

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

3 April 2013

AUTHOR/S: Planning and New Communities Director

S/1808/12/FL– GRANTCHESTER

Construction of tennis facility comprising 12 courts, court fencing, floodlighting (for 2 courts), pavilion, car and cycle parking and landscaping with vehicular access off Grantchester Road, for Trinity College

Recommendation: Delegated Approval

Date for Determination: 24 October 2012

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination as the Development Control Team leader considers that the application should be presented to Committee for decision

To be presented to the Committee by Paul Sexton

Members will visit the site on 2 April 2013

Site and Proposal

1. This full application, as amended by details received 5 March 2012, relates to a 3.4ha area of agricultural land to the west of Grantchester Road, in the parish of Grantchester but abutting the boundary with Cambridge City Council on its east side.
2. To the north the site adjoins the site of the well landscaped site Cambridge Model Engineering Club (CMEC). To the east is the Rugby Club ground, which includes floodlit pitches and a clubhouse, the boundary with which is formed by a hedgerow. To the west there are open fields bounded by short length of hedgerow at the northern end of the site, but otherwise open. To the south are open fields. There is a permissive way which enters the site in the north east corner and continues along the east boundary of the site before running east to west, beyond the south boundary of the site and the rugby club.
3. The nearest residential properties are in Fulbrooke Road, the boundaries of which are a minimum of 120 metres from the application site.
4. The application proposes construction of a tennis facility for the Cock and Hens Tennis Club, which is currently located in Clerk Maxwell Road, Cambridge.
5. The scheme comprises construction of 12 tennis courts, pavilion, court fencing, floodlighting for two courts, car and cycle parking, access/roadway and landscaping.
6. 8 of the courts will be hard surfaced, with the other 4 being either grass or synthetic surface. The courts will be enclosed by 4m high 'open mesh' fencing, in three groups of four. The two hard courts closest to the proposed pavilion will be floodlit by six 8m high columns.

7. The proposed pavilion will be located in the north east of the site. It is a single storey pitched roof building, timber boarded and slate roof, with a maximum ridge height of 5.4m. It comprises male and female changing areas and w.c's, office, lawn mower store, furniture store and social area (10m x 7m) with kitchen and server.
8. A parking area for 36 cars and 40 cycles is provided to the east of the proposed pavilion. Vehicular access will be from Grantchester Road to the south east of the main body of the site, via an existing agricultural access and track, which will be upgraded as part of the proposal, and will enter the site in the south east corner. An additional access is shown in the north east corner of the site, which is an extension of the track which leads from the end of Fulbrooke Road, and currently serves the allotments and CMEC sites. The amended drawings specifies that this access will be for emergency vehicular access only, but will be able to be used by pedestrians and cyclists.
9. Additional landscaping is proposed along the west, east and south boundaries
10. The site is located in the Cambridge Green Belt and Flood Zone 3. The application has been advertised as a departure.
11. The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, Planning Statement, Transport Statement, Landscape Appraisal, Flood Risk Assessment, Phase 1 habitat and protected species scoping survey report, Archaeological Desk Top Assessment, Archaeological Investigation, Illumination Impact Profile and Luminaire Datasheets, and Draft Heads of Terms form.

History

12. No relevant history

Planning Policy

13. National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Local Development Framework Development Control Policies 2007:

ST/1 – Green Belts
 DP/1 Sustainable Development
 DP/2 Design of New Development
 DP/3 Development Criteria
 DP/4 Infrastructure and New Developments
 DP/7 Development Frameworks
 GB/1 Green Belts
 GB/2 Mitigating the Impact of Development in the Green Belt
 GB/5 Recreation in the Green Belt
 NE/1 Energy Efficiency
 NE/4 Landscape Character Areas
 NE/6 Biodiversity
 NE/9 Water and Drainage Infrastructure
 NE/11 Flood Risk
 NE/14 Lighting Pollution
 CH/2 Archaeological Sites
 TR/1 Planning for More Sustainable Travel
 TR/2 Car and Cycle Parking Standards

Consultation by South Cambridgeshire District Council as Local Planning Authority

14. **Grantchester Parish Council** comments that it broadly approves the application but suggests one improvement to the vehicular access junction.

“This region between Grantchester and Cambridge is in an area of many sporting clubs, and the addition of this Tennis Facility is very appropriate. The facilities, fencing and lighting have all been carefully considered to be reasonably inoffensive. Access by cycle has been well designed, and a new road replaces an existing farm track for vehicular access, with sufficient parking. Visibility at the junction with Grantchester Road is suggested as reasonable for a rural road with 30mph limits at either end. However, our observations suggest cars often travel on this portion of Grantchester Road at 60mph or above, indicating that a wider visibility splay is needed at this position. Traffic is unlikely to become a problem due to the relatively small size of the new facility, and parking is sufficient with space for 3 cars per tennis court.

