

**Planning Committee:**22 May 2013

**Item Number: 14**

**Application No:**W13 / 0478

**Town/Parish Council:** Leamington Spa  
**Case Officer:** Liam D'Onofrio

**Registration Date:**10/04/13

**Expiry Date:**05/06/13

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**Victoria Park, Archery Road, Leamington Spa**

Temporary change of use of land for the installation of marquees, gazebos and shelters for use by sponsors, traders, officers, competitors and visitors to the annual Bowls England National Championships; and for the siting of up to 30 touring caravans for the accommodation of officials and competitors; all for a temporary period of not more than 36 days each year between the third week of July and the first week of September. FOR Warwick District Council

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This application is being presented to Committee due to the number of objections received and that Warwick District Council is the applicant.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Planning Committee are recommended to grant planning permission, subject to conditions.

**DETAILS OF THE DEVELOPMENT**

A temporary year planning permission is sought for the erection of marquees, gazebos and shelters associated with the annual Bowls England National Championships for use by sponsors, traders, officials, competitors and visitors within the area identified Zone 1 on the site plan. A caravan site of up to 30 caravans for officials and competitors attending the Nationals will be established within Zone 2 on the site plan, in addition to daily on-site car parking.

The permission is sought for a maximum of 36 days per year between the third week in July and the first week in September running from 2014 until 2023 in accordance with a ten year agreement with Bowls England.

The application is accompanied by a Supporting Statement and Flood Risk Assessment.

**THE SITE AND ITS LOCATION**

The application site relates to Victoria Park, a Registered Historic Park situated within the Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area. Victoria Park together with The Pump Room Gardens and Jephson Gardens to the east forms a green wedge which runs through the heart of Royal Leamington Spa. The park is located on the southern bank of the River Leam and residential properties are located to the south of the bowling greens on Archery Road. The site has two vehicular access

routes from Archery Road to the east and Princes drive to the west. An emergency access is located off Avenue road to the south of the park.

## **PLANNING HISTORY**

Various historic applications for park buildings/shelters, flood lighting and bowls pitches, none relevant to the current scheme.

## **RELEVANT POLICIES**

- DP1 - Layout and Design (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP2 - Amenity (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP3 - Natural and Historic Environment and Landscape (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP6 - Access (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP7 - Traffic Generation (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DAP8 - Protection of Conservation Areas (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DAP11 - Protecting Historic Parks and Gardens (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- National Planning Policy Framework

## **SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS**

**Leamington Town Council:** No objection.

**English Heritage (Parks and Gardens):** No response received.

**Environment Agency:** No objection.

**WCC Highways:** No objection.

**WCC Ecology:** No objection.

### **Public Response:**

Eighteen letters of objection received raising the following points:

- Loss of public access to central grass area to be used for caravans.
- Loss of public facilities during summer holidays.
- There must be more suitable areas in Leamington for the caravans.
- Edmonscode Field should be used for caravans.
- Parking congestion, traffic generation and access concerns.
- Disappointment at lack of consultation/limited response time to neighbour notification.
- Noise and disturbance.
- No definition of the size of marquees.
- Vehicle movements in park are a safety issue.

## **ASSESSMENT**

The main consideration in assessing this application is as follows:

- Principle;
- Impact upon visual amenity;
- Impact upon neighbour's amenity;
- Highway safety; and
- Matters of ecology/flooding.

### **Principle**

#### Marquees/gazebos

Victoria Park has hosted the Womens' National Championships for a number of decades during the first two weeks of August each year. The District has recently been successful in attracting Bowls England to also bring the Mens' National Championships to Leamington Spa, which is held during the following fortnight bringing the total number of championship days to 30.

The Womens' National Championships has historically included the use of temporary marquees/gazebos within the park, which have been erected a few days before the event and removed after the event concludes. Planning permission has not previously been required for these structures, which can be erected under permitted development rights for up to 28 days in a calendar year. The addition of the Mens' Nationals will extend the period that the marquees/gazebos are needed over the 28 days specified under permitted development rights. Planning permission is sought for 36 days each year to allow some flexibility with erecting structures prior to the event and removing them after the event has finished.

The applicant has not sought to specifically identify the size or location of the marquees and gazebos but these are anticipated to be of similar dimensions and in similar locations to those erected in previous years. All such structures will be located within Zone 1 on the site plan.

