

APPLICATION NO. P06/W0968

APPLICATION TYPE FULL

REGISTERED 18.09.2006

PARISH HORSPATH

WARD MEMBER(S) Mr Roger Bell

Ms Sarah Gray

APPLICANT Oxford City Council

SITE Sports Ground Car Park, Horspath Road Oxford

PROPOSAL Car park lighting

AMENDMENTS As clarified by lighting calculations received 9 October 2006 and letter from Applicant dated 25 October 2006, as amended by Drawing No. OCH/06/06 02 and Lighting Design Report accompanying Applicant's letter dated 3 November 2006 and amended by drawing no.OCH/06/06 03 accompanying letter from OCC dated 4 December 2006 and as amended by Drawing No. OCH/06/06 04 accompanying Applicant's letter dated 30 January 2007.

GRID REFERENCE 456218/204510

OFFICER Miss S Bird

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application has been referred to Planning Committee as the officer recommendation differs from the views of the Parish Council. The Local Ward Member, Sarah Gray, has also requested that the application be referred to Planning Committee.
- 1.2 The site lies adjacent to Horspath Road recreation grounds and athletics facility. The red-edged area forms part of a larger, established car park which serves these facilities and the wider public. There are approximately 90 parking spaces within the site – a further 85 or so spaces being provided in the continuation of the car park to the east of the red-edged area. A site location plan and aerial photograph are **attached** at Appendix 1 and 2.
- 1.3 The site lies within the Oxford Green Belt and abuts the Oxford City Council administrative boundary. Immediately to the west of the site lie 2 residential dwellings, whilst further to the west (approx. 300m) are a number of commercial and industrial units.
- 1.4 A number of lighting columns are already present within the immediate area, including 8 floodlighting columns associated with the athletics track and street lighting columns which run along the opposite side of Horspath Road from the site

back towards the business units.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 This application seeks full planning permission to erect 6 lighting columns within the sports ground car park positioned at intervals within the site. Following discussions with officers, the scheme has been amended from luminaires with bowl-shaped fittings to ones with horizontal cut-off fittings to reduce the amount of light spillage and light pollution upwards. The proposal has also been amended to address highway and forestry issues, optimising the location of the columns so as to safeguard highway safety and the longevity of established vegetation on the site.
- 2.2 As amended, the scheme proposed 6no. columns of 6 metres in height with 2no. luminaires per column. Each lamp would be 150W. Copies of the plans and details of the proposed lighting columns and flat-glass fronted luminaires are **attached** at Appendix 3.
- 2.3 The proposed operating times for the lighting would be from 16:00 to 20:00 hrs between October and April each year.
- 2.4 In support of the proposal, the applicant has highlighted an increasing incidence of crime within the car park, including vehicle theft and anti-social behaviour. In addition, the applicants are under a duty of care to minimise risk to users of the car park in terms of trip hazards and vehicle collisions and also to protect users from the risk of assault and robbery/theft. As a public car park, the parking facilities are also utilised by staff working at an Oxford City Council building further along Horspath Road – the duty of care that is placed on the applicant consequently extends to such employees. A letter from the applicant providing further details is **attached** at Appendix 4. Crime incidence and risk at the site has been confirmed by the Thames Valley Crime Prevention Design Advisor and a letter is **attached** at Appendix 5.

3.0 CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 Horspath Parish Council Considers that the application should be refused on the grounds that the lighting is unnecessary and an intrusion into the Green Belt. Low level and low power lighting should be used if at all necessary.

Oxford Green Belt Network Objection on the grounds of an increased level of light close to a rural area within the Green Belt. The proposal would add to the creeping urbanisation of this area and detrimentally affect the rural character of the Green Belt between the City and the village of Horspath.

CPRE (Thame/Bullington Area) Objection on the grounds of light pollution and impact on the Green Belt. Not confident that lighting is specifically necessary for purposes allowed within the Green Belt and questions whether objectives could be achieved without high column lighting.

Landscape Architect Acknowledges impact of existing lighting in this former dark area. Considers it imperative to protect the established vegetation on site to mitigate visual impact.

	A flat glass cut-off variety of lamp should be used and a curfew time for the lighting would be prudent.
OCC Highways Officer	No objections.
Environmental Health	No objections. Conditions specified to prevent light trespass into surrounding area.
Forestry Officer	No objections following amendment to the siting of the columns and cable runs.
Thames Valley Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor	Supports the scheme. Given the size of the car park and the number of users, considers it necessary to light the car park. Natural surveillance of the site is low and there is a good choice of escape routes for criminals.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 P95/N0119 – Upgrade of present athletics track to an eight lane all weather track including extension of earthbanking and extension to existing car park. Erection of 8 floodlights - Planning Permission granted August 1995

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 Policies:

G2 – Protection of the Environment

GB4 – Visual Amenity in the Green Belt

C9 – Landscape Features

EP3 – Light Pollution

T1 – Transport Requirements for New Developments

D1 – Design Against Crime

South Oxfordshire Design Guide.

National Planning Guidance:

PPG2 – Green Belts

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The main considerations in this application are:

- 1) Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area within

the Oxford Green Belt;

- 2) Impact on highway safety;
- 3) Impact on residential amenity, and;
- 4) Impact on landscape features.

Visual Impact

6.2

The site lies within the Oxford Green Belt on the edge of Oxford City and falls within Horspath Parish.