We broadly approve this application. However, the new vehicular access junction on the Grantchester Road warrants improvement; cars often travel faster than suggested in the submission, requiring a greater visibility splay, appropriate for a 60mph road.”

15. The **Local Highway Authority** raised an objection to the application as originally submitted, commenting that insufficient information had been provided in respect to the 85%ile speed on Grantchester Road.

A traffic count for both Saturday and Sunday is requested, to demonstrate that these days are less busy, and/or that the pattern of use is similar to the days that were counted, e.g. do a lot more people turn up at once on a Saturday morning, though the overall figure is lower?

Due to the sites location access by cycle should not only be encouraged, but will be common. More information is required on the cycling provision to the site. Mention is made of cycle access to the north of the site, but little detail is provided. Is the ‘access track’ hard paved and if not will it be upgraded as part of the proposals. Details of the cycle provision should also be provided as that shown is insufficient. It is suggested that cycle provision should conform to the City Councils guidance.

Following the receipt of additional information from the applicant the Local Highway Authority comments that it has concluded that as a statutory consultee as Highway Authority to both Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council it has considered the information contained within the required Transport Statement and considers that for a development of this nature that the information provided is sufficiently robust to give a reasonable level of comfort that the access as designed does not fall outside the normal range of risks and hazards that would normally be encountered by users of the adopted public highway.

It confirms that visibility splays of 2.4m x 120m can be provided which are appropriate for the empirical data which has been provided in respect of the speed of traffic along Grantchester Road, and that this will involve minimal trimming of the hedge to the

south of the access. The 85% ile speeds have been identified as 39mph northbound and 43mph southbound.

16. The **Environmental Health Officer** has no objection in principle. His initial recommendation was that the floodlights should not operate after 21.00hrs on any day, but following a request from the applicant has agreed to a 21.30hrs deadline. Details of an automatic time control switch should be submitted for approval. The floodlights should be used solely in connection with the use of the site as a tennis facility and for no other purpose. The main beam angle of the floodlights as directed towards any dwelling outside the site must be kept below such an angle so as not to adversely affect the living conditions of nearby occupiers. Details of the location and type of any power driven plant or equipment should be required for approval by condition. Conditions should also be imposed restricting the hours of use of power driven machinery during the construction process, and a restriction placed on the hours of deliveries or collections to and from the site.

17. The **Environment Agency** considers that the Flood Risk Assessment has considered the flood risk appropriately for the scale and nature of the development, and has no objection on flood risk grounds.

However, further information will need to be provided demonstrating that the proposed development can go ahead without posing an unacceptable flood risk. It states that this can be addressed by conditions requiring a scheme for Flood Mitigation Measures and surface water drainage, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydro-geological context of the development.

18. The **Ecology Officer** requested additional information on lighting. The Phase 1 habitat survey and protected species scoping report identifies a large oak tree with woodpecker holes that could have potential as a bat roost, but it is felt that the floodlights can be shielded so as not to illuminate the boundary features – this needs to be confirmed and how far the light spillage will fall, otherwise the potential for impact upon bat roosts in the tree must be investigated further before the application is determined.

The report also highlights the potential value of the southern watercourse for water voles but as none were recorded at the present time no further action is considered necessary whilst no works are proposed to take place upon it. The applicant should confirm whether the new access road will result in a new bridge crossing over the ditch and the extent of any work.

The scoping report proposes a number of useful and straightforward biodiversity mitigation and enhancement measures, however it is not known if the applicant accepts to work by these recommendations. If consent is granted it will be expected that these measures will form the basis of an Ecological Management Plan for the site, secured by condition.

In response the applicant has confirmed the area of light spill, that measures contained within the ecology document will be implemented, and that there will be no additional culverting of watercourses, which the Ecology Officer has accepted as addressing his concerns.

19. **Cambridgeshire Archaeology** states that the site lies in an area of high archaeological potential and it is considered likely that important remains survive on the site and that these would be severely damaged or destroyed by the proposed

development. It strongly recommends that the site is subject to an archaeological investigation, to be carried out prior to the granting of planning permission.

20. The **Landscapes Officer** comments that the site lies within the Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire Claylands. This is a broad classification covering a large area to the south west of Cambridge. On a more local level the Cambridge Green Belt study identifies the area as part of the Green Belt lying adjacent the River Cam Corridor Landscape Character Area, which is noted as being distinctive because of its 'key views to the landmark towers of Cambridge and because of its rural and pastoral character, even close to the city centre'. The area forms a distinctive approach to Cambridge, and penetrates close to the city centre. The river valley also a strong historical association with the city and with Rupert Brook and others who have described the river between Grantchester and Cambridge.

