5.
- 7.4.8 The application site is located within an Archaeological Priority Area and as such an archaeology assessment has been submitted with the application. English Heritage has been consulted on the application has advised that the proposal and raised no objection to the proposals subject to securing a programme of investigation through a planning condition. Staff consider the proposals to be acceptable in respect of archaeology and the meets the provisions of Policy DC70 of the LDF.

7.5 Sustainability

7.5.1 Through the policies of the Local Development Framework the Council is seeking to address climate change by encouraging the highest standards of sustainable construction and design in new development proposals. The proposed extension would make use of modern sustainable design techniques, materials and construction methods. The design of the proposed extension has been carefully considered to maximise natural light through the provision of roof windows and sunpipe tubes. The applicant recognises that the proposed extension would be used fairly constantly throughout the day therefore in order to gain the best energy saving solar panels are proposed to the roof of the extended building. In addition it is also intended to utilise a ground source heat pump in association with under floor heating throughout the extension. Staff are of the view that the proposal would act as a showcase development for the Council's sustainability agenda and contribute positively to reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

7.6 Biodiversity

7.6.1 Raphael Park as a whole is designated a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation. The park contains a number of important habitats and features including Black's Lake and a range of mature trees. Policy DC58 of the LDF seeks to ensure that development proposals protect and enhance biodiversity throughout the Borough. In this case the proposed building and associated works result in the loss of some amenity grassland (605 square metres in area). The area of grass, which would be lost, is judged to be of low ecological value and as such no objection is raised to its loss. The submitted plans indicate that additional shrubbery would be planted around the proposed extension, which staff consider would compensate for the loss of the grassed area.

7.6.2 The proposed extension, service yard and associated vehicular access has been carefully sited to reduce its impact on existing trees. Despite this the proposals would result in the removal of five trees of small and medium size. As part of the wider improvement works to be undertaken within the park by the Council following the award of the Heritage Lottery Funding the aim is to replace planting which is uncharacteristic within a late Victorian, early Edwardian park, with species more appropriate for the period. A number of the existing over mature trees and some of poor health are also to be removed and replaced. It is hoped that the proposed works will improve the ecological and amenity value of the park. Staff are of the view therefore that the loss of the trees proposed through this application is acceptable having regard to the wider planting proposals.

7.7 Impact on Amenity

7.7.1 The proposed extension would be sited to the side of the existing Park Lodge. The extension would be located at a distance of 40 metres from the nearest residential dwelling at no. 92 Main Road on the opposite side of the street. Royal Jubilee Court, a sheltered housing scheme, is located to the east of Raphael Park and would be separated from the proposed extension by a distance of 36 metres. Having regard to the single storey nature of the

proposed extension and its separation from adjoining residential properties staff consider that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on visual amenity nor result in a loss of light.

- 7.7.2 The proposed service yard would introduce additional activity within the site. The service yard is well removed from the nearest neighbouring residential property and a suitable landscaped buffer would be maintained around the perimeter. Subject to the imposition of a condition limiting delivery and servicing hours, it is considered that any noise impact arising would not be unduly harmful.
- 7.7.2 The proposed extension would include a new café and public toilets which would be open throughout the year during normal park opening hours. In view of the sites location on a busy main route into Romford staff consider that any noise associated with the operation of the extension during the daytime would not be materially harmful to residential amenity given the ambient noise levels already present in this location.
- 7.7.3 The applicant is seeking to be able to operate the café in the evenings when the park would be closed. The applicant has requested opening hours of 0900 till 2330 Sunday to Friday and 0900 till midnight on Saturday. The application site is located in a suburban housing area where residents reasonably expect a different type of living environment to that of a local or town centre location. The application site is located outside of Romford Town Centre and a significant distance from the Gidea Park Major Local Centre which is further along Main Road to the east. Within the vicinity of the site there are no late night opening uses therefore the proposal would be the first such use.
- 7.7.4 The proposed café would be located within the confines of the park and well removed from the nearest residential property. Notwithstanding this it is important to consider the likely associated comings and goings from the building particularly as patrons would need to rely upon car parking within Lodge Farm Park on the opposite side of Main Road. Staff are of the view that ambient noise levels within the vicinity of the site fall considerably in the evening period. Given the location of the site staff consider it to be reasonable to impose a condition preventing the use of the external terrace area beyond 1900 and that the café should close at 2230. Members are invited to exercise their judgement to this aspect of the proposal.
- 7.7.5 The extension would include a kitchen area for the proposed café. In order to ensure that cooking smells do not result in a nuisance specialised extract units over the kitchen equipment are proposed within the ceiling space of the building. A planning condition seeking further details of the equipment is recommended in the event that Members are minded to grant planning permission.
- 7.7.6 In order to provide dedicated car parking for the proposed café use the applicant is proposing that Lodge Farm Park car park would be available for use outside of normal park hours. In order that the car park can be suitably closed off from the remainder of Lodge Farm Park this application proposes

