

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P14/S0547/FUL</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL APPLICATION
<b>REGISTERED</b>	24.2.2014
<b>PARISH</b>	HENLEY-ON-THAMES
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Ms Elizabeth Hodgkin Ms Joan Bland
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Henley Town Council
<b>SITE</b>	Makins Recreation Ground Greys Road Henley-on-Thames, RG9 1TE
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Demolition of existing skatepark and erection of new wheeled-sports facility comprising a street/flow section, bowled section sunken into the ground and new grass bunding (as clarified by noise report dated 30 April 2014)
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	None
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	475696/182167
<b>OFFICER</b>	Mr T Wyatt

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**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The application is referred to Committee at the discretion of the Development Manager.

1.2 The application site (which is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix A) is located in a predominantly residential area of Henley on rising ground to the west of the town centre. The site, which is occupied by a modest skatepark, is located towards the north eastern edge of the recreation ground, the majority of which is a grassed public area of open space formerly used as a landfill site.

**2.0 PROPOSAL**

2.1 The application seeks planning permission for the construction of a new skatepark to replace the existing facility, which comprises moveable ramps. The new permanent structure proposed would comprise an undulating concrete surface providing a series of ramps and slopes. The skatepark would be roughly triangular in shape with maximum dimensions of approximately 40 metres in width by 30 metres in depth. It is proposed to undertake planting around the south west and south east sides of the structure and to maintain pedestrian links from the main part of the recreation ground and car parking area to the east.

2.2 A copy of the plans accompanying the application is **attached** as Appendix B. Other documentation associated with the application can be viewed on the council's website, [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk).

**3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 Henley-on-Thames Town Council - No specific comments due to being the applicant.

3.2 Henley Society – No objections

3.3 Crime Prevention Design Adviser - No objections

3.4 Environmental Health – Following the submission of a noise report the Environmental Health Officer is satisfied that the new skate park, although larger, is expected to be

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quieter than the existing park due to the change in construction materials.

- 3.5 Forestry Officer - No objections subject to conditions requiring landscaping and tree protection to be agreed
- 3.6 Health & Housing - Contaminated Land – The site is a former infill site and as such may be contaminated. As such a contaminated land investigation should be secured by condition.
- 3.7 Neighbours – 13 items of correspondence have been received from individuals writing in support of the application. Many of the comments focus on the need for this type of facility in the town and the benefits that the skatepark would have for the local community, particularly young people.
- 3.8 Neighbours – 6 items of correspondence have been received objecting or raising concerns with the application proposal. The issues raised are summarised as follows:
- lack of parking due to other uses on the site
  - the speed limit on Greys Hill should be limited to 20mph
  - the proposal would result in noise disturbance to neighbouring residents
  - dance should be promoted as both sexes can participate
  - should use money for facilities used by a greater number of people
  - anti-social behaviour
  - potential criminal activity/damage to adjoining site
  - site should be used for multi – purpose sports
  - neighbourhood plan should deal with new social infrastructure
  - traffic parking/congestion on Greys Road

**4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 [P81/S0049/O](#) - Approved (15/07/1981)  
ERECTION OF BOXING AND BOYS' CLUB PREMISES WITH ANCILLARY ACCOMMODATION.

[P72/H0101](#) - Approved (16/02/1972)  
Proposed garages

[P68/H0698](#) - Approved (17/03/1969)  
HEADQUARTERS BUILDING

[P62/H0441](#) - Approved (26/07/1962)  
RETENTION OF LAND TO BE USED AS A TIPPING AREA.

[P58/H0613](#) - Approved (23/10/1958)  
USE OF LAND FOR CONTROLLED TIPPING OF HOUSE & TRADE REFUSE.

[P55/H0436](#) - Approved (26/10/1955)  
Use of land for controlled tipping of house and trade refuse to be restored later for recreational purposes.

**5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE**

- 5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy policies
- CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development
  - CSEN1 - Landscape protection
  - CSHEN1 - The Strategy for Henley-on-Thames
  - CSQ3 - Design
  - CSS1 - The Overall Strategy

- 5.2 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 policies;
- C4 - Landscape setting of settlements
  - CF2 - Provision of additional community facilities
  - CON7 - Proposals in a conservation area
  - D1 - Principles of good design
  - D6 - Community safety
  - D7 - Access for all
  - EP2 - Adverse affect by noise or vibration
  - G2 - Protect district from adverse development
  - R1 - Outdoor sport or play areas
  - T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users
  - T2 - Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008

- 5.3 National Planning Policy Framework  
National Planning Practice Guidance

**6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The main planning issues in relation to this application are:
1. The principle of the development
  2. The impact on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area
  3. The impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers
  4. Other material considerations

The Principle of the Development

- 6.2 There is an existing skateboard facility at the site comprising two ramps. However, it is apparent that this facility is in need of replacement. The site lies in a central position within the town with good access from the surrounding residential areas. Policy R1 of the SOLP states that 'proposals for new or improved facilities for outdoor sport or children's play to serve local needs will be permitted in or adjacent to settlements provided that there are no overriding amenity, environmental, Green Belt, transport or agricultural objections'. In light of the permissive stance of this Policy the principle of the development is acceptable.
- 6.3 Officers are mindful of the progressing Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan, and the potential for a new skatepark to be considered as part of the infrastructure requirements identified through this process. However, the proposed skatepark is on the site of an existing facility and Officers do not consider that this application can be regarded as premature having regard to the emerging Neighbourhood Plan process.

The Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Site and Surrounding Area

- 6.4 Makins Recreation Ground is a substantial area of public open space of approximately 2 hectares that sits in an elevated position in relation to the surrounding land to the north, east and south. The elevation of the site is more pronounced due to its historic use as a land fill site although the land does naturally rise further to the south west. There are fine views from the recreation ground over much of the surrounding town, including the housing on lower ground to the north and parts of the historic centre to the east, including St Marys Church on Hart Street. The views also extend eastwards and north eastwards over the wooded countryside beyond the River Thames.
- 6.5 The existing skateboarding facility is modest in scale, only comprising two moveable

ramps sited on an area of hardstanding. By contrast the proposed facility would comprise a much more substantial structure occupying a greater part of the site. The proposed structure would be located on the site of the existing facility but would extend outwards, particularly to the north and east. The site is generally level although the land falls sharply beyond the northern edge of the site down towards the housing within the Deanfield Road area. To the south west the land rises relatively steeply to the main grassed area of the recreation ground. The skatepark would generally be restricted to the most level existing part of the site, but would require some regrading of the land to create a level surface. This would mean some raising of the land to the north and east and some slight cutting into the bank to the south west. The skatepark would be undulating with the highest parts at various points on the edge being approximately 2 metres above the base level within the main structure, which would be generally lower than the height of the existing ramps.

- 6.6 The skatepark would be generally well integrated into the existing land form of the site although banking around the structure would be required. Externally such banking would be relatively discreet given the sloping nature of the surrounding land such that the banking should appear as a continuation of the existing levels surrounding the site and reflecting the somewhat alien land form of the site in any case due to its historic use as a landfill site. Although there are fine views outwards from the site over much of the town and the surrounding countryside, views into the site are more restricted and in such views the skatepark would be viewed against the backdrop of the existing landform and housing development, which is on still higher ground to the south west and would also be viewed in context with the functional use of the recreation ground. The site is not a designated area of land, and the development would not have a detrimental impact on the setting of the Henley Main Conservation Area, the edge of which lies approximately 75 metres to the north east of the site.

#### The Impact on the Amenity of Neighbouring Occupiers

- 6.7 The application site lies relatively close to a number of residential properties and the Environmental Health Officer initially raised concern that the noise associated with the development would have a negative impact on the amenity of nearby residents. Subsequently the applicant has commissioned and submitted a noise report to examine this issue and this report concludes that the 'noise levels associated with the proposed scheme are unlikely to cause unreasonable disturbance to occupiers of the nearest residential properties and will provide a suitable reduction in noise levels from the existing scheme'. The Environmental Health Officer has assessed the noise report and is satisfied that the noise impact from the new skatepark would be less than from the existing skatepark and would not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of nearby residents.
- 6.8 It should be noted that no hours of use restrictions are proposed as it is not considered necessary for the grant of planning permission. However, as no lighting is proposed the use of the skatepark would be restricted to daylight hours.

#### Other Material Considerations

- 6.9 The enlarged skatepark would inevitably result in a greater number of people using the facility, including some who may travel from outside of the town. There is restricted parking on the site, however, the site is in a sustainable location and is well served by the town's public transport system and existing public car parking areas.
- 6.10 The development would not result in the loss of any vegetation, however, a condition is recommended to require agreement to a scheme of tree protection for the trees along

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the northern section of the site throughout the construction process. Due to the location of the site and scale of the development Officers also consider that a scheme of landscaping should be agreed, particularly having regard to new planting to soften the edges of the development in public views from the surrounding area. Indicative planting plans have already been submitted under the application.

- 6.11 Due to the historic use of the site and the groundworks required in relation to the development, it is necessary to impose a condition regarding the need to assess, and if necessary, remediate any contamination on the site.

**7.0 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The application proposal is in accordance with relevant development plan policies and national planning policy, as it is considered that, subject to conditions, the proposal would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area, and would not harm neighbouring amenity or be prejudicial to highway safety.

**8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 **That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. Commencement – 3 years**
- 2. Development to be in accordance with approved plans**
- 3. Details of existing and proposed levels to be agreed prior to commencement of development**
- 4. Details of soft and hard landscaping to be agreed prior to commencement**
- 5. Tree protection scheme to be agreed prior to commencement**
- 6. No external lighting to be provided**
- 7. Contaminated land assessment to be carried out**

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