The landscape character of areas to the east, north and south of the site is small scale and detailed, in contrast to the more typical character of the Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire Claylands which is more evident to the west. This particular area could be said to be more sensitive to change and development than other sites around the edge of Cambridge and within the Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire Claylands Landscape Character Area.

The main landscape and visual effects will be from the flood lights; the columns which can be clearly seen in conjunction with notable Cambridge buildings such as Kings College when viewed from the east, particularly Coton Road; light spill when floodlights are in use; extensive runs of security or ball-stop fencing and; possible loss of mature vegetation along Grantchester Road.

Flood lights - there are locations along Grantchester Road where the visual impact of the development would be significantly higher than shown from viewpoints 7 and 8, although the public using the road will not have a constant view of the site due to the existing vegetation. The proposed floodlight columns do visually extend the developed edge significantly to the west and the visual impact will be particularly noticeable in certain conditions or at certain times of the day e.g. dusk

The existing rugby floodlight columns are surprisingly noticeable from Coton Road, close to Viewpoint 11, and form a mid-ground to a clear skyline featuring historic city centre buildings. The proposed floodlights would add to the mid-ground clutter, either adding to it or extending it to the north west and would have a detrimental effect on the setting of Cambridge, certainly higher than the 'negligible' effects noted for viewpoint.

Light spill - even though the lighting would be designed to have a sharp cut off outside the courts, the floodlit areas would appear as a lit 'box' and would extend or add to the lighting of the area, at times combining with the floodlights from the rugby pitches. A planting scheme could offer only limited mitigation in this instance.

Fencing - significant runs of security or ball-stop fencing will enclose areas of presently open ground, appearing from some viewpoints as more solid than others. Mitigation should be possible by the planting scheme, but the development will reduce the openness of Green Belt land.

Visibility splays – if 215m splays are required in line with Manual for Roads and Bridges it would result in the loss of a substantial length of hedgerow and several mature trees to the north of the proposed entrance, which would severely affect the landscape character and entrance to Cambridge along Grantchester Road.

Mitigation - the detailed landscape plans will mitigate the visual and landscape effects to some extent. The proposed planting will soften fencing, lessen the impact of the pylons and reduce the visual merging of existing and proposed buildings, but more planting is needed. The site (and Green Belt land) will be obviously more enclosed, and planting will only partially mitigate the setting and views to the centre of Cambridge and the apparent extension of the urban edge, particularly when the floodlights are in use.

Detailed planting plan

Revisions are suggested which include moving the courts to the east by approximately 7-8m to take them out of the rooting zone of the mature trees in the north west corner and reduce leaf drop on the court. The proposed trees to the west of the courts should be omitted. The proposed native hedge should be moved approximately 6m to the south, to allow for a mature 4m high hedge and for maintenance access between the hedge and the tennis courts. The native hedge and tree planting should be extended northwards up the west boundary to meet with the existing mature trees in the corner. Tree planting on the south and west boundaries should more closely pick out the field pattern with perhaps tree groups in the field corners. Any gaps in the existing hedges should be filled. Further planting (trees/shrubs) needed in the north west corner behind the rugby buildings. The Ash should be replaced with Oak and White Willow

Comments of the revised details will be reported.

21. **Cambridge City Council** states that its response to this application is given on the basis of the merits of the proposed site on a stand-alone basis, and that any redevelopment of the existing Cock and Hens Tennis Club site on Clerk Maxwell Road resulting from a positive endorsement of this proposal, would have to be assessed against the current Council policy regarding the designation status of the site, its constraints and suitability of alternative provision

In principle it has no objection to the proposal which it states is compliant with the City Council policy concerning the Green Belt and paragraph 89 of the NPPF. It is noted that Sport England supports the proposal.

Lighting

The conclusions of the 'Illumination Impact Profile' report are noted. The proposed scheme seeks to implement the lowest recommended Lawn Tennis Association lux levels, which accords with the City Councils policy on floodlighting. There is conflicting information within the application regarding the number of courts to be illuminated (2-4). It is noted that the height of the lighting columns (8m) is approximately half that of those erected on the adjacent rugby club (18m). Subject to a maximum of two courts being illuminated, and conditions to control the impact of lighting, particularly the timing of use, this aspect of the proposed scheme is considered acceptable.

Impact on residential amenity

The proposal is sufficiently far enough away from residential properties (150m to the NE) not to give rise to any significant concern regarding amenity on those properties. Such is the nature of the tennis use, that no concerns are raised regarding its potential impact in terms of noise and disturbance on adjacent land users.

Consideration should be given to ensuring the impact of the use of the pavilion is minimised, for example by considering an appropriate evening closure time.

Impact on ecology

The findings of the Ecological Assessment are noted. Provided the lighting scheme is implemented in accordance with the lighting report, no concerns are raised.