additional boundary fencing. The application also proposes that the car park would be lit using five lighting columns. In respect of visual impact the proposed lighting columns and fencing would be located within the confines of Lodge Farm Park and well removed from adjoining residential properties. Staff are of the view that this aspect of the proposals would have an acceptable impact on residential amenity.

7.7.7 The nature of the proposed lights is such that lighting would be directed down onto the ground and material harm is not therefore expected to occur through light spill or lights shining into neighbouring residential properties. The applicant has submitted a drawing indicating proposed lux levels and this demonstrates that the light would be contained within the confines of the park. The operation of the lighting can be controlled via condition.

7.8 Parking and Highway Issues

7.8.1 Currently service and maintenance vehicles access Park Lodge by entering the park from Main Road through the main gates, traveling along the shared pedestrian and cycle path to a hard surfaced area adjacent to the building. There is limited on site parking provision and turning space therefore Council vehicles often have to park and turn on the grass. The applicant recognises that the current situation is unsatisfactory from a safety point of view. This proposal would therefore see the creation of a new dedicated service yard adjacent to the extended Park Lodge building. The service yard would be accessed via a new single width roadway from Main Road. The siting of the proposed roadway and resultant access arrangements are considered to be acceptable from a highways perspective. It is not considered that use of the proposed vehicular entrance would interfere with the operation of the existing bus stop located further to the west. The proposals are considered to accord with Policy DC32 of the LDF.

7.8.2 The proposed service yard would enable refuse and delivery vehicles to enter the site, turn and leave in a forward gear. A dedicated refuse storage area is proposed to the rear of the building adjacent to the service yard. Staff consider the proposed servicing arrangements to comply with the provisions of DC36 of the LDF.

7.8.3 The proposed extension would create 150 square metres of café floor space. The Council's parking standards set out in Annex 5 of the LDF seek the provision of one space per 10 square metres of floor space equating to a requirement of 15 spaces for this application. Within the proposed service yard two blue badge holder parking spaces are proposed together with four parking spaces for staff. The applicant has indicated that the proposed café is to open during normal park hours during this time patrons would be able to park either within Lodge Farm Park car park or on street in surrounding roads not subject of parking controls. The applicant has indicated that the café may open in the evening when Lodge Farm Park and Raphael Park would both be closed. In order to ensure that adequate car parking is available the applicant has indicated that Lodge Farm Park car park (with a capacity of 40 cars) would be made available. Staff are of the view that the proposed parking arrangements are acceptable and comply with Policy

DC33 of the LDF.

7.8.4 LDF Policy DC36 seeks to ensure that cycle parking is provided in order encourage sustainable forms of transport. In this case the applicant has not indicated cycle parking on the submitted plans however sufficient space would be available for this to be provided. This could be secured via planning condition.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Having regard to all relevant factors and material planning considerations staff are of the view that this proposal to provide an extension to the existing Park Lodge is acceptable in principle. Staff are of the view that the proposed extension and service yard area would not be materially harmful to the character or appearance of the Gidea Park Conservation Area. The proposal is judged to have an acceptable impact on the street scene and subject to the imposition of conditions covering opening and delivery hours would have an acceptable impact on residential amenity. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in all other respects and it is therefore recommended that planning 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 proposed Park Lodge extension has been designed to be accessible to all members of the community. The extended building would have level thresholds to external doors and door widths to accommodate wheelchairs and buggies.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Application form, plans and supporting statements received on 24th May 2011, revised plans received on 31st May 2011 and additional plans received 7th September 2011.