

**DC/2016/00588**

**PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF NORTHERN SPECTATOR STAND AND ERECTION OF MULTI-PURPOSE BUILDING AND ASSOCIATED WORKS**

**CHEPSTOW RACECOURSE, CHEPSTOW**

**RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE**

Case Officer: Nia Morrison

Date Registered: 26/05/2016

**1.0 APPLICATION DETAILS**

- 1.1 This application relates to Chepstow Racecourse which is located just outside the development boundary of Chepstow, between the settlements of Chepstow and St Arvans. Vehicular access to the site is off the A466, which runs adjacent to the western boundary of the site and there is a large carpark to serve the venue the other side of the A466. North east of the racecourse is the historic registered Grade I Piercefield Park and the racecourse is also located within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 1.2 It is proposed to demolish the northern spectator stand, which is located within an established zone of development to the south west of the site and racing course. This area contains spectator grandstands, hospitality boxes and so on, and consists of a large area of hardstanding area. It is noted that the northern stand to be demolished is no longer fit for purpose (having been condemned) and has been closed for a year.
- 1.3 The proposed building has been designed with a footprint of 1512sqm measuring approximately 63m by 24m and to be single storey with an aluminium curved roof. The building is proposed to be fully glazed to the eastern elevation looking out towards the racecourse, metal clad to the west and panel clad to the northern and southern gable.
- 1.4 The proposed development is a joint venture between Arena Racing, owners of Chepstow racecourse and The Welsh Kennel Club. The building brief requires a multi-purpose use based building around a large central hall which will act as a show ring for dog shows. In addition the racecourse will use the facility for hospitality purposes on race days. It is anticipated that pedestrian access for the building will be as it is now, via the western car park the other side of the A466 through multiple service gates along the western boundary. It is noted the building would be able to accommodate approximately 2000 customers and the facility is likely to lead to two new full time positions and up to 30 part time jobs on race days.
- 1.5 This is a major development as the floor area of the proposed building is over 1000sqm. A screening opinion has been sought and it is concluded that an EIA is not required as the scale of the proposed development it is considered unlikely to have significant environmental effects on key factors including the ecological, historical and visual environment.

**2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

Numerous planning applications for development have been received over the years. The most recent relevant applications are:

M08127 – Proposed refurbishment and extension of existing members stand to provide hospitality boxes, restaurant, bar and ancillary services  
Approved 21.02.2003

M11923 – Proposed hospitality marquee  
Approved 06.09.2015

DC/2009/00015 – Removal of condition to enable permanent siting of marquee  
Approved 12.02.2009

### **3.0 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES**

#### Strategic Policies

S5 Communication and Recreation facilities  
S8 Enterprise and economy  
S12 Efficient resource use and flood risk  
S13 Landscape, green infrastructure and the natural environment  
S16 Transport  
S17 Place making and design

#### Development Management Policies

DES1 General Design considerations  
EP1 Amenity and environmental protection  
LC1 New built development in the open countryside  
LC4 Wye Valley AONB  
LC5 Protection and enhancement of landscape character  
NE1 Nature conservation and development  
G11 Green Infrastructure  
MV1 Proposed developments and highway considerations  
MV2 Sustainable Transport Access  
SD2 Sustainable construction and energy efficiency  
SD3 Flood risk  
SD4 Sustainable drainage

### **4.0 REPRESENTATIONS**

#### 4.1 Consultations Replies

St Arvans Community Council – Recommends Refusal with the following comments summarised below:

- Replacing an old stand with a modern multi-purpose building is viewed as a positive development by the Community Council.
- Concerns about the traditional traffic that will cross the A466 on non-race days e.g. dog shows. Allowing the road to be crossed without appropriate safety measures would greatly increase the risk of an accident
- Transport report does not address the specific infrastructure problems surrounding Chepstow.

Further comments received 19/07/2016 reinforced that the Community Council were still gravely concerned with the lack of consideration for the movement of traffic to and from the proposed site from the A466. Attention is drawn to that:

- There is a combined footpath /cycle path which runs along the A466 parallel to the Racecourse boundary. This combined footpath /cycle path runs from St

Arvans village past the Racecourse and on to Chepstow. It is now a popular path, frequented by school children going to and from school as well as a variety of other users.

