

MC/19/0485

Date Received: 22 February 2019

Location: Anchorians Sports Club Darland Avenue Darland Gillingham

Proposal: Installation of an artificial grass pitch (AGP) with 4.5m high ball stop fencing and entrance gates to AGP perimeter; installation of 2.0m high and 1.2m high pitch perimeter barrier and entrance gates within AGP enclosure; installation of floodlight system; installation of a maintenance equipment store located within AGP enclosure and adjoining hard standing areas.

Applicant Medway Council,
John Hatchett

Agent Labosport Ltd
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Ward: Watling Ward

Case Officer: Katherine Parkin

Contact Number: 01634 331700

Recommendation of Officers to the Planning Committee, to be considered and determined by the Planning Committee at a meeting to be held on 18th September 2019.

Recommendation - Approval with Conditions

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Drawing numbers: 18-0822 BM25583 0451 02, 18-0822 BM25583 0451 03, 18-0822 BM25583 0451 04, 18-0822 BM25583 0451 05, 18-0822 BM25583

0451 06, 18-0822 BM25583 0451 07 and 18-0822 BM25583 0451 08, received 22 February 2019.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 3 The use hereby permitted shall only operate between the hours of 08:00 to 22:00.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not prejudice the amenities of neighbouring property in accordance with Policy BNE2 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 4 The floodlights should be installed and thereafter retained in accordance with the approved drawings and shall not be used after 22:00.

Reason: To protect neighbouring amenities in accordance with Policy BNE2 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 5 Prior to the first use of the pitch details of any tannoy system to be used including proposed times of use, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The tannoy system shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not prejudice conditions of amenity, in accordance with Policies BNE2 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 6 The pitch herein approved shall not be brought into use until details of the proposed acoustic barrier have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and maintained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not prejudice conditions of amenity, in accordance with Policies BNE2 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

For the reasons for this recommendation for approval please see Planning Appraisal Section and Conclusions at the end of this report.

Proposal

This application seeks planning permission for the installation of an artificial grass pitch (AGP).

The proposal incorporates the following features:

- Installation of new artificial grass surfaced field of play sized 106m x 70m with associated pitch markings to accommodate an 11v11 football pitch sized 100m x 64m, as well as a variety of 9v9 youth football pitches, 7v7 and 5v5 mini

soccer pitches and football training areas. The finished rubber surface will be coloured grass green.

- Installation of high level fenced enclosure around the AGP perimeter with new 4.5m high ball stop fencing with entrance gates to the AGP perimeter. The fencing and gates will be polyester powder coated in moss green. Neoprene washers will be fitted to fence posts/mesh fixing points to reduce rattle and vibration from ball impact.
- Installation of new pitch perimeter barrier (1.20m and 2.0m high) with entrance gates internally within the fenced enclosure to segregate the pitch playing area (the field of play) from adjoining hard standing areas.
- Installation of new hard standing areas adjoining the field of play (internally within the fenced enclosure) complete with associated porous asphalt surfacing for goals storage and pedestrian circulation.
- Installation of new hard standing areas connecting the AGP to adjacent pavements complete with associated porous asphalt surfacing for pedestrian access as well as for vehicular maintenance access and emergency access.
- Installation of new floodlight system 15m above ground level with sixteen new luminaires mounted onto eight new floodlight masts located along northern and southern longitudinal sides of the AGP. The luminaires will be installed with minimal aiming angles and integral louvres to reduce horizontal and vertical overspill.
- Installation of new maintenance equipment store (height 2.59m) located within the fenced enclosure. The store will be constructed in steel, finished in polyester powder coated in moss green.

The site is located within the existing boundaries of the Anchorians Sports Club. Pedestrian access is provided from the existing entrances via Darland Avenue.

The existing car parking arrangements close to the proposed development can accommodate more than sixty vehicles between the artificial hockey pitch and the existing clubhouse, plus forty-five formal spaces directly around the existing clubhouse including six dedicated bays for disabled driver badge holders.

In addition, there is substantial ad-hoc parking available along the access road, which can accommodate at least another sixty cars.

For the increased activity generated using the (recently permitted) new pavilion in supporting this proposed AGP, this increase in use will be predominantly weekday evening activity when existing car parking is less well used.

The proposed hours of use are 08:00 to 22:00 every day.

