

Caversham Croquet Club Equipment Shed

Planning application reference: PP-07471128

Open space statement

The 0.12 ha site that Caversham Croquet Club leases from Reading Borough Council is part of Albert Road Recreation Ground, a designated open space.

The proposed location of the new equipment shed is as far as it can be from the car park and public areas of the Recreation Ground (see Block Plan). It will be alongside the Club's existing hut, which is of comparable dimensions and design (see Detailed Plan). The small area of grassland that will be lost (8 sq m) is just one part of an area of rough grass along the southern boundary of the site that is used by members when not actively engaged in play on the lawn.

In this location on the far margins of the site, the development will not create a visual intrusion. It will not change the character or ambience of the Recreation Ground, or interfere with public enjoyment of its many facilities.

National Planning Policy Framework paras 73, 74 & 75 and RBC's Core Strategy Document, Policy CS28, are rightly concerned with protecting designated open spaces. Any development must either provide replacement open space to a similar standard close by, or demonstrate that improvements can be made to the remaining open space of a sufficient standard to outweigh the loss.

The small scale of the proposed equipment shed (Asgard 7' X 11' Gladiator P!) with a footprint of only 8 sq m, means that the provision of an alternative area of land is neither practical nor relevant to this application.

However, planning gain will be achieved in the sense that increased storage space for lawn and gardening equipment will enable the Club to improve both the scale and efficiency of its lawn management and gardening activities. A well-managed croquet lawn is an asset that contributes to the Recreation Ground's facilities for sport and recreation and its general appeal to the local community.

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