6.3

The height, design and positioning of the lighting columns needs to be assessed as to their impact on the open nature of the surrounding Green Belt. There is a proliferation of existing lighting columns within both the immediate and wider area ranging in height between approximately 6m and 10m. Also visible from the site are a number of lighting columns associated with the business and industrial units further west along Horspath Road. As such, the skyline in this locality and, consequently its openness, is already punctuated. The proposed lighting columns would be set between the floodlighting columns associated with the athletics track and a band of street lights along the opposite side of Horspath Road. They are to be restricted to the western, more developed side of the car park and closest to the existing lighting columns in the area. Similar in design to the existing lighting columns in the area, the proposed additional lighting columns would be approximately 4m lower than the athletics track floodlights and should be the same height as the Horspath Road street lighting. In addition, the established vegetation on the site would act to partially screen the lighting columns from wider view. Consequently, the scheme would have no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing lights in this area.

6.4

At night, the impact of potential light pollution associated with the scheme also needs to be assessed. Policy EP3 of the Local Plan explains that there are a number of factors associated with light pollution. These include sky glow; the orange glow usually associated with urban areas, glare; the uncomfortable brightness of a light source when viewed against a dark background, and light trespass; the spilling of light beyond the site boundaries where the light source is

6.5 located.

It is acknowledged that this area of Green Belt, once a former 'dark' area, has been subject to the introduction of various light sources over time. These have combined to create a more urbanised character, with associated sky glow at night. Nevertheless, the sports facility, car park and floodlighting have been previously determined as appropriate development within the Green Belt and they

have an established evening use. No change of use is proposed. It is not considered that the light generated by this proposal would create a significant increase in sky glow in this already illuminated area and ultimately the proposal is not considered to have any additional impact on the openness of the surrounding Green Belt. Set against a background of existing illumination, it is not considered that the lighting would appear as a stark light source creating 'glare' in the landscape. The applicants have also taken all measures to direct light downwards within the boundaries of the site. The luminaires are proposed with a horizontal cut-off acting to minimise light spillage upwards and into the surrounding area and conditions will be imposed to ensure satisfactory levels and distances of light trespass and spillage. The submission of details to be required by condition 6.6 relating to beam orientation and aiming angles will also allow for effective future monitoring of the installed scheme. These conditions (4-6) have been suggested by the Environmental Health Officer.

Policy EP3 explains that pollution caused by lighting can be substantially reduced through the switching off of lights when not required and the avoidance of over-lighting. The applicants have advised that lighting is only required in the darker, winter months from approximately 4pm – 8pm between October and April. They have agreed to operate an automatic cut-off controlled by a fully adjustable time 6.7 clock. Furthermore, the applicants propose only to light the western half of the car park nearest to the sports ground and car park entrances. As a result, the lighting is proposed nearest to the existing permitted lighting in this area.

Given the recent recorded levels of crime within the car park and the high opportunity for continued crime which has been confirmed by the Police Crime Prevention Advisor, it is considered that the need for additional lighting in this area is justified. Additional public safety issues mean that the applicant has a further duty of care to minimise risk to car park users. It is considered that the scheme, as amended, represents a proposal which satisfies these needs whilst minimising the impact on the surrounding Green Belt.

Highway Safety

6.8 Lighting contour diagrams and technical details have been submitted to demonstrate the potential for light spillage within the vicinity that would be associated with the proposed lighting. The Street Lighting Section of the County Council is satisfied that the proposal would not result in unsatisfactory levels of light spillage or glare. The Highways Authority also has no objection to the scheme. Notwithstanding this, should any future issue arise, the Highway Authority is able to require shields or baffles to be fitted at the owners expense and/or the geometry of the light beams to be altered to further control the direction of light emitted and reduce the impact within the surrounding area.

Residential Amenity

6.9 There are just 2 residential properties located within the vicinity of the site. These

are situated immediately to the west of the entrance into the car park. The scheme has been amended to a design which uses cut-off lamps (rather than bowl-shaped fittings which allowing the bulb to project further than the main lamp shield) which help to focus light emitted and prevent light trespass. Subject to conditions to ensure such factors, the Environmental Health Service has advised that there are no objections to the proposals in terms of light nuisance. It is considered that no detrimental impact on residential amenity would arise from the proposals and, arguably, any reduction in anti-social behaviour in the area associated with the lighting could be seen as a positive impact. No objections have been raised by neighbours.

Landscape Features

6.10

There are several significant trees located around the boundaries of the car park and an established hedgerow which runs alongside Horspath Road. It is important to protect these landscape features to screen the lighting columns and mitigate light spillage associated with both the existing and proposed lighting in this area. Following numerous amendments, it is now considered that the siting of the lighting columns and cable runs is compatible with the retention of the vegetation on the site. The Forestry Officer has consequently withdrawn all objections to the proposals and supports the scheme.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 It is recommended that planning permission be granted because it is considered that the proposals accord with the relevant Development Plan policies. The lighting would have no significant impact on the openness of the surrounding Green Belt and would not materially harm highway safety, residential amenity or existing landscape features.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 **That planning permission be granted subject to:**

1. Commencement three years

2. Lighting to operate between 16:00 and 20:00 April to October only.

3. Luminaires to have flat-glass front cover.

4. Details of lighting orientation, profiles and mounting heights to be submitted.

5. Light trespass into windows of neighbours not to exceed vertical illuminance of 5 Lux.

6. Light spill not to exceed 5 Lux at distance greater than 5 metres from boundary of site.

7. Vegetation to be protected during operations in accordance with NJUG10.

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