

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 22 JUNE 2016 AT 10.00 AM

EAST HERTS DISTRICT

Agenda No.

3

APPLICATION FOR THE PROPOSED VARIATION OF CONDITION 2 OF PLANNING PERMISSION 3/1210-12 FOR AMENDMENTS TO REMODELLING PROPOSED AROUND HOLES 5 AND 6 DUE TO REMOVAL OF UNSTABLE LEYLANDII CYPRESS TREES, MINOR REVISIONS TO TEES ON THE ACADEMY COURSE AND TARGETS ON THE DRIVING RANGE, IMPROVEMENTS TO DRAINAGE SYSTEM INVOLVING AN EXTENDED DRAINAGE CHANNEL, PROVISION OF INFILTRATION BASIN AND ENLARGEMENT OF APPROVED INFILTRATION BASIN AT CHADWELL SPRINGS GOLF CLUB, HERTFORD ROAD, WARE, HERTFORDSHIRE, SG12 9LE

Report of the Director Environment and Commercial Services

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Local Member: Jeanette Taylor

Adjoining Local Member: Andrew Stevenson

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider planning application ref 3/0225-16 for the proposed variation of condition 2 of planning permission 3/1210-12 for:-
- amendments to remodelling proposed around holes 5 and 6 due to removal of unstable Leylandii Cypress trees,
 - minor revisions to tees on the academy course and targets on the driving range,
 - improvements to drainage system involving an extended drainage channel, provision of infiltration basin and enlargement of approved infiltration basin.

2 Summary

- 2.1 The site is currently being redeveloped under approved planning permission 3/1210-12 and once complete will become the Chadwell Springs Family Golf Centre. The site lies on the southern side of the A119 Hertford Road between the towns of Hertford and Ware.
- 2.2 The proposal is for changes to the golf course following removal of a number of Leylandii trees. These include hole realignment for the 5th and 6th holes, introducing physical landform barriers between them, drainage modifications to prevent run-off from the site and raising

target greens within the multi-shot driving range and on the 9th hole.

- 2.3 As part of the application, a further 46,000m³ of inert material would be imported onto the site. The current permission allows for 203,000m³ of inert material to be imported. It is anticipated that the addition importation would take 12 weeks dependant on supply of suitable materials and weather conditions. A further four weeks would be required to complete grass seeding and planting of trees and shrubs.
- 2.4 Access to the site would be via the existing access, directly from the A119 Hertford Road. The number of vehicle movements would be no more than 140 daily movements (70 in and 70 out), (as currently permitted) Monday – Friday with no more than 70 vehicular movements (35 in and 35 out) on Saturdays. The proposed hours of operation would continue to be 0700 - 1800 Monday to Friday and 0800 – 1300 on Saturdays.

3 Conclusion

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Chief Executive and Director of Environment should be authorised to approve planning permission subject to conditions set out in this report.

4 Description of the site and proposed development

- 4.1 Chadwell Springs Golf Club covers an area of 19.5 hectares and is situated approximately 1km to the south west of Ware. It is approximately 1.5km to the north east of Hertford and is bounded by the A119 (Hertford Road) to the north and the A10 to the west. To the east and north eastern fringes of the site lies residential property. The site lies to the south of the A119 from the King's Meadow Nature Reserve. A small industrial estate is located adjacent to the north west corner of the site.
- 4.2 A golf club has been sited at Chadwell Springs since the end of the nineteenth century. Originally a 18 hole golf course, its size was reduced by approximately 38 acres further to the construction of the new A10 (which runs adjacent to the western boundary of the site). In 1974 McMullens a 9 hole golf course was constructed on the site. The site closed in 2012 to undertake redevelopment.
- 4.3 The site currently benefits from permission 3/1210-12 for proposed remodelling of the existing 9 hole golf course by importing inert material. A multi-shot driving range, pitch and putt course and short game tuition area will be created. The permission also includes single storey driving range building comprising 20 bays along with erection of 10 metre high containment netting and associated lighting. The golf club house and golf shop will be demolished. A public house incorporating golf shop will be built. Associated works including alterations to the existing car park and provision of overspill car park,

cycle storage and bin storage. Landscaping and provision of bus stop and further, the creation of a pedestrian access point on Hertford Road.

- 4.4 The permitted scheme approved the importation of 203,000m³ of materials to construct the pitch and putt course, short game tuition area and driving rang. Works are currently underway and the scheme is projected to be complete in Autumn 2016.
- 4.5 Since works commenced in August 2014 an existing row of mature Leylandii Cypress trees have been found to be unstable with some falling during high winds. The applicant has stated that the remaining trees cannot be retained. The removal of the trees has safety, playability and visual implicants for the site, which has resulted in the submission of this application to vary condition 2 of permission 3/1210-12.
- 4.6 The proposal comprises the following changes;
 - Changes to landform, golf hole orientation and tree planting following removal of the Leylandii Cypress trees around the 5th and 6th holes,
 - screening the approved maintenance building on the course once the tree removal is complete,
 - improving issues with drainage identified during construction,
 - rectifying minor architectural deficiencies with target visibility and definition,
 - improved and extended tree planting.
- 4.7 The issues relating to hazards from ball strike can be resolved by two methods including hole realignment, hole separation and visual definition. The proposal includes the realignment of the 6th tee and 5th green position. The proposed landforms is not higher than 73m AOD which is the maximum height in the current approved scheme.
- 4.8 Changes to the drainage scheme would be within the multi-shot driving range. To ensure surrouding catchment areas do not add to the driving range catchment area, interceptor swales are proposed to divert and convey some runoff directly to the attenuation basin. This has resulted in the minor level change proposals along the western edge of the driving range.
- 4.9 Within the driving range revised grading is proposed in the target green design to reposition targets and slightly elevate them. The applicant states that this would require a minimal amount of material to achieve.
- 4.10 The proposed earthworks will result in an increased amount of run-off which is directed towards the 9th green. The applicant states that this will been addressed by raising the green by 0.5m providing shallow swales around the green diverting surface water away from the

playing surface. The tee level would also be raised by 1m.

