

## UPDATE REPORT:

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 18 July 2018

ITEM NO. 11

Ward: Caversham  
App No.: 181035/FUL  
Address: The Heights Primary School, 82 Gosbrook Road, Caversham, Reading  
Proposal: Fencing off an area of the Westfield Park Recreation Ground for educational use during school hours for use by the Heights Primary School.

### RECOMMENDATION AMENDED TO:

GRANT Planning permission.

## 1. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1.1 The Council's Ecologist has advised that there are no objections to the application.

1.2 CADRA, GLOBE, the CPDA: no responses to advise of at the time of writing.

1.3 It is not clear from the plans (as the gates are a dull colour), but for confirmation, three access gates are shown on the plans. The enclosed area will be fully accessible to the public, if they wish, outside of the stated times, as set out in the main report. Signage to indicate this would be supplied.

## 2. UPDATE ON OBJECTIONS RECEIVED

2.1 The final number of objections and other representations received will be reported to your meeting. The table below seeks to provide a response to all other objection points which are not considered to have been responded to in the main report.

Objection	Officer response
How long will the grass last? What then, lay tarmac?	This is a detailed maintenance consideration for the applicant and the Leisure and Recreation Service, no tarmac is proposed.
Have all associated costs been borne in mind, eg. maintenance and child supervision?	Not a planning consideration
Why can't the area just be used for the School without fencing at all? School use the park for PE already occurs and this takes up a much greater area anyway, so do not see the point of this	A school playground is required within a contained area
This is a business that runs a school and	This is a Free School and has requirements

should not take open space	for a playground space to be provided, which cannot be provided at the 82 Gosbrook Road site.
We need more open space in Caversham when the air quality is so poor.	The Council's Environmental Protection team does not identify a reduction in air quality attributable to this planning application
Should have a fence which is used for the school and removed at the end of each school day	This is not understood to be a suitable solution for the school and a demarcated, retained area is required.
It will lead to an increase in traffic	No concerns for additional traffic generation from the Highway Authority
Object to using the park for purposes which are not what the paid upkeep of the park is for	Park maintenance is not a direct planning consideration
Concerned that the proposal will create arguments or uncomfortable nature of children playing near to where people are relaxing	This is a usual occurrence in a public park
Was there not a covenant on this land?	Not a planning matter
The School is acting selfishly and is trying to make up for the planning errors they have made	No response
Other options have been considered and rejected and the public have not had a chance to see these	Consultation took place with Ward Councillors before application submission
The fence will create an alleyway at the side of the park	A 1.6m high temporary mesh fence is not considered to create an alleyway
There would be an adverse effect on biodiversity	No objection from the Council's Ecologist
Would not object if the school was permanent and serving the local catchment	No response
Spend more time formalising the site in Caversham heights	Planning permission is close to being issued
You should consider also the 300+ objections to the previous proposal	Each planning application is to be considered on its individual planning merits and objections to each application considered accordingly
Brings the area closer to traffic fumes on Gosbrook Road	No objection from the Environmental Protection team on air quality grounds and this is already a public park
An archaeologist has indicated that there is a cropmark in this area which is of significance	Berkshire Archaeology are considering this matter and officers will provide a verbal update at your meeting.
Tree canopies and roots would be affected	No objection from Council's Natural Environment Team (Tree Officer) to the proposal
Instead you should impose a 20 mile per hour speed limit, introduce a pelican crossing and instruct the school to use the already fenced off Christchurch Meadow	A contained playground is required next to the school site.
All those with children at the school knew there was no outside space when they chose	Not a planning matter

the school for their children and the school knew they had inadequate outside space when they offered places for 2018 entry.	
There is sufficient space in other local schools to take children for the 2018 entry without having to spend more public money on extending this school.	This is not the position of the LEA, as set out in the previous report on application 180552.
This application is totally unacceptable and goes against the Reading 2050 charter that councillors have signed up to.	Not a planning document and therefore not considered to be relevant to the planning assessment.
Not a shady area and site can become waterlogged	Considered to be suitable for the intended purpose by the School and the LEA.
It is also a shame that you are not as open to providing funds to the local Schools that actually need the additional funding rather than wasting money on temporary solutions for The Heights.	No response.
If this planning application goes ahead it is imperative that it is written into the documentation that the fencing is taken down and the park restored to its current state by 1st October 2020	Condition recommended.
The Environment Agency is trying to reduce flood risk in the area. Replacing grass with tarmac will contradict this.	There is no tarmac proposed and there is no objection from the Environment Agency
The new school buildings have already taken green space away from St. Anne's School.	Noted and the purpose of this application is partly to re-provide pitch space.
Concerned for future use of the site and what that means for the park	The report for planning application 180552 advises that the 82 Gosbrook Road site enjoys an established education use. Any future proposals would be considered on their individual merits.
Should consider relative costs of removable fencing	Not a planning requirement.
Lack of compliance with 160676/APPCON (tree conditions), does not trust the applicant to abide by conditions	That decision also notes that as no harm was caused, no further action was being considered. Not relevant to the consideration of this planning application, which does not cause harm to trees and must be considered on its merits.
There appears to be no times or limitations of exclusive use detailed in the application.	Covered in the main report.
Not clear where the gates are	There are three gates in the fencing, as shown on the proposed plans.
There is a lack of detail in the planning statement with regard materials and methods of construction. For example, is there any capacity to recommend fencing specified with anything to absorb sound and prevent rattling of the fence from ball play etc? For example specify rubber mountings	No noise concerns from EP Team RBC Parks and Recreation satisfied that this is standard construction fencing to BS Standards, suitable for the intended use.

buffering the fencing connections with fence post connections? Or is this standard construction practice for play space fencing?	
Concerns for noise situation: -how many pupils assumed to use the space? -how was the sound level decided on? -questions the assumed height of children -The noise data appears to be modelled using a library function for the software -full impacts on all surroundings not given -should provide a follow-up noise survey.	EP Team content with noise report and does not object.
The fence may attract graffiti which will make the park looked uncared for. May have a negative effect on crime.	Plain galvanised steel unlikely to attract graffiti.
Losing our parks and green spaces can have an immeasurable negative effective on the physical and mental health of local people.	Noted, but purpose and open space function retained.
A them and us culture, not present at the outset of this project, is likely to ensue as a direct consequence of permission because it will be taken to indicate the committee pays a higher regard to those who are not local.	Not a planning consideration.
More staggering of break times would negate need for this area.	School/LEA advise that this would not solve the issue.
The school should suffer the inconvenience of not having the space; not the residents having the inconvenience	Officers give relative weight to this community need and note the temporary nature of the proposal.
The application has been done under 82 gosbrook Road, no doubt to avoid any objection.	Addresses are for information only and the application site is clear from the local plan supplied.
The school already has a fenced off area, which caused two lovely Silver Birch trees to be felled.	This may refer to Leisure and Recreation works to the tarmac area near the present children's play area; this is not relevant o the consideration of the current application.
From a visual point of view this will disrupt the pleasant open views , and spoil the appearance of the park.	Visual effect of the fence covered in main report.

Case Officer: Richard Eatough