

Application Number

P/2011/0824/R4

Site Address

Land At Kings Ash Primary School
Pimm Road
Paignton
TQ3 3XA

Case Officer

Mr Scott Jones

Ward**Description**

Change of use of school land to Community play area; construction of a tree house and play area including a gravelled area, fire pit and a seated area using reclaimed materials from the local community

Executive Summary / Key Outcomes

The proposal seeks to convert a parcel of school land, which is largely a grassed area, to a structured community adventure play area that will operate under supervision. The proposal provides a positive community-based enhancement, providing a new and interesting play area that knits well with the immediate surrounds, where there are playing fields and community facilities adjacent. The proposal therefore has broad support, subject to details (e.g. materials) and outstanding consultation comments.

Recommendation

Site Visit; Approval delegated to the Executive Head of Spatial Planning, subject to i) suitable comments from the Authority's Arboricultural Team, the Police Liaison Officer and the Torbay Development Agency, and ii) the receipt of details that show an acceptable form and finish.

Site Details

A sloping parcel of open land that currently forms part of the wider curtilage of Kings Ash Primary School. The site sits close to the community centre and a multi-use games area and playing fields. It also looks out over buildings and land around Smallcombe Road to the North.

Detailed Proposals

The application is in two parts, as it seeks the change of use of the land from school land to community play area, along with approval for the permanent structures detailed within. These structures include a number of beach huts arranged around a fire pit; a wooden "crow's nest" that features two platforms and rises to a height of around 6metres; a cargo net; and a raised walkway that

links with the aforementioned nest and joins a suspended boat, beach hut and chain bridge.

Summary Of Consultation Responses

Sport England – Raise no objection to the proposal, as the proposed development affects only land incapable of forming, or forming part of, a playing pitch, and does not result in the loss of or inability to make use of any playing pitch, a reduction in the size of a playing area, or the loss of any other form of sporting facility on the site.

Arboricultural Officer - Pending comments

Torbay Development Agency – Pending comments

Police Liaison Officer – Pending comments

Summary Of Representations

None.

Relevant Planning History

None.

Key Issues / Material Considerations

Principle and Planning Policy -

- i) Community needs
- ii) Visual implications, revolving around the scale, size and appearance of the proposed structures
- iii) Neighbour amenity implications
- iv) Any highway matters; impact on highways, adequacy of access
- v) Arboricultural issues

i) Community needs:

The scheme has evolved from a community led initiative that responded to a media groups' national competition to help bring forward three community play areas designed by the children in the community. The competition focused on building the ultimate tree house, with projects being sought that were green minded and environmentally friendly. The Wild Fox Community Development Group led the project and reached out to a number of community groups for support, such as the school (who offered the land), the local community centre

and local residents. The scheme has therefore evolved with engrained community interaction and support and it is seen as a response to the wants and needs of local people. It is pertinent to note that there has been no public objection to the scheme, which supports the statement that this is a scheme being largely delivered by the community for the community.

ii) Visual implications:

The use sits comfortably with those of the surrounding area, whereby school and community playing fields and buildings provide a backdrop of a similar use and character. There is therefore a degree of homogeneity locally and the use should therefore have little impact on the character of the area.

In regard to the structures themselves the play area knits together a number of ground level and raised elements. The scale and form of the structures sit comfortably within the area and the play area is therefore considered visually acceptable.

It is understood that the proposal will be constructed by the time of the September Committee Meeting and hence there will be an opportunity to fully understand the visual implications of the scheme via a site visit.

iii) Neighbour amenity implications:

The proposal is situated close to buildings and space (e.g. multi use games area) that also support community based activities. As such there would be no unreasonable amenity issues on the users of the adjacent buildings.

Residential properties sit to the Northwest of the site off Smallcombe Road, obscured behind established tree borders and physically sited some 35metres from the corner of the site at the nearest point. Consideration has been given by the applicants to limit the potential for harm, for example by locating the most-raised and substantial structures away from this area and closer to the community centre to the South of the site. Considering the layout of the proposed development, the distances to adjacent plots and properties, along with the general relationship, neighbour amenity would not be materially affected by the scheme.

iv) Any highway matters; impact on highways, adequacy of access:

The proposal is not expected to produce any further traffic movement to or from the site, as the development is a community facility set within the established neighbourhood. It is expected that children or families will walk to such a facility. There is level access into the play area via the established footways around the existing community hub.

v) Arboricultural issues:

The scheme includes features set around an existing tree on the site. The Council's arboricultural team have been in discussions with project leaders over

the scheme prior to the receipt of the formal application, in order to ensure that the scheme is feasible on arboricultural grounds. The formal comments of the Authority's arboricultural team are still pending, and hence will be reported at committee.

Closing the gap -

The proposal would appear to provide an innovative form of community-led adventure play space within what is already a centrally located multi-functional community hub. The scheme would benefit of the community within a deprived ward of Paignton.

Conclusions

Subject to the receipt of responses from consultees and the use of suitable materials the proposal represents a good community led development.

Relevant Policies

- BES Built environment strategy
- BE1 Design of new development
- R2 Outdoor recreation developments
- L9 Planting and retention of trees