Impact on openness of the Green Belt

Unlike adjacent rugby, cricket and football pitch provision in this part of Cambridge, which is generally more open in appearance, the nature of the specific tennis proposal requires a significant amount of high fencing and column lighting, which reduces the openness of this part of the Green Belt. The boundaries of the site mean that it is set within a staggered hedgerow line and benefits from the backdrop of an adjacent tree belt to the north. The location of the single storey pavilion and the extent of accommodation provided, which is to the minimum Sport England standard, means that the visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt is minimised. It is noted from the Landscape Appraisal that the location of the site and its visual presence from surrounding vantage points would be minimal, afforded through 'glimpse' views. On the basis the Council is not minded to object to the location of the proposed courts, pavilion, fencing or lighting columns on the grounds of impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The development will form part of a cluster of sporting facilities within this part of Cambridge. Any detracting from the openness of the Green Belt would be minimal and is outweighed by the benefits of the proposed use.

Access

SCDC should ensure itself that the proposed access arrangements to the site are safe, particularly to pedestrians and cyclists, seeking to use the facility. It is unclear from the documentation to what extent it is possible for the applicants to rely on pedestrian and cycle permissive access rights via the track to the north and to what extent this could also be used for vehicular traffic from Fulbrooke Road. The latter should be conditioned out of any grant of planning permission and likewise any permission should be specific to ensure that parking at the tennis club is ancillary to the use of the courts and not, for example, to be used in association with the adjacent CMEC site.

In particular, the vehicular access point is from an unlit stretch of road with no pavement, outside the 40 mph zone. Grantchester Road is subject to traffic calming proposals by the City Council, although none have yet been implemented. This stretch of road is narrow and there are local concerns regarding speeding. Expert advice should be sought on the safety implications of the access and robustly demonstrated as part of any recommendation to approve.

Landscaping

The proposed southern boundary landscaping appears sparse and could be strengthened to lessen the visual impact of the courts, fencing, pavilion building and lighting columns. The preservation of the setting of this part of south Cambridge requires very careful consideration. Additional landscaping should be secured by condition.

Flood risk

The advice of the Environment Agency should be sought in relation for the proposal to exacerbate the risk of flooding to nearby houses. Any permission should be subject to a condition to require a surface water drainage scheme to be submitted to the Council for approval prior to the commencement of development

If consent is to be granted it recommends that conditions are imposed in respect of controlling floodlighting levels, time of floodlights, maximum of 2 illuminated courts, additional landscaping, surface water drainage, restrictions of use of access, materials and use of pavilion.

22. **Councillor Burkitt** strongly supports the application
23. The comments of the **Councils' Drainage Manager, Anglian Water and Sport England** are awaited, although a letter from the latter was included within the application documents indicating its general support.

Representations by Members of the Public

- 24 Letters of objection have been received from a total of 33 households in Fulbrooke Road, Grantchester Road and surrounding area. In addition to these two letters have been received, one of which is signed by the occupiers of 12 properties in Fulbrooke and the other by 12 properties in the same road, and letters of objection from Cllr Sian Reid, City Councillor for the adjacent area and County Councillor Lucy Nethsingha.

One letter from a resident of Grantchester supports the application and hopes that it can be implemented without unnecessary delay. Another letter from a Cambridge resident also supports the application, but declares an interest as a member of the Club.

The objections raised are summarised below:

- a. Green Belt – particularly sensitive part including the world-famous south-west approach to Cambridge, including Grantchester. Although some limited sports facilities have been allowed in the Green Belt this exceeds the norms for non-disruptive development and would alter the character of the green belt in this visually and environmentally sensitive area. Contrary to para 80 of NPFA - preserve the setting and special character of historic towns, para 79 - openness and their permanence, and para 81 – to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity. Gradual erosion of Green Belt. Intrusion of lighting. A facility of this kind is inconsistent with the Local Plan. Over-provision of ancillary facilities, the size of the club house is not justified. The access road will be intrusive.
- b. Para 87 of NPPF states inappropriate development harmful by definition and should only be approved in very special circumstances and whilst one of exceptions in para 89 is provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport etc, appeals are often rejected where it does not protect openness of land.
- c. Road between Cambridge and Grantchester has deliberately been maintained as a narrow, undeveloped country road, and is part of the charm of this approach to Cambridge. It is not sufficient to say that the new junction with the track from the tennis club to Grantchester Road would be widened and

landscaped; it would still fundamentally alter the character of this part of Grantchester Road.

