

LONDON BOROUGH OF ENFIELD

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date : 28th April 2015

Report of

Assistant Director, Planning,
Highways & Transportation

Contact Officer:

Andy Higham 020 8379 3848
Sharon Davidson 020 8379 3841
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Ward:

Bush Hill Park

Ref: 15/01218/RE4

Category: LBE - Dev by LA

LOCATION: Firs Farm Playing Fields, Firs Lane, London, N21 2PJ

PROPOSAL: Creation of a wetland area (approximately 4,000 sq.m.) to the north of existing sports pitches involving restoration of culverted watercourse, Moore Brook, excavation and landscaping and creation of footpaths and cycle ways.

Applicant Name & Address:

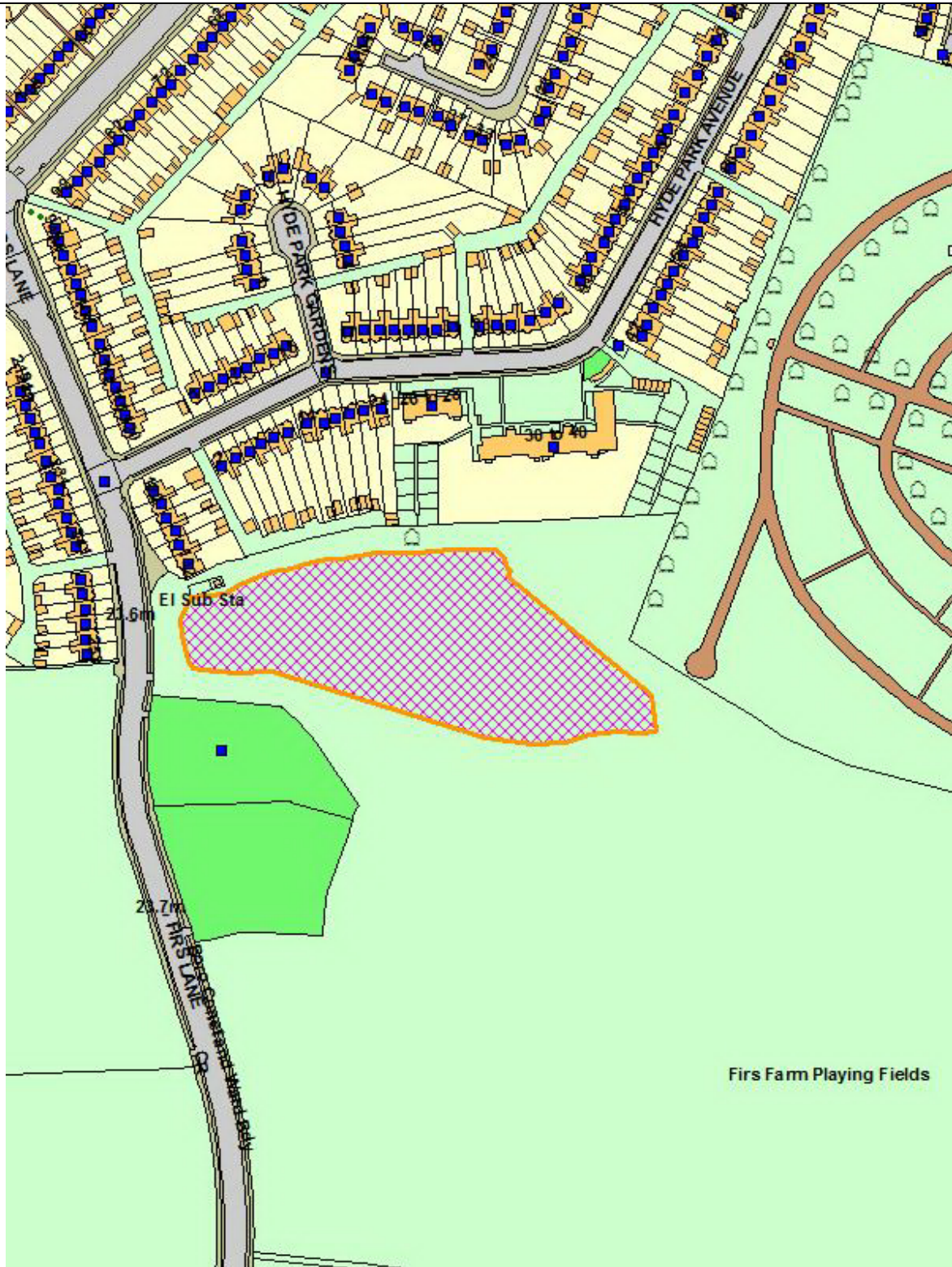
Mr Ian Russell
Civic Centre
Silver Street
Enfield
London
EN1 3XA

