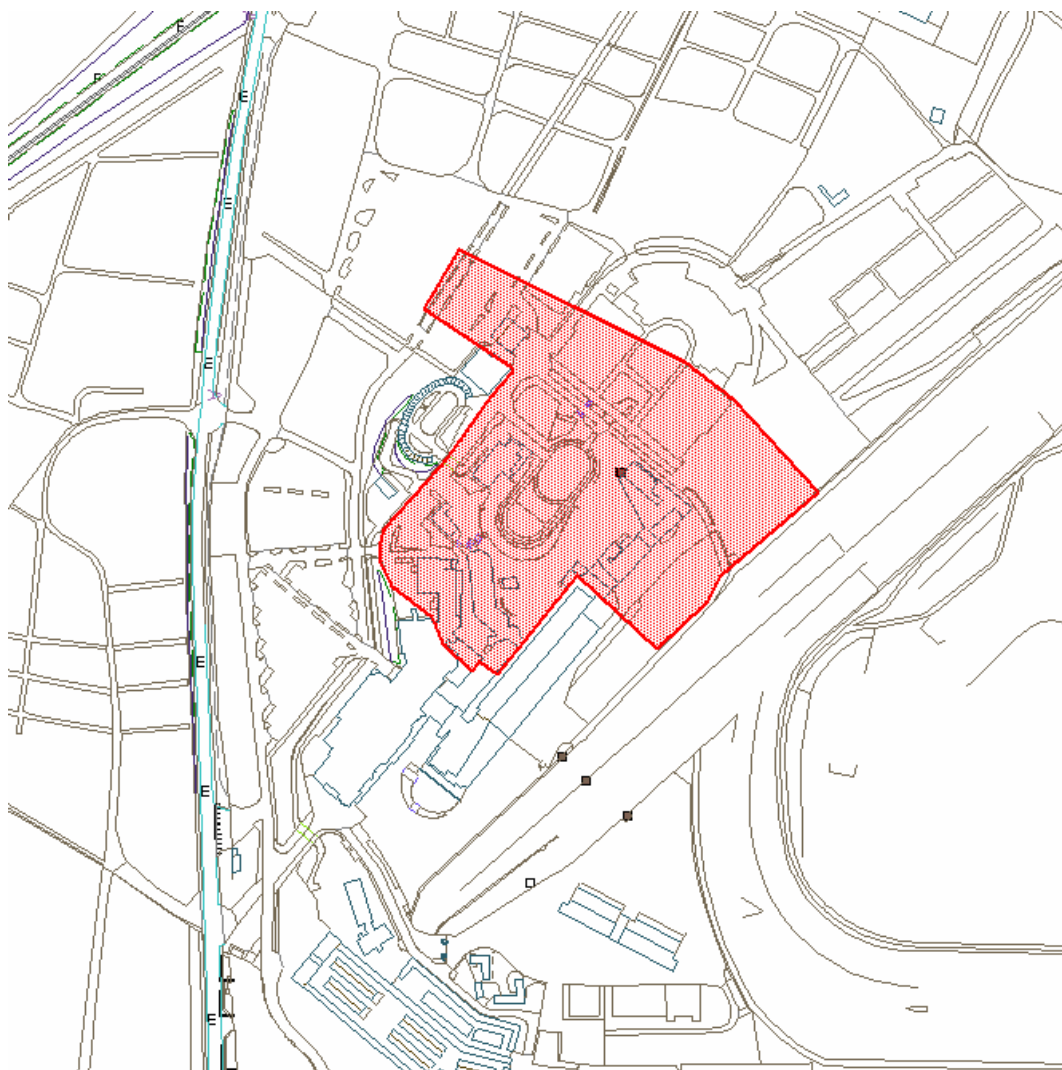


APPLICATION NO: 13/00661/FUL	OFFICER: Mr Martin Chandler
DATE REGISTERED: 27th April 2013	DATE OF EXPIRY: 27th July 2013
WARD: Prestbury	PARISH: Prestbury
APPLICANT:	Jockey Club Racecourses Ltd
AGENT:	Mr N J Surtees
LOCATION:	Cheltenham Racecourse, Evesham Road, Cheltenham
PROPOSAL:	Erection of a new Grandstand, extension of raised walkway deck viewing area, and realigned horse walkway and raised pedestrian walkway/bridge (over realigned horse walkway). Extension to North Entrance building, extension to and refurbishment of Weighing Room, construction of a garden terrace with a new betting shop beneath, extension of the un-saddling lawn and hard landscaping to north of Weighing Room. New steps and adjustments to landscaping strip between tented village and end of Parade Ring, adjustments to levels and resurfacing within the built complex and resurfacing to the course side in front of the new Grandstand up to the running rail. Other associated infrastructure work (including underground ducts and services), landscaping works, and relocation of spoil material to a remodelled site.

RECOMMENDATION: Recommendation at Committee



1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND PROPOSAL

- 1.1 The application proposes the erection of a new grandstand at Cheltenham Racecourse. The application also includes a number of other works, including; improvements around the parade ring; a realigned horse walk (including pedestrian bridge); a raised walkway; extension to the weighing room; extension and refurbishments to the See You Then Bar and creation of a garden terrace; and extension of the north entrance. It is envisaged that the development will increase the capacity of the course by 1500.
- 1.2 The application is accompanied by a large number of supporting documents, statements and drawings. Of particular interest are the detailed design and access statement and the planning statement which helpfully and clearly convey this large project. Members will be aware that these documents can be located on the council website and are encouraged to read them.
- 1.3 Within these supporting documents the applicant has advised what the overriding principle behind the application is; *to maintain Cheltenham racecourse as the premier national hunt course in the UK and protect and enhance the important revenue generated for local business and the local economy in general.*
- 1.4 Members will no doubt be familiar with the application site. It is proposed to demolish the existing A&R stand, royal box and tote terrace to make way for the replacement stand located in the same position and comprising of six floors of accommodation;
 - Level – 1 (below ground); plant room, Tote, WCs, cellar and storage (including refuse;
