

## Appendix to Item D4

### APPLICATION TW/06/3088 – INDOOR SWIMMING POOL AT PADDOCK WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL, OLD KENT ROAD, PADDOCK WOOD

NOTES of a Planning Applications Committee Members' site visit to Paddock Wood Primary School on Tuesday, 12 December 2006.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr R E King (Chairman), Mrs V J Dagger, Mr J A Davies, Mrs E Green, Mr G A Home, Mr S J G Koowaree, Mr T A Maddison, Mr J I Muckle, W V Newman and Mr A R Poole.

OFFICERS: Mr J Crossley and Mr J Bickle (Planning) and Mr A Tait (Democratic Services).

THE APPLICANT: Paddock Wood Primary School: Mr M Olley (Head Teacher) with Mr P Johnson of the Johnson Dennehy Partnership; Ms G Parker (First Strokes).

OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES: Tunbridge Wells BC: Cllr D Marriott with Mr T Archer (Planning). Paddock Wood TC: Mr R Moon with Mrs N Reay (Clerk).

ALSO PRESENT were some 25 members of the public.

- (1) The Chairman opened the meeting by explaining that its purpose was for Members of the Committee to see the application site and to listen to the views of those present. It had been decided to defer making a decision pending this site visit.
- (2) Mr Crossley informed the meeting that there were two applications. These were related but separate. The first application was for a swimming pool and would be considered by the Planning Applications Committee. The second would involve the release of land for housing to enable the School to meet the capital costs needed for the pool. This would be considered by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.
- (3) Mr Crossley went on to say that both applications had come forward at the same time and had attracted a considerable number of objections.
- (4) Mr Crossley then went into greater detail about the swimming pool application. This had been put forward by the School and KCC for both School and Community use. The capital cost of the pool would be met by the proposed housing development but its community use would provide much needed revenue.
- (5) In 1994, permission had been granted for a 16m pool. This latest proposed one was 20m long located within a building with a footprint of approximately

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18 x 32m. It would run parallel to the fence along the North West side of the site.

- (6) Mr Crossley explained that the houses next to the fence along Ewins Close and Burton Court had not been built until recently and had post-dated the original permission.
- (7) Mr Crossley said that the objections had come forward from local residents and the Town Council. No view had yet been received from the Borough Council. Views had also been received from the Environment Agency and from Sport England (who wanted the pool to be 25m long).
- (8) The application would also generate additional car parking. This would be met by an additional 7 spaces adjoining the existing car park and more spaces along the access road giving a total of 20 (according to the application). There would not, however need to be any additional parking for Community use purposes as the public would be able to use the spaces reserved for School use during the evenings and at weekends.
- (9) Mr Olley (Head Teacher) underlined that the footprint of the building was broadly similar to the one that had received permission in 1994. The School had always intended to ensure that it was roughly the same height and distance from the boundary as before.
- (10) Mr Olley confirmed that the provision of a swimming pool would depend on the successful outcome of the sale of the land for development as specified in the complementary application. He added that a 25 metre pool such as Sport England had asked for would make it the same size as the ones in the St John's Centre and the Tunbridge Wells public bath. The actual figure for parking would be 16 not 20 as Mr Crossley had stated. It was not anticipated that permission would lead to a great increase in traffic. Kent Highways had been content with the access road that already existed.
- (11) In response to questions, Mr Crossley said that the proposed ridge height of 5 ½ metres would equate to just below the guttering of the neighbouring properties. The approximate wall to wall distance between the two buildings would be 11 metres. No additional fencing would be provided.
- (12) Several members of the public asked for a visual description of the footprint. Mr Crossley said that the pool building would stretch from about the terrace to the south to just before the fence at the northern end.
- (13) Members of the public and from the Town Council asked a number of questions and made a number of points which are summarised below:-

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- (a) Had there been meaningful consultation with Mascalls School who would find their pool much underused if permission were granted here? Furthermore, had Putlands Primary Leisure Centre been consulted as they were unable to raise sufficient money to provide a pool of their own? *Mr Olley replied that Mascalls School was very support of the project and would wish to make use of the pool.*
- (b) A representative from the Town Council said that the main grounds for objection were that the building would overshadow the recently built properties in the vicinity. The location of the pool should therefore be moved further towards the School. There was also no suitable access for coaches and buses. *Mr Crossley said that it would be possible to condition use of access.*
- (c) There was already a problem of traffic on the Old Kent Road to the west. There were also construction issues that the Committee would need to consider. These included noise, lorries and cranes. Sport England had also made the point that there would not be sufficient community use to make the pool a viable proposition.
- (d) The proposal was for the pool to stay open until 10pm on weekdays and 8pm on Saturdays and Sundays. The previous permission, though had been for School hours only. *Mr Crossley said that the hours applied for were now reduced to 9pm on weekdays and 8pm at weekends.*
- (e) In response to a comment from a member of the public, the Chairman of Governors confirmed that there had once been a pool on the School site. This had been located in a horsa hut. The School had decided to try to improve its swimming provision. It was now possible to do this by selling land provided that there was no detriment to play and sports provision as a result. If permission was not granted for the other application for the development of land on the School site, the project would not be able to go ahead.
- (f) A former Governor of the School said that she had waited forty years for a pool of this standard to be provided. She would be very happy with this application if there was no significant reduction of play space. *Mr Olley replied that play space would be saved by cutting back on the planting areas and that additional hard space would be provided.*
- (g) In response to a question from Mr Muckle, Mr Olley said that the reason for not moving the pool away from the boundary was to provide play space between the pool and the main school building. This would also ensure that safety arrangements were as good as possible since there would be public access. During School Terms,

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community use would be for about 30% of the time, increasing during the holidays.

- (h) Mr Olley explained that arrangements for the running of the pool would be left to "First Strokes". They would ensure that the pool was run profitably whilst also being available for community use. However, it would never become a public pool. There would be between 20 and 30 youngsters using the pool at any one time – one class at a time.
  - (i) Mrs Parker from First Strokes said that the reason that there would only be a maximum of thirty children in the pool at any one time was because they would be learning to swim. For adults, it would be possible to increase the number of users to 40. This would equate to 10 adult users in each lane of a 4 lane pool.
- (14) Mr Muckie asked whether it would be possible to turn the pool round by 90 degrees and move it further away from the houses. Mr Olley replied that this was an option that he was willing to consider.
- (15) Mr Olley said that there would be space to park in the Old Kent Road for any coaches that did come.
- (16) Mr Archer from Tunbridge Wells BC said that the Borough Council had concerns over the size of the proposed development and its location as well as traffic generation and car parking.
- (17) Mr Olley said that First Strokes had suggested that the School would use the site from 1pm to 3.30pm. The mornings should be set aside for mothers and toddlers. The time of maximum returns would be towards the end of the day. The possibility of staff using the pool first thing in the morning was at this stage only a suggestion.
- (18) The Chairman thanked everyone for attending. The notes of the visit would be appended to the report to the Committee meeting that determined the application.