- The proposed access to the site for use by the exhibitor's vehicles has to cross the footpath/cycle path in order to access the entrance gates.
- Drivers *leaving* the site have no warning of these users and are completely unsighted. Unless they actually stop at the gate to look for walkers and cyclists, there is a high possibility of an accident. There have already been incidents of collision between cyclists and motorists entering and leaving this site.
- Drivers entering the site from the A466 at that point have to cross a busy carriageway and negotiate a narrow entrance. There are trees and bushes which can obscure a driver's view of pedestrians and cyclists on that track. Again it has the potential to cause an accident. A near miss was witnessed very recently when the driver of a vehicle towing a trailer, apparently anxious to clear the trailer from the carriageway almost collided with a cyclist.

Chepstow Town Council – Recommends approval

Dwr Cymru-Welsh Water - There is no connection to the public sewer and therefore no comments.

Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust – No comments to make as no archaeological restraint on the site

Cadw – The northern grandstand is in a poor condition and the replacement building will be located on a similar but wider footprint. The new building will have a curved roof rather than the angular one on the current grandstand. The application area has already been radically changed for the original design of the historic park and the proposed development will not be in any of the identified significant views of the park. The new building will be replacing an existing one of similar size although in a different design. However given that it is in an area of modern buildings relating to the later race course in our opinion the proposed development will have a slight adverse impact on the registered historic park

Gwent Police – No response to date.

CAIR– No response to date

MCC Planning Policy - Strategic Policies S5 and S8 relating to Community and Recreation Facilities and Enterprise and Economy respectively, provide support in principle for the proposal due to the Racecourse's importance in the Local economy.

The site is located in the Wye Valley AONB, as a consequence Policy LC4 must be referred to. The site is also located within the Piercefield Historic Park and Garden, as there is no specific local planning policy in relation to Historic Parks and Gardens it is important to ensure DES1 in relation to General Design is considered along with Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales relating to Conserving the Historic Environment. Policy EP1 should also be taken into consideration along with Strategic Policy S17. Policy LC5 relates to the protection and enhancement of Landscape Character along with Policy NE1 (Nature Conservation and Development) and Policy GI1 relating to Green Infrastructure (GI).

Strictly speaking the proposal is contrary to Policy LC1 as new build in the open countryside outside existing settlement boundaries. Subject to compliance with the policies set out in the above paragraph, however, the proposal may be considered to

be acceptable in principle as it is the replacement of an existing building within an existing large scale and long established recreation facility.

Finally, it should be noted that the site is located in a minerals safeguarding area as designated in Policy M2. As there is already an existing stand in this location and the proposed development would be located within a group of existing buildings/the curtilage of the racecourse criterion iv) would be applicable and there is not considered to be any conflict with Policy M2.

MCC Conservation Officer - The site is within the Grade I Piercefield Registered Garden, the boundary of which follows the road from Chepstow to St Arvans. The park extends to the east to the river covering a large area. Formerly woodland, this part of the registered park has been used as part of the racecourse development for a number of years and is characterised by modern buildings and the racecourse itself. The buildings are most prominent from the main road adjacent to the park boundary, having said this there are open views to the east over towards Piercefield House and so the visual impact on the setting of the park needs to be considered from both directions.

The proposed building replaces an existing modern and condemned viewing stand which has little architectural or historical merit and so its removal would not have an adverse impact on the heritage assets. The replacement building is larger and given its prominence, would need to be carefully considered; a well-designed modern building is considered to be most appropriate rather than adopting a traditional approach. It is understood that a large expanse of glazing is proposed overlooking the racecourse for indoor viewing of the racing. This could create a dominant feature in the landscape and so careful consideration should be given to the type of glazing and construction details. The choice of cladding and roofing materials should also be carefully approached. I note that the application remains as previously discussed, however in order to mitigate against this it would be necessary to condition samples of the proposed materials and finish, in particular the metal cladding including the Trespa rain screen cladding, flat surface aluminium insulated composite panel, the natural anodised aluminium ventilation louvre, aluminium standing seam roofing and details of the roof lights. I note that the aluminium panels are to be in black and wonder if a softer grey would be more appropriate to alleviate some of the harshness.