 - Level 0 (ground floor level); Club enclosure bar, Tote, coffee bar and balcony;
 - Level 1; Members facilities, steppings for 2,700, balcony and tote;
 - Level 2; Owners and trainers facilities, A&R club bar and balcony with stepped views;
 - Level 3; new Royal Box with private lobby, cloakroom and toilets, private boxes, Tote and balcony with stepped views;
 - Level 4; Premium Superclub facilities, Tote and balcony with stepped viewing;
- 1.5 The racecourse is located within the green belt to the north of the town. This is of course a key constraint that will be fully assessed later on in this report.
- 1.6 The application is before committee at the request of Prestbury parish council. Members will visit the site on planning view.

2. CONSTRAINTS AND RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Constraints:

Greenbelt

Relevant Planning History:

02/00113/FUL 18th January 2007 PER

Construction of new arena, (Use Class D2); re-routed Horse Walk and over-bridge; new viewing mound with stand and related facilities; low, grassed mound; new means of enclosure and entrances; other associated alterations within Racecourse

03/00316/FUL 1st May 2003 OBL106

Demolition of buildings with Courage Enclosure; construction of new viewing stand and related facilities within Courage Enclosure

07/00896/FUL 24th August 2007 PER

Demolition of existing weighing room and provision of a new weighing room and media centre

08/00650/FUL 24th June 2008 PER

Erection of a twin masted PVC Canopy over the festival bowl to provide cover with alterations to bowl to provide viewing areas (terraced and seating)

10/01401/TIME 18th October 2010 PER

Application to extend the time limit for the implementation of planning permission 07/00896/FUL. Demolition of existing weighing room and provision of a new weighing room and media centre

10/01936/FUL 4th February 2011 PER

Formation of private access link between fields of Ellenborough Park Hotel and Cheltenham Racecourse

12/00634/FUL 20th June 2012 PER

Infilling a 118m2 first floor courtyard in existing office building with extended open-plan office space

3. POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Adopted Local Plan Policies

- CP 1 Sustainable development
- CP 2 Sequential approach to location of development
- CP 4 Safe and sustainable living
- CP 7 Design
- CO 1 Landscape character
- CO 5 Definition of green belt
- CO 6 Development in the green belt
- CO 9 Development at Cheltenham racecourse
- UI 3 Sustainable Drainage Systems
- TP 1 Development and highway safety
- TP 6 Parking provision in development

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

4. CONSULTATIONS

Architects Panel

Is the information sufficient to understand the application?