#### Caravans

The Womens' Nationals have always had a number of officials and competitors who have stayed in caravans during the period, often bringing family members to support the event. The applicant states that prior to staging the Womens' World Bowls in 1996 these have successfully been sited on Victoria Park using the Cricket Outfield. From 1996-2011 alternative sites were found for those wishing to use caravans but those sites are no longer available for this purpose. The caravans were sited on a trial basis at Edmonscote in 2012 but this proved problematic and the emergency relocation of approximately 18 caravans to Victoria Park was necessary. It is proposed that caravans will remain on site where 24 hour security will be provided.

The applicant notes that caravanning has decreased over the years and the average number more recently is between 15-20. The preference for caravanning amongst male competitors is unknown at this stage but the applicant seeks to afford them the same opportunities and therefore a maximum

of 30 caravan spaces are proposed covering the event period. The pitch spaces will be managed in compliance with the Caravan Act within Zone 2 on the site plan. The applicant states that caravan spacing will be based upon a 10m by 10m pitch and to give some context to the scale of the caravan area a 40m by 40m bowling green could theoretically hold 16 caravan pitches. The remainder of Zone 2 will be used flexibly for the daily on-site car parking for the event, which has been the case since 1997.

The Womens' Nationals are understood to provide an economic boost to Leamington Spa and the district and there are significant economic benefits to the town having secured the hosting of the Mens' Nationals also. The temporary use and structures do not contravene any planning policies and the scheme is therefore acceptable in principle.

### **Visual Amenity**

The marquees/gazebos and on-site parking areas are all features of the long-established Womens' Nationals and in context with the overall scale of the park and zoned areas the caravan pitches form only a small addition to the overall use. The structures and facilities are temporary in nature (erected for a maximum of 36 days per year) and add to the overall vibrancy and occasion of the event. As with other temporary events, such as a fun-fair or circus, the scheme will not have any significant impact upon visual amenity or the character or setting of the conservation area, given its temporary nature.

### **Neighbours' Amenity**

A significant proportion of objections to the scheme relate to the loss of Victoria Park for use by members of the public during the Championship event. It should be noted that the Womens' Nationals is an existing and established event that takes place each year, albeit for a shorter period of time than the combined Nationals due to take place from 2014. Nevertheless large sections of the park will remain accessible to members of the public, including the tennis courts. Although this may restrict members of the public wishing to use the whole park a sensible balance is considered to have been struck that minimises the disruption to public access of the park while supporting this major national event being hosted by the town.

Being an established event local residents appear to be used to associated on-site noise, however one of the biggest concerns raised relates to traffic movements and the parking control on Archery Road during the event. The parking control falls outside the application site and is controlled as part of the management of the event. It is understood that traffic management and parking controls have been successfully used at past events and will be controlled for forthcoming events under separate legislation.

### **Highway Safety**

Notwithstanding parking controls, vehicles and caravans will use existing park accesses and charged event parking within Victoria Park will operate, as in

previous years. The vehicle movements are controlled and therefore unlikely to raise any pedestrian safety issues to members of the public using the park.

The Highway Engineer's has raised no objection to the scheme and does not consider that the use will have a material impact upon the highway.

### **Ecology/Flooding**

The Ecologist has raised no objection to the scheme.

The park is within Flood Zone 2 and 3 and a Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted to support the scheme. The site is not subject to flash flooding and river level predictions can be obtained from the Environment Agency to forewarn of flooding of the site. Zone 3 on the site plan is not within flood zone 2 or 3 and will be used as a safe evacuation route via a park gate onto Avenue Road, should the need arise.

The Environment Agency have been consulted and any suggested conditions will be applied accordingly.