In order to ensure that the roof profile is lightweight and sleek it might be worth conditioning the eaves and verge details

In addition it would be good to understand the hard landscaping and around the building as the proposed drawing doesn't specify any and whether there are any proposals for soft Landscaping.

MCC Landscape Officer - Requests further information on materials and finishes of external works and expresses a concern that the landscape visual appraisal has not informed the design of the building.

MCC Highway Officer - Initial comments received 27.05.2016. The redevelopment of the stand is well within the site boundary and would appear to have little adverse effect on the internal vehicular movement. The pedestrian and the vehicular access into the site is to remain as existing. The application is supported by a Transport Statement that confirms access and layout suitability for the TRICS data for the site. (TRICS is the National standard for trip generation analysis and validates assumptions about transport impacts of new developments). Further comments received 19.07.2016 acknowledge that concerns have been expressed with regard to the intensifying of the whole site and the increasing frequency

of traffic and travel issues experienced with the increased venue provision proposed. Concerns can either be justified or alleviated in part with the applicant providing a comprehensive Traffic Management Plan for the events proposed for the whole site. This must be provided to emphasise the considered plan to reduce any risks at the site associated with the increased frequency of larger events that will inevitably be attracted to the site.

MCC Biodiversity Officer - The submitted ecological survey is sufficient to inform the decision. Nesting birds are the only consideration for the decision and a planning condition is recommended to cover implementation of the recommendations of the report.

MCC Building Control - No concerns. Should the proposal lead to significant increases in the numbers of people using the racecourse facility at any one time consideration may need to be given to the capacity and adequacy of the foul water drainage.

MCC Tourism Officer – Supports the application. As the largest racecourse in Wales and the South West, Chepstow Racecourse is a key events venue in Monmouthshire. It currently stages 32 fixtures a year including the prestigious Coral Welsh Grand National in December as well as summer music race nights and non-racing events including festivals, fireworks and conferences. Superbly located between Bristol and Cardiff and close to the M4, M48 and M5, it is within a 45 minute drive time of more than 2 million people, and attracted approximately 92,000 paying racegoers and 16,000 hospitality customers in 2015.

Based on Monmouthshire's 2015 STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) figures, each visitor day brings an average of £63.19 to the local economy, ranging from £31.18 for day visitors to £158.77 for visitors staying in serviced accommodation. As well as improving facilities for race day and other leisure visitors, the proposed development will enable Chepstow Racecourse to attract more high quality conferences, trade shows and exhibitions to capitalise on the higher yield business tourism market. Monmouthshire's most recent local authority tourism profile (produced by ONS) showed Monmouthshire to be the third most popular local authority in Wales for business trips with the value of Monmouthshire's business tourism estimated as £16m pa representing approximately 5% of the Wales total.

In an increasingly competitive tourism marketplace, it is critical that key destination venues like Chepstow Racecourse continually improve their offer, to help deliver continued tourism growth for the county. The proposed development comprising approximately 1200 square metres of indoor space will enable the venue to host an increased range of events aimed at different audiences throughout the year. In particular, a new improved wet weather exhibition space will enable Chepstow Racecourse to meet the increasing expectations of visitors, and help deliver year round benefits for tourism in Monmouthshire, including local employment.

MCC Economic Development - Information provided by Chepstow Racing & Events indicates that in 2015 it attracted 92,000 paying racegoers and 16,000 hospitality customers. More than 40,000 customers attended non-racing events. The business therefore plays an important role in attracting visitors to Chepstow and the surrounding area. Modern sporting and entertainment venues need to continue to adapt to ensure that they offer a high quality experience that meets the changing expectations of visitors. They also need to be able to offer multi-purpose facilities capable of hosting a range of events. This proposal is an important one, as it will help to ensure that Chepstow Racing and Events can continue to compete for customers in an increasingly demanding leisure market.

MCC Environmental Health Officer - Whilst there is the potential for disturbance at the nearest residential properties from the proposed development, in particular from amplified music I am not in a position to substantiate a level of problems on which to base an objection. However given the potential for disturbance at nearby residential properties I would recommend that any granting of planning permission was subject to the following conditions:

A scheme of acoustic insulation measures to be incorporated into the design and fabric of the building by a suitably qualified acoustic consultant shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to the commencement of the development.