- d. Any major increase in volume of traffic entering or leaving the road from both sides is likely to be dangerous and have a disruptive effect on traffic. Despite what is said in the application the use would result in a significant increase in traffic and the location of the exit to Grantchester Road is at a particularly dangerous and unsuitable as a junction. Limited visibility. Speed limit should be reduced to 40mph.
- e. Access is not proposed to be lit and will have minimal visibility splays. Night time use is planned and Grantchester Road is very dark at night, narrow and twisting. The access will not be safe creating a risk for both cars and cycles using the access and on Grantchester Road. If the scheme goes ahead the users will seek to expand the access and install lighting on grounds of safety.
- f. Will make road more dangerous for cyclists at a time when cycle use is encouraged.
- g. Traffic to the Rugby Club in Grantchester Road is already a hazard, not just on match days.
- h. The application makes no reference to the existing consultation about the very dangerous pedestrian and bike crossing at the intersection of Fulbrooke Road and Grantchester Road, reviewing ways to slow down traffic in the latter as it hits the 30mph zone.
- i. More bike and pedestrian traffic in Fulbrooke Road, including over a very fragile bridge at the end, and what is currently an extremely quiet lane that leads past the allotments.
- j. Will pedestrian access to Grantchester, across the fields, be preserved? The plans seem to indicate there will be a gate blocking access to the track on the other side of the PAD. A lovely walk will be urbanised
- k. No plan for traffic – will cars go behind the rugby club where currently they only go to the model engineering site.
- l. Cars backed up bumper to bumper midweek mornings past planned access point and slow moving.
- m. Cars sometimes parked outside Pembroke fields at weekends.
- n. Claim that will largely be used on Fridays seems highly questionable as most people play tennis at weekends. The methodology used in the traffic assessment is queried.
- o. Traffic assessment based on existing membership – facilities indicate this will increase and looking at more costs 279 member club.
- p. Need further traffic calming measures.
- q. Vehicular access from Fulbrooke Road to the tennis courts should be prohibited. Parking in Fulbrooke Road already difficult. Understood that there is an agreement between Trinity College and the CMEC to allow vehicle

access from Fulbrooke Road to the parking area and then out to Grantchester Road via the tennis courts, which would be unsatisfactory to local residents.

- r. Transport Statement - greatly underestimates additional hazard proposed by new access to Grantchester Road. 10% of vehicles traveling over 45mph should not be considered, a 'small percentage'.
- s. Distances quoted to bus stops are very marginal and only within 400m 'as the crow flies'.
- t. Farm track should be preserved to maintain the essential agricultural character of this stretch of the road.
- u. One letter suggests access should be via Fulbrooke Road or the Rugby Club, where Grantchester Road is wider and lit.
- v. The large copse of trees between the top of Fulbrooke Road and the site is an important habitat for wildlife, especially birds. It is not true that the proposed development would have no harmful effect on this ecologically sensitive area. It would irrevocably change the environment at a time when such sanctuaries close to the city are becoming most needed and prized.
- w. Lighting will have adverse impact on wildlife. The list of birds drawn up omits migratory species: nightingales and cuckoos nest here. Bird nesting will be affected and nest boxes are no substitute.
- x. There are foxes in the area. Badgers, muntjacks and hares. On major flight path to seminal lake behind Fulbrooke Road.
- y. Wildlife has already diminished in the area through the clearing of trees and shrubs – this proposal will only increase this.
- z. Undue pressure on local wildlife and habitat, contrary to para 81 of NPPF. Four red species noted on day of survey – others known to live in the area that includes the woodland next to the development. Not enough research done into impacts of both light and noise pollution. Insect population will be disturbed.
- aa. Although reference is made to the area as being of 'low ecological value that refers to the open grass field not the areas that surround it.
- bb. Allotment holders and gardeners welcome birds and animals that reduce pests and any threat to their livelihood is to be deplored.
- cc. Visual amenity – impact will be contrary to paras 79 and 81 NPPF.
- dd. The rural character of this area is part of the Local Plan. It is absurd to claim that the development proposed will have no impact on the appearance of this area, and that it will not affect the appreciation of the area by walkers, visitors and residents. The present grassy track is an integral part of the rural appearance and amenity of the area and to give it a hard surface suitable for vehicular access will be intrusive, no matter the colouring or finish.
- ee. Erosion of landscape character.