Yes, the visualisations help significantly.

Context

The visualisations detail the existing buildings at the site well.

Massing and Scale

The proposed building is obviously large but we presume it has been design to accord with the client's requirements. However we are not entirely convinced by the proportions of the proposed building.

External Appearance

The external appearance is quite difficult to assess, there is plenty of information but the varying materials and building forms make it quite difficult to assess.

We do have some queries with regards the relationship between the proposed building, the existing building and the parade ring.

Detailing and Materials

See comments under 5 above

Environmental Design

We would welcome a greater explanation of the proposed environmental aspects of the scheme i.e. will it be seeking to achieve a particular level of bream accreditation.

Summary

The proposal is a significant scheme for the town and we would like the chance to meet with the architects to better understand the proposal prior to providing a full set of comments. There may be specific parameters that the client has which have guided the way the scheme has developed.

Recommendation

We would like a better understanding of the scheme before submitting a formal comment.

Environmental Health 4th June 2013

I have reviewed this application and offer the following comments:

Noise from piling operations

A development of this size and scale is likely to require piled foundations to be used. Use of such a system has the potential to cause loss of amenity for nearby properties due to noise from the piling operation. I must therefore recommend a condition on the following lines is applied to any permission for this development:

Condition: Development approved by this permission shall not be commenced unless the method for piling foundations has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The piling shall then only be undertaken in the approved method.

Reason: To protect nearby residential property from loss of amenity due to noise from piling operations.

Condition: A scheme for the control of noise and dust from all works of demolition and construction shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before such works commence on site.

Reason: To protect local residential property from loss of amenity during works of demolition and construction.

If you have further queries, please let me know.

Cheltenham Civic Society 20th June 2013

We are in favour of this proposal. In our view it is a good scheme which gives unity to the currently disparate group of buildings at the Racecourse.

Trees Officer 23rd May 2013

The Tree Section has no objection to this application. Trees to be removed are, in the main, trees of lesser quality and the replacement trees are of a good size as well as being from an interesting and varied pallet of appropriate species.

As the proposed *Alnus cordata* are traditionally shallow rooted species, I recommend they have a root director inserted into the planting pit at the time of planting. This will encourage their roots to go down into the soil and therefore not disturb adjacent surfaces.

On drawing 21108/16, Spoil Deposition Plan-various proposed native tree + shrub plantings are to take place. Could details of species, size etc be supplied and agreed via a planning condition as a part of any permission granted.

Please also use conditions:
TRE01B Existing Trees to be retained
TRE03B Protective fencing

Parish Council 14th May 2013

The Prestbury Parish Council Planning committee supports in principle the application, but would ask that the application be considered by the Cheltenham Borough Council Full Planning Committee, in view of the following reservations:

1. An imposing building which does not sit well in the landscape.
2. There is a loss of vista of the Cotswold escarpment. (Policies CO1 and CP3)
3. A sympathetic less angular design might be more appropriate.

Landscape Architect 10th June 2013

Please attach landscaping condition LAN 02B to any permission granted.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

The viewpoints selected for the LVIA are acceptable, having been agreed beforehand with CBC.

Assessment of the visual effects of the proposed new grandstand varies between moderate adverse and minor neutral. As the landscape setting of Cheltenham Racecourse is one of its notable features, any proposed redevelopment should seek to enhance the relationship of built form to landscape. A building design of less height and mass should be considered in order for it to relate better to its surrounding landscape.

Planting

Drawing 21108/13 Rev. P2: The trees, shrubs and herbaceous perennials specified are acceptable. (Note: - smaller species include both shrubs and herbaceous perennials. The heading of this table should be amended).

Drawing 21108/13 Rev. P2: As above. The General Planting Specification is acceptable.