Relevant Planning History

MC/18/3312

Construction of a single storey sports pavilion
Decision Approval with conditions
Decided 07 February 2019

MC/16/2591

Installation of 1.1m high pitch-side barriers to either side of
1st XV rugby pitch
Decision Approval with conditions

Decided 12 October 2016

MC/16/1231	Variation of condition 7 on planning permission MC/13/2476 to allow the floodlights to be switched on between the hours of 17.00 and 22.00 Monday to Friday Decision Approval with conditions Decided 12 May 2016
MC/13/2476	Installation of six 15m masts and 16 2kw floodlights together with a 3 phase electricity and meter supply box cabinet measuring Decision Approval with conditions Decided 05 December 2013
GL/95/0725/76/0150 (HIS/98/72381)	Proposed provision of 9 hard tennis courts together with the erection of associated flood lighting and fencing Decision Approval with conditions Decided 02 February 1996
GL/92/0720/76/0150 (HIS/98/70023)	Proposed excavation to form 2 dug outs on north side of the All Weather pitch Decision Approval with conditions Decided 04 December 1992
GL/76/0150H (HIS/98/61790)	Construction of an artificial all weather multi-sport surface to be floodlit and fenced. Decision Approval with conditions Decided 12 November 1988

Representations

The application has been advertised in the press, on site and by individual neighbour notification to the owners and occupiers of neighbouring properties.

Sports England was also consulted and has responded raising no objection to the application, which is considered to meet exception 5 of their adopted Playing Fields Policy, relating to the potential benefit of new sports facilities.

Eight representations from neighbouring properties have been received, objecting on the following grounds:

- No extra parking has been planned; there should be more on site.
- More congestion.
- Parking around the site is already a problem.
- Additional pressure on existing single access onto Darland Avenue.
- Existing inconsiderate parking, including on grass verges and on surrounding residential roads.
- Blocking emergency access.
- Substantial increase in noise and litter.
- Additional unnatural lighting and subsequent light pollution.

- Loss of dog walking space.
- Impact on safety and security of surrounding properties and residents.
- Impact from construction.
- Why is there the need for another pitch, as there are already plenty of sports amenities in this area?
- Pavements and paths around the grounds become muddy tracks from existing use.
- Effect on property values.

Thirty representations from neighbouring properties have been received in support of the application with the following comments:

- All weather facilities that provide exercise opportunities all year round (especially for children) are great idea.
- This facility will help keep kids off games consoles; will provide a sense of identity and belonging; help fight obesity; encourage team work; develop life skills; and enrich social interaction for the family.
- Great opportunity for the area and community; it will bring the community together around football.
- A deserved asset for a football club that takes great strides to grow the popularity of the game, especially for girls.
- More than enough dog walking space remaining in the area.
- Much needed resource for grassroots football in the area, invaluable for attracting new players and raising the reputation of the Club to encourage more investment to support their role in providing sport in Medway.
- Extra noise would be negligible as there will still be traffic and evening noise from existing activities.
- It will promote health and well-being.
- It is not too close to housing and near to main access routes, and so should not inconvenience local residents.
- The majority of Anchorian players are local and walk to the pitches.
- The number of visiting teams will not increase; extra playing space is not being created – the development will mean that games can be played more regularly during the winter when the current pitch becomes muddy and dangerous.
- It will help keep down the mud transferred to surrounding areas.

Development Plan

The Development Plan for the area comprises the Medway Local Plan 2003 (the Local Plan). The policies referred to within this document and used in the processing of this application have been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) and are considered to conform.

Planning Appraisal

Principle

The application site is within the urban area and covered by Policy L3 of the Local Plan and paragraph 97 of the NPPF, which require the retention of open space, sports and

recreational buildings and land. The proposed AGP would enhance sports and recreation facilities through the redevelopment of a small part of the site, and this will provide further benefits to local community groups within Medway. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy L3 of the Local Plan and paragraph 97 of the NPPF, and there is no objection to the proposal in principle subject to the consideration of the matters below.

Design

Development Plan Policy BNE1 of the Local Plan places considerable emphasis on the importance of achieving high quality buildings and places. Paragraph 124 of the NPPF states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Paragraph 127 adds that developments should add to the overall quality of the area, be visually attractive, and sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

Local Plan Policy BNE1 seeks to ensure that the design of development is appropriate in relation to the character, appearance and functioning of the surrounding area.

The proposed AGP would be located where there is an existing grass pitch, immediately adjacent an existing artificial hockey pitch, and over 60m away from the nearest residential property. No objection is made for the new surface or the size and scale of the AGP, which is similar to the adjacent hockey pitch, and whilst the proposal introduces additional ball stop green fencing and floodlights, these would not be detrimental to the character of the area, as they are already existing features of the site. The current artificial sports pitch contains approx. 3-4.5m high ball stop fencing and approx. 15m high floodlights, and the proposed new AGP will also include approx. 4.5m high ball stop fencing and approx. 15m high floodlights.

The proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the requirements of Policy BNE1 of the Medway Local Plan 2003 and paragraphs 124 and 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

Amenity

Paragraph 127(f) of the NPPF asserts that achieving well-designed places should include creating a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. Paragraph 180 states that new development should be appropriate for its location, including limiting the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

According to Local Plan Policy BNE2, all development should secure the amenities of its future occupants and protect those amenities enjoyed by neighbouring properties. The design of the development should have regard to privacy, daylight and sunlight, noise, vibration, light, heat, smell and airborne emissions and activity levels and traffic generation. Policy BNE5 of the Local Plan seeks to minimise the loss of amenity from light glare and spillage.

Neighbours Amenity

The nearest residential property to the application site is over 60m away to the west, in Rotary Gardens. The boundary with the rear gardens of properties on this road is well screened with trees, shrubs and garden fencing, plus outbuildings within the playing field boundary.

The main impacts on surrounding properties from the proposed development relate to light and noise, and these are the particular concerns raised from neighbour consultation about the application.

With regards to noise, the application has been supported by a noise impact assessment.

The assessment has demonstrated there will be a negligible and imperceptible impact on existing noise levels and sensitive residential receptors. The existing noise climate already contains noise from the sports facility, and the proposals are unlikely to result in a significant change to this. Indeed, predicted noise levels from the AGP are likely to be below both the current residual and background noise levels during the more sensitive periods.

The assessment has conservatively not taken into consideration any attenuation that may be provided by fences around nearby residential gardens, which may offer some further noise reduction.

There are therefore no objections in relation to the noise impacts of the proposal, subject to a condition being imposed on any forthcoming permission requiring the submission of details of the acoustic barrier. In addition, a condition restricting the times of the use of the pitch would help limit noise. There have been no details of any tannoy system to be provided, and therefore this should also be conditioned.

With regards to light spillage, the application has been supported with a light assessment.

To limit harm the proposed floodlights are designed with minimal aiming angles and integral louvres to reduce horizontal and vertical overspill, to ensure that the lights are concentrated in the appropriate areas but also limit the effects of lighting spillage into the surrounding area. The floodlight design achieves values which meet the requirements of BS EN 12193:2018 Light and lighting - sports lighting, and also takes into account the guidance from the Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light, which classifies this site as being in an environmental zone E2, which is a rural area with low district brightness.

The floodlighting plan shows overspill/backward light reducing to 0 Lux horizontally at ground level, and 0 Lux vertically at 1.8m above ground level. This confirms that light mitigation treatment to reduce light impact to residential neighbours is not required. The floodlights are therefore considered to be acceptable subject to a condition to ensure they are installed in accordance with the submitted information. The condition should also include restrictions to the hours of use of the floodlights and prevent disturbance later than the approved hours of the site.

Taking into account that the site is already an existing sports pitch, plus with the retained tree and boundary screening, the size and scale of the proposed fencing and floodlights and the distance to neighbouring properties, it is considered there would be no detrimental harm to neighbouring residential amenity in terms of noise or light impacts.

On this basis, it is considered that the proposal will not harm the amenities of neighbouring properties to any significant degree. Therefore, the proposal is in accordance with Policies BNE2 and BNE5 of the Local Plan and paragraphs 127 and 180 of the NPPF.

Highways

Policy T13 of the Local Plan sets out maximum standards for sports facilities and requires assessment on an individual basis. Concerns have been raised regarding the level of traffic generation and impact on surrounding roads. The AGP would utilise the existing car parking at the site, which has a provision of around 165 car parking spaces and 6 disabled spaces. The proposal would not affect this provision. It must be considered that the site is already used as a sports pitch; the proposal is essentially an improvement to the surface of part of the pitch. Due to the sustainable location of the site, close to public transport links, it is unlikely that any additional traffic generation would result in any significant issues of highway safety. Consequently the application is considered to be in accordance with Policies T1 and T13 of the Local Plan.

The proposal is unlikely to have a significant impact on parking or highway safety in the immediate area, and the development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policies T1 and T13 of the Local Plan and paragraph 109 of the NPPF.

Local Finance Considerations

There are no local finance considerations.

Conclusions and Reasons for Approval

It is considered that the proposed AGP is therefore acceptable in principle on the basis that it is appropriate in terms of the design and impact on the street scene, and that there are likely to be no adverse effects on amenities, or on parking or highway safety. As such the proposal is considered to be in accordance with the provisions set out in paragraphs 97, 109, 124, 127, and 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019, and the Medway Local Plan 2003, including Policies BNE1, BNE2, BNE5, L3, T1 and T13. Therefore the application is recommended for approval.

The application would normally be determined under delegated powers but is being referred for Committee determination due to the number of representations received expressing a view contrary to the officer's recommendation.

Background Papers

The relevant background papers relating to the individual applications comprise: the applications and all supporting documentation submitted therewith; and items identified in any Relevant History and Representations section within the report.

Any information referred to is available for inspection in the Planning Offices of Medway Council at Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham ME4 4TR and here <http://publicaccess1.medway.gov.uk/online-applications/>