- ff. Loss of farmland.
- gg. Disingenuous to suggest that because several present members of the club live within cycling distance that it will result in minimal increase in traffic and disturbance. These change and once erected people will be able to join from all over the region. Bound to be traffic disruption to Fulbrooke Road, presently a quiet cul-de-sac. Of a scale that will enable it to host tournaments and facilities will be hired out for social purposes. These are more extensive than it enjoys at its current location.
- hh. To place such a quasi-commercial hub in such a spot, will fundamentally alter the character of Fulbrooke Road, the lane that leads alongside the Townlands Charity ground, and the whole aspect of the countryside on this edge of Cambridge.
- ii. The area is flood plain and ditches which surround the area, the brook and the lake have risen to the point of serious threats three times in the last few months. The land is clay and completely inappropriately to the dependently flat requirements of courts. The necessity for very large quantities of concrete is another reason for not allowing further massive building.
- jj. The statement about flooding fails to acknowledge actual flooding in residential gardens in Fulbrooke Road during wet weather (max 1m 2001). Soakaways are an inadequate measure against run-off, which may find its way into the Fulbrooke and thus into gardens. Add to ground saturation in area that consists of heavy clay, with a high water table. There is no possibility of water infiltration.
- kk. At a meeting held by the agents it was recognised that the storm cells currently proposed will serve no purpose, and unless actively pumped will always be full and offer no flood mitigation. Extensive land drainage will be needed that has not been shown, that will pull water from a greater area than the development itself, with outflows from pumps needed to local ditches. More pressure will be put on streams feeding Bin Brook, further endangering properties in the area, and more attention is need to the drainage arrangements before the planning application can safely be allowed to proceed.
- ll. Sewage – problems have been experience from the Rugby club. Not at all clear that the Tennis Club has begun to think through consequences of adding to the loads on aged pipes. Croftgate Flats had to provide pumps and storage tanks.
- mm. Despite assurances given, there is bound to be night sky illumination, visible from some distance.
- nn. Impact on permissive path which runs along east and south boundaries – appears restricted by a stile and partially merged with planned vehicular access track. Valued and well used route should not be compromised by development. Should be no restriction to its access from Fulbrooke Road and clear separation should be between it and access track.
- oo. Noise and light pollution will impact on residential amenity Social events at pavilion a concern – add to noise and disturbance already experienced from Rugby Club and occasionally from the CMEC.

- pp. Little to prevent Visitors straying onto agricultural land – regarded as conservation area by the Campaign for the Farmed Environment.
- qq. Concern about future expansion into remainder of site.
- rr. Seems to be lack of long-term commitment to use of the site by landowner as it is understood there is an enforceable break point in the lease after only 10 years.
- ss. Wide enough gap between access road and hedge on south boundary is required to allow wild fruits to be culled safely.
- tt. While Grantchester residents have been kept in the loop over the development the agents have made little effort to contact affected Cambridge residents. Full consultation should be required.
- uu. Will this application make it easier for future residential development of the area, which residents will oppose?

Comments on the revised details will be reported.

Representations on behalf of the applicant

- 25. In response to points raised during the consultation process the applicant has submitted a letter setting out comments relating to the amended drawings, permissive path, floodlights, drainage, highway and access, hours of use, archaeology and Green Belt, and this is attached as Appendix A

Material Planning Considerations

- 26. There are a number of key issues for Members to consider in this case; whether the proposed development is appropriate development by definition in the Green Belt; whether the proposal results in any other harm to the Green Belt; landscape impact; highway safety; residential amenity; lighting; ecology; drainage, archaeology and any other matters
- 27. If it is concluded that the proposal is inappropriate by definition, then this and the extent of any other harm, will require Members to consider whether the applicant has demonstrated that very special circumstances exist which clearly outweigh that harm.

Is the proposal inappropriate development in the Green Belt by definition?

- 28. Paragraph 87 of the NPPF confirms that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 88 states that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt and that ‘very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
- 29. Paragraph 89 of the NPPF states that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate, but lists exceptions, which includes ‘provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it’.

30. Paragraph 90 states that certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate development in the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Engineering operations are referred to as falling within the scope of this paragraph.
31. The proposed development provides facilities for outdoor recreation and therefore looking at the provisions of paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF the main consideration in determining whether the proposed development represents inappropriate development is whether it preserves the openness of the Green Belt.
32. Policy GB/5 encourages proposals in the Green Belt which provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation, appropriate to the Green Belt, where it would not harm the objectives of the Green Belt.
33. The site is at the edge of Cambridge and is currently part of the open land to the west of the rugby club site. When walking out into the site along the permissive way leading from the track off the end of Fulbrooke Road there is an immediate sense of entering open countryside, and a similar open impression will be gained looking back to the site from the permissive way to the south. The proposed development of the site, which involves extensive amounts of fencing around the tennis courts, along with the erection of a clubhouse, six flood light columns, and car parking area will not preserve the openness of this particular section of the Green Belt. Although the fencing will be an 'open-mesh' style fencing it can have a fairly solid appearance depending on the angle from which it is views.
34. Officers are therefore of the view that the proposal is inappropriate development, and therefore harmful by definition.

