

MC/21/2423

Date Received: 13 August 2021
Location: St Augustine Of Canterbury Catholic Primary School Deanwood Drive
Parkwood Gillingham
Proposal: Installation of Trim Trail play equipment
Applicant: Mrs Shelley Hall
Ward: Rainham South Ward
Case Officer: Stephie Theedom
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 10th November 2021.

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:

Received 13 August 2021:

Trim Trail Location Plan
Trim Trail Site Plan

Received 07 September 2021:

Proposed Block Plan

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

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

Proposal

The application site is St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School, the proposal seeks to erect a wooden Trim Trail equipment (perimeter 17m-6m) on the existing school playing field.

Relevant Planning History

MC/04/0441

Erection of new 2.4 meters high security palisade fencing to Deanwood Drive & 1.8 meters high fencing to S.W boundary

Decision: Approved

Date: 18th February 2004

MC/18/2826

Construction of a two-storey front; single storey side; single storey rear and light well infill extensions

Decision: Approved

Date: 27th September 2018

Representations

The application has been advertised on site and by individual neighbour notification to the owners and occupiers of neighbouring properties. **Sports England** have also been consulted.

No letters of objection have been received regarding this application.

Sports England have written in objecting to the proposed development on the grounds of loss of the playing field.

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 2021 (the NPPF) and are considered to conform.

Planning Appraisal

Principle and objection from Sport England

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The objectives of the NPPF which seek to support vibrant and healthy communities and provide a well-designed built environment and notes access to open space can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

The Local Plan supports the provision of sports facilities, although this is, in the sense an alternative form of outdoor facility, the aim and objective are not too dissimilar to the standard sport facility classification. The trim trail equipment would provide a form of outdoor sporting activity to promote the health/wellbeing of the children attending the school. On this basis, Policies L1 and L2 of the Local Plan, supports improvement to existing facilities and the provision of new ones.

Guidance from Sport England will state the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of:

- all or any part of a playing field, or
- land which has been used as a playing field and remains undeveloped, or
- land allocated for use as a playing field

unless, in the judgement of Sport England, the development meets with one or more of five specific exceptions.

The playing field area has been identified for this use marked out with a running track however, Google Earth imaging from both 2018 and April 2020 shows that two grass football pitches are also accommodated on the playing field. It has been noted by the applicant that the sport pitches were added to host a Deanery Football Tournament.

Sports England state that the proposed trim trail would appear to overlap one or both of these football pitches and their respective safety run off areas. No recognition of this impact, or mitigation proposed to re-provide the impacted playing pitches is provided within the application. Therefore, objection to the application because it is not considered to accord with any of the exceptions to Sport England's Playing Fields Policy or with Paragraph 99 of the NPPF

The applicant has provided further information stating that the school field is substantial enough to incorporate the trim trail, running track (summer term), rounders pitch, cricket pitch and football pitch. The school has a total of 187 children on roll and throughout the year the field is used to support a variety of sport provision which again is interchangeable, and therefore two pitches are not required. The trim trail is an addition to our sport provision and will sit at the bottom end of the pitch that was painted in to host the historic Denary football tournament. No provision will be taken away from the children, only an exceptional addition to our school field.

The erection of play equipment would not reduce the playing field areas and will continue to serve the existing school use on the site and benefit the health and wellbeing of school children. For this reason, the principle of development is acceptable, subject to the other material considerations set out below.

Design and Appearance

Policy BNE1 of the Local Plan and paragraphs 128 and 134 of the NPPF give focus to high-quality design ensuing new development should complement the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout.

The majority of the play equipment would be constructed from wood and would sit comfortably within the context of the site. The play equipment would be of a scale and design that is to be expected of such a development and having regard to their size, location and land take relative to the school field area it is considered that the proposals would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the site or wider area.

Amenity

Policy BNE2 of the Local Plan and paragraph 130 of the NPPF relates to the protection of these amenities.

Whilst the play equipment would be located within the existing field adjacent to residential dwellings, given that the use of the school field is not changing and the boundary is heavily shielded by trees and shrubbery, It is not consider that these proposals would result in undue material harm to nearby residents.

Trees

Paragraph 174 of the NPPF outlines that planning decision should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment in terms of, and amongst other matters minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.

The site is cover by a TPO order (G5/1969). The proposed development would not remove or affect any of the existing trees or shrubbery location on the site. The Trim Trail will be located a minimum distance of 2m and a maximum of 10m from the protected trees. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal would not cause harm to the trees and is therefore acceptable.

Conclusions and Reasons for Approval

It is considered that the scale, mass and design of the Trim Trail play equipment would be in keeping with the existing character of the areas and there would be no detrimental impact on the amenities. The benefits of the development would introduce new play equipment to an existing interchanging sport field.

The application is therefore in accordance with Policies BNE1, BNE2, L1, L2, T1 and T13 of the Medway Local Plan 2003 and the advice set out in paragraphs 99, 111, 126, 130, and 174 of the NPPF.

The application would normally be determined under delegated powers however is being referred to Members of the Committee for decision due to the objection received from Sports England.

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/>