The hours of operation shall be limited to:

- a. 09:00 to 01:00
- b. Amplified music or performed music shall only be played inside the venue between the hours of 11:00 and 00:00

#### 4.2 Neighbour Notification

Two letters of objection have been received with the following reasons summarised below:

- The existing infrastructure cannot take further events. On event days there are long queues of traffic and chaos on the roads in and around Chepstow
- Exacerbate pollution problems in terms of noise and litter on event days
- Not the best location for a kennel club and concerns the building will be used for other purposes such as a late night music venue

#### 4.3 Local Member Representations

None received

### 5.0 **EVALUATION**

- Principle of the proposal
- Visual impact and landscape assessment
- Amenity impact
- Highway safety

#### 5.1 Principle of the proposal

5.1.1 Strategic Policies S5 and S8 relating to Community and Recreation Facilities and Enterprise and Economy provide support in principle for the proposal. Chepstow Race course is a well-established site and the proposal of the building to sustain its growth and provide an up-to date modern facility at the site is supported by the Council's tourism and economic development officers. It is noted that the proposal has the benefits of providing *'an improved wet weather exhibition space will enable Chepstow Racecourse to meet the increasing expectations of visitors, and help deliver year round benefits for tourism in Monmouthshire, including local employment'* and *'help ensure that Chepstow Racing and Events can continue to compete for customer in an increasingly demanding leisure market.'*

5.1.2 It is crucial however that to ensure there are no significant detrimental visual, neighbour amenity or highway safety impacts resulting from the proposal, and these issues are addressed in the ensuing sections.

## 5.2 Visual impact and landscape assessment

- 5.2.1 In terms of assessing the visual impact of the development, the proposed building is considered to enhance the appearance of the existing site. It is proposed to remove a disused stand that has little architectural or historical merit and although the stand it is to replace has a slightly smaller footprint than the proposal, it is considered that the contemporary design and the proposed use of modern aluminium and glazed materials has the potential to improve the overall visual appearance of the racecourse complex. The low profile curved roof and the embedding of the building into the existing slope of the land will help nestle the building within the site and its setting within the racecourse site and surrounding Wye Valley AONB landscape.
- 5.2.2 It is considered vital to agree the specific materials and finishes of the building to ensure a high quality building. This point is also put forward in the submitted visual appraisal '*there is opportunity to improve the general character of the site and its immediate surrounding, through the arrangement of the built elements, and the materials and finishes used.*' The need to agree materials is also raised by the Council's Conservation Officer and Landscape Officer. Although *full* details have not yet been put forward it is considered that that there is sufficient evidence to provide confidence that a high quality of design and finish can be achieved with planning conditions and to satisfy the Authority's design and landscape policy considerations, in particular the terms of Policy GI1 - Green Infrastructure.
- 5.2.3 Although Cadw have a view that there will be a slight adverse impact on the registered historic park, Piercefield Park and also Wyndcliff registered park, it is considered as the building is to be of a high quality modern design and set within an area of existing development within the Racecourse ( as well as providing a real benefit to the local economy) that from distant viewpoint such as Piercefield Park the building will be viewed as a minor feature as part of the wider racecourse complex.
- 5.2.4 Overall the proposed building is considered to have a positive visual impact that has been well designed within the site and surrounding landscape in accordance with policies DES1 and LC4 of the LDP.

## 5.3 Residential amenity impact

- 5.3.1 In terms of residential amenity impact the main concern will be the noise impact from the use of the building. It is considered that during the use for dog shows the noise impact would be limited and therefore acceptable. It is anticipated that for the majority of the day the dogs will be inside the building and with their owners and noise can be controlled and at an acceptable level.
- 5.3.2 On non- race/event days there is some concern that the building could be hired out for other hospitality events; although not specifically referred to in this application, the building has the potential for this use. In order to ensure these type of occasions will not result not in a detrimental impact on amenity a condition requested by the Council's Environmental Health Officer (EHO) will ensure a scheme of acoustic insulation measures is designed into the construction; the EHO also seeks to restrict the late evening use of the building to no later than 1am and music should not be played past midnight. This should ensure an acceptable noise impact following the result of the use of the building on non-race day events. Conditions will also ensure that there is a time restriction on the building so it cannot be used after 1am for events and that music cannot be played from the building past midnight. Providing this condition is adhered to noise impact is considered acceptable and in accordance with policies EP1 of the

LDP. However, the EHO's comment about the building not being brought into use before 09.00am is considered to be unduly restrictive and would prevent the proper operation of the dog show events. As such, an earlier time of commencement if use of 7am is recommended.