Any other harm to the Green Belt

35. The Landscapes Officer has highlighted the importance of this section of the Green Belt on the southern edge of Cambridge. The applicant is proposing additional landscaping on the east, west and south boundaries of the site, and a native hedge within the site, immediately to the south of the tennis courts.
36. To a degree the proposed use will be seen as an extension of the existing sporting use of land to the west by the rugby club and officers are of the view that the visual impact on the wider Green Belt can be sufficiently mitigated by the landscaping proposed, although the exception to this will be the proposed floodlighting.
37. Although officers are of the view that the wider visual impact of the six 8-metre high columns, as structures, will be limited, and less than that of the higher, and numerically greater number of columns at the rugby club, there will be an increased impact when the floodlights are in use. This will have the effect of extending the area of illumination into the currently unlit area to the west of the rugby club, and officers are of the view that the lighting will be viewed from a wider area, particularly from the south, along the Coton Road, Grantchester.
38. The applicant accepts the need for a restriction on the hours of use of the floodlights and is suggesting a time of 21.30hrs, which officers consider reasonable. Given this restriction, the fact that only two courts are to be floodlit, that there will be periods of the year when lighting is not required for this time, and the ability to control the type and direction of lighting to limit light spill, officers are of the view that it is possible to reduce this potential visual impact on the Green Belt to an acceptable degree

Landscape Impact

39. The initial comments of the Landscapes Officer are set out earlier in this report and revised drawings submitted by the applicant incorporate the majority of the suggested amendments requested in order to help reduce landscape impact.
40. Officers are of the view that it is inevitable that there will be a significant change to the character of the site when viewed from the permissive paths, but that with the additional landscaping proposed the impact on the wider landscape, and longer distance views, will be limited to the floodlight columns and lighting as discussed above. When viewed from the south these will be viewed against the significant planting immediately to the north of the site.
41. The further comments of the Landscapes Officer will be reported at the meeting but officers are minded to take the view that the applicant has adequately addressed the issues of the impact of the proposed development on the wider landscape

Highway safety

42. The existing farm access can be upgraded, and appropriate visibility splays provided based on the empirical evidence supplied, without resulting in the need to remove any significant amount of the existing hedge along Grantchester Road
43. The Highway Authority has confirmed that it is satisfied with the additional information supplied by the applicant, which included traffic counts for Saturdays and Sundays, and that a safe vehicular access can be provided, in accordance with the empirical data provided. In coming to this conclusion it has noted the comments received during the consultation process.
44. The access has been designed to allow vehicles to enter and leave the site while encountering no greater hazard than would normally be associated with any access onto the adopted public highway. Whilst the increased use of the road has the potential to increase conflict between cyclists and motor vehicles this is unlikely to be of such a level to present a clear and constant danger to more vulnerable road users.
45. The Highway Authority has recognised the consultation being undertaken by Cambridge City Council in respect of traffic calming in Grantchester Road and although these proposals may impact on the speed of vehicles using the junction, the design of the access to the site is such that it is acceptable in highway terms for the approach speeds along the road with its current layout.
46. The Highway Authority has confirmed that there is currently no requirement for the junction to be illuminated, but that it can only consider the information provided with this application and any proposal for future expansion of the site would need to be reviewed at that time. Officers of this Council would not support illumination of the entrance due to the adverse impact it would have on the character of the area and a condition would be imposed on any consent controlling external lighting.
47. The Highway Authority does not consider any conflict with movements to and from the site at times of peak traffic to pose a highway issue as traffic passing the site will be slow moving.
48. Adequate off road parking is provided for the proposed facility.

49. The site falls within the Western Corridor Area Transport Plan area where a contribution of £20, 862 is required towards highway infrastructure and the applicant has submitted a draft Heads of Terms form recognising this requirement, which should be secured through a Section 106 Agreement.

Residential amenity

50. The nearest residential properties to the site are in Fulbrooke Road and Grantchester Road to the north east, with the boundary of the closest property being some 120m from the north east corner of the application site, with the CMEC site, allotments and rugby club in-between.
51. The impact of the proposed floodlighting on residential amenity has been assessed as part of the comments of the Environmental Health Officer and deemed to be acceptable, subject to the conditions suggested in respect of angle of light beam and hours of use of the site.
52. Noise from use of the site is not considered to be likely to have a significant adverse impact on amenity. Restrictions can be imposed on the hours of use of the pavilion.
53. Fulbrooke Road is already used as access to the Kings and Selwyn sports grounds and CMEC and its use for vehicular access to this site would not be appropriate. The revised drawings show access in this direction to be for emergency use only, and this can be controlled by condition. Access to the site for pedestrian and cycle use is considered by officers to be acceptable.

Lighting

54. The application as amended confirms that only the two hard surfaced courts closest to the pavilion are to be floodlit. This involves the erection of six 8-metre high columns and the issues relating to the impact of lighting on the Green Belt, landscape and residential amenity have been discussed above. The lighting levels proposed are at the minimum levels recommended for this type of use. The Club currently has two floodlit courts at its existing site and argues that any relocation needs to maintain this provision. A condition can be attached to any consent controlling specification of lighting and hours of use, including the requirement for an automatic cut out device.
55. Any future application to increase the amount of floodlighting would have to be judged on its merits.