### **SUMMARY/CONCLUSION**

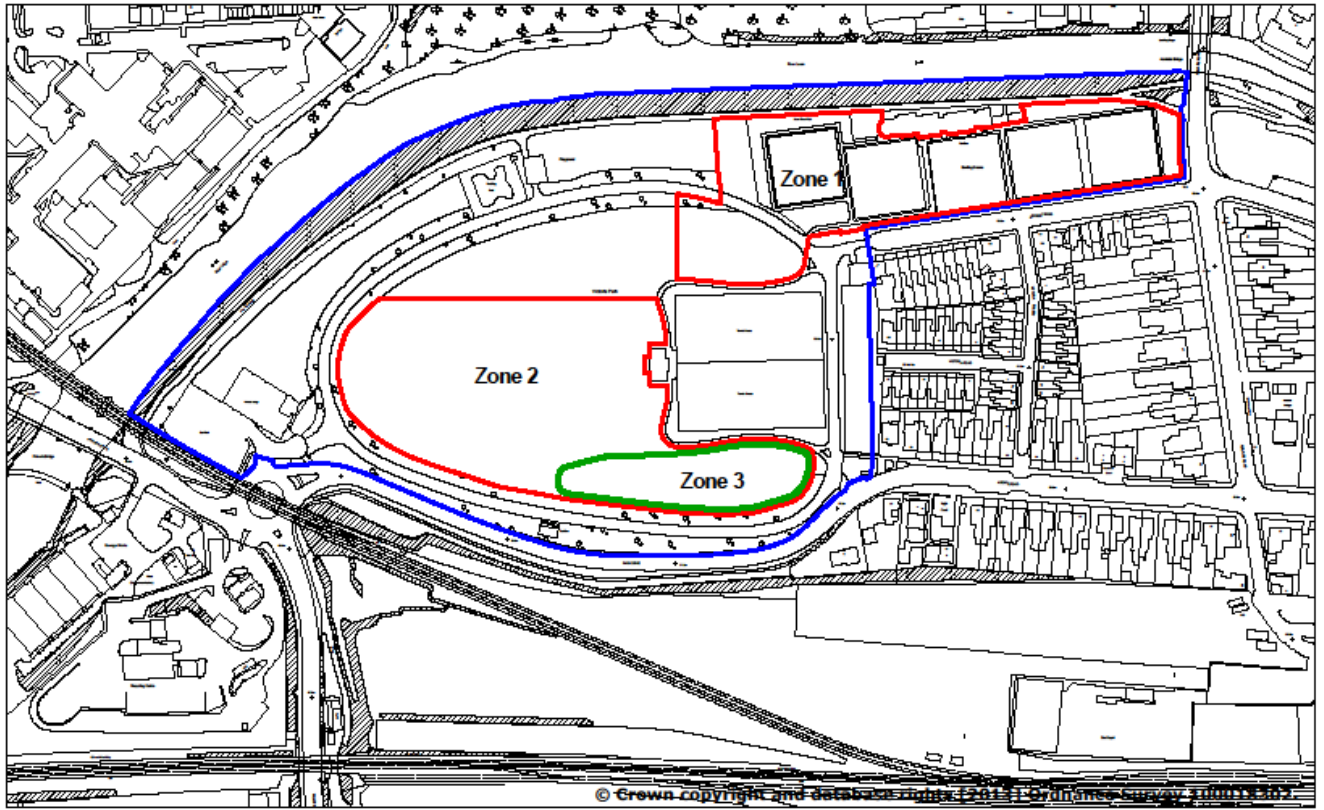
In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, the nature of the development and the temporary use of the site would not cause unacceptable harm to highway safety, neighbours' amenity, the character or setting of the Conservation Area or the Historic Park and Garden status of Victoria Park. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the policies listed.



### **CONDITIONS**

- 1 The use hereby permitted shall take place on no more than 36 days per Calendar year until and including 2023 after which it shall be discontinued and shall only take place between and including the last week of July and the first week of September in each year permitted. **REASON:** That the use of land and temporary structures are required only in association with the Bowls National Championships and the long-term, unnecessary use of the site for purposes unrelated with this event would be inappropriate and detract from the visual amenities of the locality contrary to Policies DP1, DP2, DAP8 and DAP11 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011.
  
- 2 The use hereby permitted shall only take place within the identified zones on the 1:2500 site plan submitted with the application. At the end of each event all temporary structures shall be removed and the site shall be restored to its former condition as park land. **REASON:** That the use of land and temporary structures are required only in association with the Bowls National Championships and the long-term, unnecessary use of the site for purposes unrelated with this event would be inappropriate and detract from the visual amenities of the

locality contrary to Policies DP1, DP2, DAP8 and DAP11 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011.

- 3 No more than 30 caravans may be situated on the Land at any one time. **REASON:** That the use of land for caravans is only granted for the benefit of officials and competitors attending the Bowls National Championships and the unrestricted intensification of caravan pitches on site would be inappropriate, detracting from the visual amenities of the locality contrary to Policies DP1, DP2, DAP8 and DAP11 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011.
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 <p>WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p><b>Site Plan - Marquee and Caravans at Victoria Park</b></p> <p>Scale: 1:2500 @A4 Drawn By: MRB/CC</p> <p>Riverside House, Milverton Hill, Royal Leamington Spa, Warwickshire. CV32 5HZ</p>	<p>Date: 08 April 2013</p> <p>Tel: 01926 410410</p> 
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