Agent Name & Address:

Enfield Council
Civic Centre
Silver Street
Enfield
London
EN1 3XA

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be deemed to be **GRANTED** in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 subject to conditions.

Ref: 15/01218/RE4 LOCATION: Firs Farm Playing Fields, Firs Lane, London, N21 2PJ



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Scale 1:1250

North



1.0 Site and Surroundings

- 1.1 Firs Farm Playing Fields is a public park situated within the Bush Hill Park Ward. It is a relatively large park that is bound by the residential houses on Hyde Park Avenue to the north, Edmonton Cemetery to the north east, the A10 to the east, residential streets to the south and Firs Lane to the west
- 1.2 The section of the park subject to the planning application totals approximately 4,000 sqm. The area is a predominantly flat grassed area to the north end of the park, south of Hyde Park Avenue and situated in between Firs Lane and Edmonton Cemetery.
- 1.3 The site is situated is designated as Metropolitan Open Land and is adjacent to a small wooded section of the park designated as a site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation.

2.0 Proposal

- 2.1 The application proposes engineering works in order to create a multi-functioning wetland area. This wetland is proposed to introduce a water feature to the park to enhance the visual amenity of the area and re-invigorate a part of the park that is currently underused. It is also proposed to re-introduce a culverted watercourse- Moore Brook.
- 2.2 The proposals involve the excavation of part of the park, approximately 110m by 65m. It is proposed to excavate to a depth of 2.3m. The soil from this excavation would then be re-positioned to the immediate west of the wetland ponds where a new raised landscaped area is to be created with sloping gradients 1.4m above existing ground level.
- 2.3 The proposed wetland itself would be broken into 3 separate cells 1200m², 800m² and 1500m² respectively. There would be new pathways created between each cell in Breedon gravel that would link into new paths created in easterly and westerly directions away from the park.
- 2.4 The applicant advises that the scheme will deliver multiple benefits:
 - Enhanced amenity features including improved access for all users through the creation of a network of footpaths/cycleways.
 - Increased biodiversity by creating habitat for a variety of wildlife.
 - Improve water quality through the creation of wetland treatment cells (Moore Brook flows towards Pymmes Park Lane further downstream)
 - Reduced flood risk through the storage of water following extreme rainfall.

3.0 Relevant Planning Decisions

- 3.1 There are no known relevant planning decisions relating to this section of Firs Farm Playing Fields.

4.0 Consultations

4.1 Statutory and non-statutory consultees

4.1.1 Environmental Health

No objection raised. This is because there would be no negative environmental impact in regards to human health. In particular there are no concerns regarding air quality, noise, or contaminated land.

4.1.2 Environment Agency

No objection raised. An informative has been suggested to advise:

The proposed wetland site is located within a Source Protection Zone 1 (SPZ1). The public water supply abstraction is from the Chalk aquifer which is overlain by sufficient thickness of London Clay and therefore should be adequately protected from the surface activities (unless there are preferential pathways such as borehole soakaways or periglacial/scour features present or introduced).

With regards to excavated materials and waste, it is confirmed that material arising from a development is not waste as long as it is used on the site of production and is suitable for that use without processing and treatment. A waste exemption would not be needed if this is the case. The applicant/contractors have a duty to follow the CLAIRE Code of Practice. The Moore Brook is an ordinary watercourse and therefore the responsibility of the Lead Local Flood Authority.

4.1.3 Traffic and Transportation

No objection raised, subject to a construction method statement condition being imposed.

4.1.4 Tree Officer

No objection. The Tree Officer has stated there are no objections raised subject to conditions in relation to landscaping and tree protection.