Ecology

56. The application is accompanied by a Phase 1 habitat and protected species scoping survey report and following the receipt of additional information from the applicant regarding the Ecology Officer is content with the information provided in respect of light spill and that there is no additional culverting of watercourses that will result. The confirmation that the applicant accepts the implementation of the measures outlined in the ecology document is noted.

Drainage

57. The eastern half of the site is identified as being within Flood Zone 3 and the history of flooding and drainage issues in the surrounding area is recognised. It is therefore important to ensure that drainage issues associated with the development have been appropriately considered.

58. The applicant entered into pre-application with the Environment Agency and has produced a Flood Risk Assessment, which has been accepted in principle by the Agency, although it states that the risk to the adjacent Award Drain has not been fully assessed, and requests that conditions are included in any consent requiring the submission for approval of a detailed scheme for surface water drainage and flood risk mitigation measures.
59. Any scheme for surface water drainage will need to be designed to ensure that run-off rates are controlled to existing greenfield run-off equivalents and the local comments in this respect are noted and have been passed to the applicant. A condition can be attached to any consent requiring the submission of a scheme for approval prior to commencement of any development.
60. The Award Drain runs along the southern boundary of the site and any comments of the Councils' Drainage Manager will be reported at the meeting.
61. Although Anglian Water has been consulted on the application no comments have been received. The applicant has indicated that foul water could be dealt with by an on-site sewage treatment plant if necessary, although connection could be made to the existing foul sewer in Fulbrooke Road.

Archaeology

62. Following the original comments of Cambridgeshire Archaeology the applicant has undertaken an investigation of the site and a report has been produced that indicates that there are no findings that would prevent the proposed development from proceeding, although Officers are currently waiting for confirmation from Cambridgeshire Archaeology on this point.

Other matters

63. Officers have concluded that the proposal is inappropriate development by definition as it will not preserve the openness of the Green Belt
64. The applicant does not agree with officers view that the proposed development is inappropriate by definition but has, without prejudice to that view, set out what it considers to be the very special circumstances that exist in this case. It states that the NPPF clearly supports outdoor sports uses, and the development will enable the construction of a purpose-built tennis club, for a club which has an open Membership policy. It will support the health and well-being of the local community, stating that tennis is a sport that appeals to a very large are range so a facility that is more likely to provide these health and well-being benefits to wider section of the community.
65. The agents letter points out that Planning authorities should make decisions to give 'access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation that can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities' [NPPF para 73] and 'to provide opportunities for outdoor sport in the Green Belt' [NPPF para 81]. The provision of a new purpose built tennis facility is an important and special circumstance that weighs in favour of the proposal.
66. Officers are of the view that the proposed development will have an impact on the openness of the Green Belt in the immediate area of the site, but accept that the impact on the wider Green Belt will be minimal, with the exception of the lighting proposed.

Conclusion

67. Officers are of the view that the issues in this case are very finely balanced. As a matter of fact the proposed development will have an impact on the openness of this part of the Cambridge Green Belt, however Policy GB/5 and the NPPF support the appropriate provision of facilities for sport in the Green Belt, and it is the benefit of the provision of these which forms the main basis of the applicants 'very special circumstances' in this case.
68. Having carefully considered the additional matters of highway safety, landscape impact, residential amenity, lighting, ecology, drainage and archaeology, and the limited harm that would result from these, officers are of the view that on balance the identified harm is clearly outweighed by the overall benefits of the proposal.

Recommendation

69. Subject to any additional comments, including those of the Landscapes Officer, Drainage Manager and Anglian Water, it is recommended that the Planning Committee gives delegated powers to approve the application subject to the prior signing of a Section 106 Agreement securing the Western Corridor Area Transport Plan contribution, and the following suggested conditions

Conditions

Conditions should be imposed relating to the following matters

- Time limit – 3 years
- List of approved drawings
- Details of external materials
- Visibility splays
- Falls, levels and materials of access road
- Gates 5m from carriageway
- Surface water drainage
- Foul water drainage
- Flood mitigation measures
- Details of floodlighting
- Hours of operation of floodlights – 21.30hrs
- Restrict use of pavilion – 22.30hrs
- Landscaping
- Ecology measures
- Details of external lighting
- All vehicular access from Grantchester Road (emergency access only to north)
- Car and cycle parking provision and restrict use to tennis club
- Restriction on hours of use of power operated machinery during construction process
- Restriction on hours of collection/deliveries
- Details of location of any power driven plant or equipment
- Western Corridor Area Transport Plan contribution.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted January 2007)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (adopted July 2007)
- Planning File Ref: S/1808/12/FL

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