Drawing 21108/16 Rev. P3: Proposed trees, shrubs and wildflowers: Plant specifications, including species, size, form, quantity and source are required.

Proposed swale:

Construction and planting details of the swale are required.

Proposed re-contouring of the ground:

A timetable is required for completion of the re-contouring of the ground and planting as per the drawing.

The Council's Drainage Engineer should be consulted regarding any potential effect on adjacent land resulting from re-contouring of the ground.

Hard Landscape

Drawing 21108/09 Rev. P5: The proposed new plaza and the adjacent landscaped areas have a pleasing design. The indicative paving materials are appropriate. Details of the proposed paving materials will be required.

Drawings 21108/10 Rev P6, 21108/11 Rev P6, 21108/12 Rev P7, 21108/15 Rev P2 :
As above, the proposed materials are acceptable, but specification details are required.

Other Comments

Drawing 7081 PL56 Rev A:

Roof Plan: Suggest a green roof for the whole or part of the roof. This would help to:

- Attenuate rainfall run-off;
- Reduce the visual impact of the proposed new building when viewed from Cleeve Hill.

Land Drainage Officer 21st May 2013

I have reviewed the Flood Risk Assessment submitted with the application and concur with its conclusions.

Strategic Land Use Team 13th June 2013

The relevant policy document for consideration in regard to this application is the Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Second Review 2006; Material Considerations include National Planning Policy Framework and the Tewkesbury, Cheltenham and Gloucester Joint Core Strategy Developing the Preferred Option Consultation Document of December 2011.

In the Local Plan relevant policies include: CO6, CO9, RC 11(b).

CO6 - This policy sets out a presumption against the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt unless the development meets one of the exception tests laid out from (a) - (e).

CO9 - This policy permits development at Cheltenham Racecourse so long as it: is principally horse racing related and does not extend beyond the confines of the built up area.

RC11 (b) - this policy requires that the use of the countryside for recreation and sport will only be permitted where it would not conflict with an open character in the Green Belt.

In the NPPF the most relevant policies include: The core planning Principles (paragraph 17) of:

- Proactively driving and supporting sustainable economic development
- Protecting the Green Belt
- Encouraging multiple benefits from the use of land

Supporting these core principles are the following paragraphs in the NPPF:

Paragraph 19, "Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth".

Paragraph 70, "policies and decisions should...plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship).

Paragraph 81 "Plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt"

Summary comments for application

The proposal significantly meets the requirements of Local Plan policies CO6 and CO9. CO6 allows development which is permissible under policy C09 as identified in (note 5) of the policy. C09 permits development which is principally horse racing related where it does not extend beyond the confines of the built up area. The applicant states the proposed development will be principally for horse racing related use and buildings should be developed, refurbished and extended with the needs of race goers principally in mind.

The bulk of the proposed development is felt to meet both tests in Local Plan Policy C09. The key Grandstand building is within the built up area policy designation. Despite elements of the scheme being located outside the defined built up area, those elements which are outside this designation are necessary for the design proposed and in some cases are extensions or improvements to structures already outside this boundary. In any case these elements of the scheme are mostly very near or adjacent to existing racecourse buildings and the designated built up area of the racecourse.

Because of this close spatial relationship to existing buildings and because of the scale and form of the development as a whole, particularly the relatively small scale of structures outside the built up area (some of these buildings will, it appears, be largely surrounded by the tented village) the proposal will not conflict with an open character in the Green Belt and is therefore deemed to be in conformity with Local Plan policy RC 11 (b)

The Planning Policy team is therefore of the view that the principle of redevelopment of the site as proposed is generally in accordance with the Development Plan given that the scheme is principally for horse racing related use and could not easily be positioned in a radically different location on the racecourse as a whole due to the constraints of providing appropriate views and replacing existing facilities in a way which facilitates pedestrian movement through the site.

The development is also likely to contribute towards building a strong responsive and competitive economy in the town, create a high quality built environment and will not substantially diminish protection of the greenbelt in this location.