4.2 Public response

4.2.1 Letters were sent to 42 adjoining and nearby residents. In addition 8 site notices have been displayed outside the site. Three letters have been received to date, 2 in support and 1 against the development. The comments provided have been summarised below as follows:

Letter of Support:

- The proposed wetland will improve the visual amenity and attractiveness of an area of the park that is very underutilised.

Letters of Objection:

- Too much interference with the natural environment.
- If it comes into being, trees would have to be kept low, as the view of the fields would be obstructed from those local to them.

- Wetlands would create stagnant and polluted water, which would be unpleasant for walkers, runners cyclists and other users of the area.

5.0 Relevant Policy

5.1 London Plan

- Policy 5.13 Sustainable drainage
- Policy 5.14 Water quality and wastewater infrastructure
- Policy 5.18 Construction, excavation and demolition waste
- Policy 6.9 Cycling
- Policy 6.10 Walking
- Policy 7.19 Biodiversity and access to nature

5.2 Core Strategy

- CP21 Delivering Sustainable Water Supply, Drainage and Sewerage Infrastructure
- CP28 Flooding
- CP29 Flooding
- CP30 Maintaining and improving the quality of the built and open environment
- CP34 Open space
- CP36 Biodiversity

5.3 DMD

- DMD 47 New roads, access and servicing
- DMD 59 Avoiding and reducing flood risk
- DMD 62 Flood control and mitigation measures
- DMD63 Protection and improvement of water courses and flood defences
- DMD 64 Pollution control
- DMD 70 Water quality
- DMD 71 Protection and enhancement of open space
- DMD 78 to 81 Green Infrastructure

5.7 Other relevant policy/guidance

- NPPF
- NPPG

6.0 Analysis

6.1 Principle

- 6.1.1 Firs Farm Playing Fields is an open space on the boundary between Edmonton and Winchmore Hill. The site is dominated by sports pitches (12 football and 1 rugby pitch); however, there are substantial areas around the sports facilities that offer opportunities to create more natural open spaces. It is proposed to re-landscape these areas to restore a culverted watercourse (Moore Brook, which is 'lost' tributary of Pymmes Brook), create a wetlands area, and enhance woodlands and grasslands. The area of wetlands to be created is approximately 4,000m².

- 6.1.2 It has been agreed with Enfield's Parks Department, that the excavated material to create the wetland is to be reused within Firs Farm Park, to create a new landscaped area to the immediate west of the wetland area. This is an area that has been identified as requiring improvement. This proposed scheme, and the use of the excavated materials, form part of the strategic improvements to Firs Farm Playing Fields.
- 6.1.3 Firs Farm playing fields is designated as Metropolitan Open Land. Policy DMD 71 states that essential facilities that would support the enjoyment of, and maintain the openness of open space will be acceptable subject to certain criteria. Core Policy 34 states that the Council will protect and enhance existing open space to improve the provision of good quality and accessible open space. It is considered that the proposal achieves the objectives of these planning policies, as discussed below.
- 6.2.2 The proposed wetland is to be situated on land that is currently grassed with trees around its periphery. This area within the park has no playgrounds on it, no pitches and no formal paths through it. Thus currently, it is an under-utilised section of the park. However, the proposed wetland is to include paths running through it in strategic locations, linking it to the wider park and outlying area. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would support the enjoyment of the park. Furthermore, it is considered that the proposal would not compromise the openness of the park and existing greenery will be enhanced through additional native planting within the wetland area.
- 6.2.3 Overall, it is considered that the existing park would be enhanced by the wetland as it would create a useable and multi-functioning area that is currently under-utilised. The proposal would benefit the park and its users in regards to recreational function and visual amenity, as well the environmental and biodiversity enhancements it creates.

6.2 Impact on Character of Surrounding Area and Landscaping

- 6.2.1 The wetland has been split into 3 different areas, annotated on the plan as "cells". These cells vary in width and depth. The proposed wet land will reach a maximum width of 110m. The maximum depth of the wetland is 3m from ground level.
- 6.2.2 The wetland would look in keeping with the park, which is characterised by trees, grass and shrubs. It would look like a large landscaped area with pedestrian footpaths through it promoting connectivity through the park. The footpaths are to be surfaced in Breedon Gravel.
- 6.2.3 A condition is suggested requiring a landscaping plan to be submitted. Although landscaping details have been submitted with the types of species to be planted, their location has not been provided on a plan.