#### 5.4 Highway safety

5.4.1 A Transport Assessment has been submitted which anticipates that on dog show days the exhibition hall is likely to attract approximately 2500 journeys, including vehicles and public transport movements, which is considerably less than on race days. Parking will be arranged as on race days, with visitors using the existing large car parks west of the site on the other side of the A466 and dog owners parking within the racecourse complex.

5.4.2 In terms of the traffic congestion, on dog show events the number of users expected are thought to be adequately accommodated by the existing highway network. The Council's Highway Officer has no concerns with the proposal in terms of the safety of access and egress. There is an existing underpass and crossings that pedestrians will be directed to use both on the dog event days and race days.

5.4.3 On race days and larger events the Council's Highway Officer has provided further comment that a Traffic Management Plan will be required to ensure it has been fully considered to reduce any risks at the site associated with the increased frequency of vehicular and pedestrian movements of larger events attracted to the site. St Arvans Community Council have raised specific concerns in relation to the conflict with the well-used pedestrian and cycle path along the A466 and that vehicles leaving the race course will have to cross this path. This is considered an important consideration with the potential intensification of the racecourse however it is felt by Officers that with the provision of this Traffic Management Plan as a condition the proposal is considered to be in accordance with policies MV1 and MV2 of the LDP. The Community Council can be consulted on the discharge of the Traffic Management Plan at the time of receipt.

#### 5.5 Conclusion

5.5.1 The addition of an exhibition hall within Chepstow Race Course is considered to have a positive impact upon the economy of Monmouthshire, supporting business and tourism within the County. The potential impacts of the building have been well considered and it is anticipated that the building will have a discreet visual impact within the surrounding Wye Valley AONB landscape, preserving the natural beauty of the area, and the contemporary design proposed complements and enhances the existing racecourse complex. In terms of noise and highway safety impact, these can be adequately managed and conditions are recommended to help mitigate these issues.

### **6.0 RECOMMEDATION: APPROVE**

#### Conditions

1. Standard 5 year condition
2. Development shall be built in accordance with the approved plans listed in the decision notice.
3. The hereby permitted development shall be carried out in accordance with Section 6.0 SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDED MITIGATION of the submitted ecological assessment: New Kennel Club Building, Chepstow



Racecourse, Chepstow, Ecological Assessment (old stand building) prepared by Nicholas Pearson Associates dated 17 May 2016.

4. A scheme of acoustic insulation measures shall be incorporated into the design and fabric of the building by a suitably qualified acoustic consultant and such details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to the commencement of the development.
5. No development shall take place until a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) that takes into account risks at the site associated with the increased frequency of larger events has been received and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be operated in accordance with the approved TMP.
6. No development shall take place until the final finish of all external finishing materials has been agreed in writing. Samples of materials shall be made available on site for inspection. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
7. No development shall commence until a detailed section of the roof of a scale of 1:10 or 1:20 is submitted to and agree in writing with the local planning authority.
8. No development shall commence until the details of the rooflights have been submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.
9. No development shall take place until details of the all external paved surfaces and means of enclosure have been submitted to and approved by the LPA. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
10. No development shall take place until a submitted landscaping and planting scheme has been agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The landscaping and its maintenance thereafter shall be carried out in accordance with the approved landscape scheme and planting plan.
11. The hours of operation of the building hereby approved shall be limited to 07:00 to 01:00. Amplified music or performed music shall only be played inside the venue between the hours of 11:00 and 00:00

### **Informatives**

NESTING BIRDS – Please note that all birds are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The protection also covers their nests and eggs. To avoid breaking the law, do not carry out work on trees, hedgerows or buildings where birds are nesting. The nesting season for most bird species is between March and September.

It should be brought to the attention of the applicant that in the event of a new or altered vehicular access being formed, the requirements of Section 184 of the Highways Act 1980 must be acknowledged and satisfied. In this respect the applicant shall apply for permission pursuant to Section 184 of the Highways Act 1980 prior to commencement of access works via MCC Highways.