5. PUBLICITY AND REPRESENTATIONS

Number of letters sent	110
Total comments received	3
Number of objections	3
Number of supporting	0
General comment	0

- 5.1 In response to the publicity of the application, three letters of objection have been received. Two letters raise concerns regarding the potential increase in noise that may come about as a result of this application; parking provision is also raised as a concern and one letter criticises the appearance of the new stand. Loss of a view is also raised as a concern but members will be aware that this is not a planning consideration.

6. OFFICER COMMENTS

6.1 Determining Issues

6.1.1 The key constraint relating to this application is the site's location within the Green Belt. This will be fully discussed in the following section of this report but it is also important to consider the design merit of the proposed application as well as its impact on neighbouring amenity. Finally, highway safety is an important consideration in the determination of this proposal.

6.2 Green Belt and the policy context

6.2.1 Local Plan policy CO9 recognises the importance of the racecourse to the town, stating that redevelopment or the construction of new buildings at the racecourse will need to be assessed in relation to the national significance of the venue as well as green belt policy. The actual text of the policy reads as follows:

6.2.2 *Development at Cheltenham Racecourse, including extensions, will only be permitted where it:*

a) is principally horse racing related; and

b) does not extend beyond the confines of the built up area.

6.2.3 The application has been reviewed by the Council's policy team and it has been met with a positive response. The policy team state that;

6.2.4 *The bulk of the proposed development is felt to meet both tests in Local Plan Policy CO9. The key grandstand building within the built up area policy designation. Despite elements of the scheme being located outside the defined built up area, those elements which are outside this designation are necessary for the design proposed and in some cases are extensions or improvements to structures already outside this boundary. In any case these elements of the scheme are mostly very near or adjacent to existing racecourse buildings and the designated built up area of the racecourse.*

6.2.5 Notwithstanding this position, the proposal is of course for a very large structure located within the green belt and therefore policy CO9 is not the only policy consideration. Local Plan policy CO6 (Development in the Green Belt) is of distinct relevance and officers are satisfied that this policy remains consistent with the advice set out within the NPPF when identifying inappropriate development.

6.2.6 The NPPF states quite clearly that *'inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.'*

6.2.7 It is the view of officers that this proposal would have to be considered inappropriate unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated and this is effectively the rationale behind local plan policy CO9 which recognises the importance of the racecourse to the town and therefore promotes a more permissive approach to development in this location. This does not mean, however, that all forms of development within the confines of the built up area are acceptable; the scheme still has to stand on its merits as an appropriate form of development in what is accepted to be a special case.

6.2.8 Members will be aware that land is allocated as green belt serves five purposes;

a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;

b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;

- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

6.2.9 The racecourse already represents a significant encroachment into the countryside and therefore proposals that seek to perpetuate this have to be handled sensitively. This report will go on to discuss the merits of the scheme in the following section, but it is quite apparent that without very special circumstances being demonstrated, a development of this scale in the green belt would be considered inappropriate.

6.2.10 Our own policy, CO9, recognises the importance of the racecourse to the town but the question to ask here, is whether or not this importance represents the 'very special circumstances' envisaged within the NPPF to enable this authority to support an application of this nature? To help answer this question, the application is supplemented by an economic statement prepared by the Jockey Club. Within this, it is confirmed that the Jockey Club employs 90 full-time staff at the racecourse. Beyond that, it is confirmed that for each race meeting, over 1000 jobs are created. In festival week this number rises to over 5,500.

6.2.11 The proposed development will create over 200 new jobs, rising to over 300 for The Festival. In addition to this, it is estimated that the value of The Festival to local economy exceeds £50 million.

6.2.12 Members will be well aware of the value that the government currently places on building a strong and competitive economy and the emphasis placed on approving sustainable development without delay. The NPPF advises that there are three strands to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental. Based on the figures provided as part of the application, it is quite apparent that the racecourse is a fundamental component of the local economy and officers consider that this is a material consideration of significant weight. Indeed, it is considered that the importance of the racecourse to the town does represent very special circumstances in the assessment of this application. Notwithstanding this position, the scheme has to be acceptable in its own right and therefore this report will now consider the wider merits of the proposal.

Matters in relation to the design, layout, impact on neighbouring amenity, and access and highways will follow by way of an update. The update will also include a conclusion and recommendation.