

Caversham Croquet Club Equipment Shed

Planning application reference: PP-07471128

Planning Statement

For several years Caversham Croquet Club has leased an enclosed 0.12 ha site within Albert Road Recreation Ground for the purposes of playing competitive and recreational croquet and coaching. (see Location Plan). Though the Club has membership structure with an annual fee, members of the general public, by prior arrangement, are encouraged to try the sport.

The Club's existing hut, (shown on the Location Plan) is used for storing croquet and lawn maintenance equipment, administrative and social purposes and, occasionally, preparing refreshments. As the Club has increased its membership and expanded its equipment holdings, the hut is becoming increasingly cramped.

The Club is now planning to erect an equipment shed approximately 224cm (W) X 330cm (D) X 207cm (H) to house its growing range of equipment and materials needed for lawn maintenance, thereby releasing space in the existing hut.

The intended shed (Asgard 7' X 11' Gladiator P!) is made of strong, thick galvanised steel, with subdued green external decoration. It will be set on a concrete base. The floor area will be around 8 sq m. It will be installed to the manufacturer's instructions by Club members over a two-day period. It will not be connected to water, sewerage or electricity services. It comes with a 10-year warranty and should require minimal maintenance over this period.

Locating the proposed equipment shed close to the Club's existing hut will be operationally efficient. Colocation will also reduce visual impact as both structures will be as far as possible from parts of the Recreation Ground open to the general public.

Both the existing hut and the proposed shed will be located within 1.5m of the site's southern boundary (see Block Plan). A mixed hawthorn and ivy hedge on this boundary will screen the from residential properties at 10 and 12 Harrogate Road (see 1:133 Detailed Plan).

Albert Road Recreation Ground is a designated open space in RBC's Core Strategy. Policy CS28, concerning development on open spaces, may permit development where there would be an improvement in the site's recreational facilities. The equipment shed would enable the Club to improve its ground maintenance capability and, thus, the recreational facilities it offers.

The proposed development would not impact on any trees. No vegetation would be lost as a result of the development, other than 8 sq m of turf. Neither protected species nor habitats would be at risk.

The proposal will not increase the number of Club members using the Club facilities. This is already limited by the capacity of the playing surface. Access to the site, through gates in the eastern and northern chain link fence boundaries will be unchanged. The proposed development will not impact in any way on the adjacent municipal Tennis courts or Caversham Bowling Club's facilities. Neither will it have any impact on the current provision for car parking in the Recreation Ground.

Homeowners at 8 and 10 Harrogate Road, Caversham have been consulted about the proposal. In addition, the community group, Supporters of Albert Road Park (SARP) has been notified.

In summary, the proposed equipment shed is designed to enhance existing recreational facilities in Albert Road Recreation Ground.