

Planning Application 23/500263/REM:

Approval of Reserved Matters for Scale, appearance, Landscaping, Layout being sought for the Sittingbourne Rugby Club and Community Hub including, 2x RFU compliant rugby pitches and associated parking, pursuant to application 17/505711/HYBRID. ADDRESS: Land At Wises Lane Borden Kent ME10 1GD.

In light of the points outlined below and the extensive time the Wises Lane Monitoring & liaison Group and the Full Parish Council have dedicated to this planning application, they agreed that there are no further gains to be made by their attendance at the Swale Planning Committee meeting on 9TH November 2023.

The Parish Council (PC) would like to address and clarify the actions it has been taking regarding planning application 23/500263/REM the Rugby Club on the Wises Lane development.

On 17th February 2023 the Parish Council put forward numerous concern points regarding this application, these can be found on the Swale Planning Portal. On 28th March 23, the PC asked SBC Planning to add that the PC objected to the application for these reasons.

In August 2023 the application was an item on the Swale Planning Committee meeting, and so to back up our concerns the PC sent a representative to put across the PC's 8 main points of concern that were thought important to get across in the 3 minutes speaking time allowed.

As a consequence of the PC and other comments made at the Planning Committee meeting the application was deferred by the Planning Committee to allow responses to questions and concerns raised with regard to the following (the minutes of this meeting can be viewed at <https://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=130>).

1. Proposed parking spaces
2. Adequate coach turning and suitable modifications to Cryalls Lane
3. External lighting;
4. The proposed number of toilets
5. Improvements to the design of the building so it was more in keeping with the local area
6. Disabled parking.

At the PC meeting on 17th August, the PC minutes noted the points that they had raised at the Committee meeting which were:-

The Director of Planning's report addresses many of Borden Parish Council's comments but the following were thought to still be a main cause for concern:-

1. The Appearance of the clubhouse.
2. Gas leakage from the Nature Reserve
3. Archaeology
4. Coach Manoeuvrability
5. Vehicular site access
6. Speed limit
7. Car Parking Allocation
8. Public Toilets

After the Planning Committee meeting, Quinn Estates contacted the PC to arrange a meeting with them, the Planning Officers and Rugby Club officials regarding the PC objections, to discuss the PC concerns.

At their meeting on 21st September, the PC considered the request to attend this meeting and it was resolved to send 2 representatives to attend the meeting on behalf of the PC, on the understanding that the PC representatives would not be able to make any decisions and any decisions requested would be brought back to the Full Council meeting for further consideration.

It was also resolved that PC raise further concerns at the meeting concerning the lighting and noise that would emanate from the balcony and function room for any event and that they would also like the building signage to prominently display the Community Hub and request that the landscaping greatly reduces the visual impact of the building on the surrounding rural area, also the structure of the management committee is to be defined.

The meeting was arranged for 2nd October and was attended by a representative from Quinn Estates, Sittingbourne Rugby Club, 2 Parish Councillors, and the Parish Clerk who took notes which will be published on the Parish Council website as agreed at their October meeting.

From the meeting, Quinn Estates took away several actions for consideration. The actions with their responses to each one are listed as follows:-

1. The planting of shrubs to break the symmetry of building design and possible trellises. ✓
The attached landscape plans show far more detail on the planting areas than on the site coloured masterplan. I would hope this resolves Councillors concerns over breaking up elevations and further planting around the building.
2. Look at vertical vs horizontal cladding options and draw a new design. ✓
Clague are working on a revised design that includes horizontal boarding to the façade that it was suggested was explored – I will share this with you and officers (copied in) asap.
3. Look at reducing lighting by considering lowering light levels and/or putting film on windows. Take the lighting issue back to Swale planning with a view to making the building lighting and light overspill subject to special conditions and the recommendation of a lighting expert. ✓
We are happy to accept a planning condition wording that ensures the internal lighting design minimises light spill from the balcony/windows, perhaps as an amended to the proposed condition for external lighting.
4. Speak to the case officer regarding increasing the number of parking spaces and update landscape and car park plans. ✓
We have carried out a review of the car park – we think that an additional 11 bays can be provided without significant losses of planting/green space, increasing the number of spaces to 76, providing additional capacity should it be required in the future. We have designed 4 bays to the front of the building that would logically be best suited to drop offs/pick ups rather than longer stays, which I think from a practical level could be useful.
5. Noise - will go to the planning officer regarding planning conditions. The Parish Council will form part of the management committee, and license and if Swale wanted could try to put a planning condition on i.e. don't use the balcony after 9 p.m. ✓
Operating hours of the building are likely to be controlled by licensing and the management company unless a planning condition is imposed.
6. Change to floor colour to mark changing rooms from other areas. ✓
Plans will also change the floor plan colour so that the toilets are shown in the communal area and not the changing rooms. Detailed design will cover materials and is not a planning matter.
7. Remove the Rugby Club signage from drawings. ✓
Signage on the building to be removed from drawings.
8. Exterior coating of window and balcony structure in matt would deflect light.

From the meeting the Parish Council was also sent updated plans for the following:-

- Detailed revised landscape plan
- Amended car park layout
- Proposed floor plans and elevations with vertical cladding
- Proposed floor plans and elevations with horizontal cladding
- Internal layout review

At their meeting on 19th October, there was an agenda item to consider if there were any further matters that needed to be considered and raised in regards to this application before it goes back to the Planning Committee. The notes taken at the meeting were shared with Full Council along with the responses received from Quinn Estates to the actions they took away and they were walked through the updated plans. From this they resolved to write to Quinn Estates, stating that if the below points are accepted and Quinn's planning application reflects the following points then the Parish Council would not object.

1. The floor covering for the public area and toilets is clearly discernible as different to the changing rooms.
2. The light overspill is subject to a separate planning condition following the advice of a lighting expert.
3. The planning department is confident that the sound and lighting conditions will result in no detrimental impact to the flora, fauna and protected species within the Nature Reserve.
4. The Vertical cladding option is used.
5. The 11 extra parking spaces are added.
6. The enhanced landscaping to soften the visual impact is included.

Clarity has also been sought with the Planning Department to ensure their understanding that points 2 and 3 refer to the overspill lighting from the clubhouse balcony window onto the Nature Reserve, and this has been taken into account for the table update report for the Planning Committee meeting.

The Parish Council are only statutory consultees in the planning process, this means they have the right to be informed of planning applications within the parish. They cannot approve or reject planning applications, they can only comment on them in the same way that individuals can comment and have no powers to approve or reject planning applications.

All planning applications can only be commented on by the PC in a properly called council meeting which the public can attend, these comments are then submitted to the planning authority.

At the Parish Council meetings there is an agenda item that allows the public to speak, this includes if they wish the PC to understand their view when considering comments for planning applications.

The Wises Lane Monitoring Group and Full Parish Council hopes that the factual information given in this statement helps their Parishioners understand the time and consideration that the members of Borden Parish Council have put into trying to influence some positive changes to this planning application for the Parish.