6.3 Impact on Neighbouring Properties

- 6.3.1 The proposal would not impact neighbouring residents in regards to outlook, and privacy. Whilst the residential properties on Hyde Park Avenue and Firs Lane are relatively close to the site, the nature of the proposals will not impact upon those properties. There would be obvious disruption during the

construction process, however the project should only take approximately 6-8 weeks to complete. The impact of construction works would be managed through a construction method statement condition.

6.4 Highway Safety and Construction

6.4.1 Traffic and Transportation have raised no objection to the scheme, subject to a condition relating to the submission of a construction method statement. The construction method statement would need to provide details of access and parking during construction.

6.5 Biodiversity

6.5.1 There are no ecological constraints to the proposed development. Whilst the site is located near an area of the park designated as Local Nature Conservation (wooded area to the west and south), it would not impact upon these areas. Overall the scheme is encouraged from a biodiversity perspective and will help to re-introduce new species to the area.

6.6 Trees

6.6.1 The Tree Officer has raised no objection to the proposal. The development will seek to provide additional trees in the area surrounding the site which will improve the appearance of the park as a whole. A condition has been recommended that the scheme is carried in accordance with the tree protection plan and arboriculture method statement.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 The proposal seeks to introduce a wetland area into the park to improve the appearance of the park, the visual amenity and attractiveness of this area along with the restoration of an old watercourse- Moore Brook. This will also bring an added biodiversity benefit which is to be welcomed. The proposal is therefore supported.

8.0 Recommendation

8.1 That planning permission be subject to the following conditions:

1. C51A – Three year time limit
2. C60 Approved Plans

The use and development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans, as set out in the attached schedule which forms part of this notice.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. No development shall take place until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Statement shall provide for:

- i. the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors
- ii. construction access
- iii. arrangements for vehicle servicing and turning areas
- iv. loading and unloading of plant and materials
- v. storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development
- vi. wheel washing facilities
- vii. measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction
- viii a scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from the construction works

Reason: To ensure that the implementation of the development does not prejudice highway safety or the free-flow of traffic on adjoining highways, and to minimise disruption to neighbouring properties.

4. All areas of hedges, scrub or similar vegetation where birds may nest which are to be removed as part of the development, are to be cleared outside the bird-nesting season (March - August inclusive) or if clearance during the bird-nesting season cannot reasonably be avoided, a suitably qualified ecologist will check the areas to be removed immediately prior to clearance and advise whether nesting birds are present. If active nests are recorded, no vegetation clearance or other works that may disturb active nests shall proceed until all young have fledged the nest.

Reason: To ensure that wildlife is not adversely impacted by the proposed development in accordance with national wildlife legislation and in line with CP36 of the Core Strategy. Nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended).

5. No works or development shall take place until full details of both hard and soft landscape proposals have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Soft landscape details shall include:
 - Planting plans
 - Written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment)
 - Schedules of plants and trees, to include native, wildlife friendly species and large canopy trees in appropriate locations (noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers / densities)

Reason: To screen, preserve and enhance the development and ensure adequate landscape treatment in the interest of amenity.

6. Retained Trees

In this condition a “retained tree” is an existing tree which is to be retained in accordance with the approved plans and particulars and any recommendations therein; and paragraphs (a) and (b) below shall have effect until the expiration of 5 years from the date of the (occupation of the

building/commencement of use of the approved development) for its permitted use.

- a) No retained tree shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree be pruned in any manner, be it branches, stems or roots, other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars, without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority. All tree works shall be carried out in accordance with BS 3998:2010.
- b) If any retained tree is cut down, uprooted, destroyed or dies, another tree shall be planted at the same place and that tree shall be of such size and species, and shall be planted at such time, as may be specified in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the retained trees, shrubs and hedgerows on the site or in adjacent sites are not adversely affected by any aspect of the development.

7. Tree Protection

The scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the Arboriculture Method Statement and Tree Protection plan submitted with the application.

Reason: To ensure that the retained trees, shrubs and hedgerows on the site or in adjacent sites are not adversely affected by any aspect of the development.

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Firs Farm Wetlands - Location Plan

1:1250