5 Consultations

- 5.1 East Herts District Council raises no objection to the proposal.
- 5.2 Environment Agency is satisfied that the variation in condition is acceptable and the change in flood risk as a consequence of the amended landform is adequately addressed within the addendum produced by Hydro-Logic Services Ref: K0245/pw.
- 5.3 CPRE did not respond to formal consultation.
- 5.4 Historic Environment Unit state that the development is likely to have an impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest and therefore recommended planning conditions including the requirements of a groundworks methodology and an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation is attached to any grant of planning permission.
- 5.5 Herts Ecology state although bat roosts are present in the underground sites to the north of the site, these will not be affected by the proposed variations. Furthermore, it is likely that birds will nest within the *Leylandii* throughout summer and would be harmed by felling. In order to protect breeding birds, their nests, eggs and young, tree felling should only be carried out during the period October to February. If this is not possible then a pre-development (same day) search of the area should be made by a suitable experienced ecologist. If active nests are found, then clearance work must be delayed until the juvenile birds have left the nest are fully independent or profession ecological advice taken on how best to proceed.
- 5.6 Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust did not respond to formal consultation.
- 5.7 Ware Town Council did not respond to formal consultation.
- 5.8 Hertfordshire County Council as Highways Authority whilst the proposal will extend the construction period for a further 12 weeks, the proposal will not increase the number of daily HGV movements from that already permitted under the existing planning consent. Therefore the Highway Authority has no objection to the proposal provided the condition controlling HGV movements remains in place.
- 5.9 Lead Local Flood Authority raises no objection to the proposal.
- 5.10 Neighbours / Publicity

Site notices were erected on 9th February 2016 and an advert placed in the Hertfordshire Mercury on 11th February 2016.

601 properties were consulted on the application and **3** letters objecting to the application were received. The concerns can be summarised as:

- the number of traffic movements proposed;
- material being deposited on the highway resulting in unsafe conditions;
- material being deposited on the path;
- material from the site blocking the highway drains causing flooding;
- noise and safety concerns resulting from traffic movements.

6 Planning considerations

6.1 The relevant development plan policies are:

National Planning Policy Framework

Hertfordshire Waste Development Framework – Waste Core Strategy & Development Management Policies Development Plan Document 2011-2026 Adopted November 2012

Policy 1A – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy 2 – Waste Prevention and Reduction

Policy 4 – Landfill and Landraise

Policy 6 – Green Belt

Policy 7 – General Criteria for Assessing Planning Applications Outside of Identified Locations

Policy 9 – Sustainable Transport

Policy 11 – General Criteria for Assessing Waste Planning Applications

Policy 13 – Road Transport & Traffic

Policy 16 – Soil, Air and Water

East Herts Local Plan Second Review, Adopted April 2007

Policy BH2 - Archaeological Evaluations and Assessments

Policy GBC1 - Appropriate Development in the Green Belt

Policy GBC4 - Major Developed Sites

Policy ENV1 - Design and Environment

Policy ENV2 - Landscaping

Policy ENV10 - Planting New Trees

Policy ENV11 - Protection of Existing Hedgerows and Trees

Policy ENV14 - Local Sites

Policy ENV16 - Protected Species

Policy ENV17 - Wildlife Habitat

Policy ENV20 - Groundwater Protection

Policy ENV21 - Surface Water Drainage

Policy LRC1 – Sport and Recreation Facilities
Policy LRC6 - Golf Courses
Policy SD1 - Making Development More Sustainable
Policy SD4 - Sustainable Development and Nature Conservation
Policy TR3 - Transport Assessments

6.2 The issues to be taken into account in determining this application are:

- Impact on the Green Belt
- Landscape
- Highways
- Ecology
- Surface Water Drainage/Flood Risk
- Noise and dust

6.3 The proposal contains 4 elements;

- ameliorating hazards from ball strike following removal of the Leylandii Cypress trees around the 5th and 6th holes, with associated amendments to course playability, definition and visibility.
- screening the approved maintenance building on the course once the tree removal is complete.
- improving issues with drainage identified during construction.
- rectifying minor architectural deficiencies with target visibility and definition.
- improved and extended tree planting.

6.4 The site was granted planning permission in December 2012 for re-grading of the golf course, involving the importation of 203,000m³ of waste material, demolition of the existing club house and golf shop and the erection of a new pub with golf shop under. The development is underway, the principal of the development has been established. The work on the construction of the club house is yet to commence. .

6.5 The proposal is for a variation to the approved permission including the importation of a further 46,000m³ of waste material. The applicant states that the importation would extend the duration of the project by a further 12 weeks. The application details that a row of trees between two of the golf holes are unsafe. During recent high winds two of the trees fell.

Landscape and green belt

6.6 The site is within the green belt, forming an important gap between Ware and Hertford. The A10 forms the boundary to the west of the site. The site rises up the valley sides from the Ware Road and finishes on the ridge line. The golf course is a recreational use within the green belt which the NPPF says is a beneficial use of the green belt. The golf course improvements already have planning permission

and so this proposal is about changes to that permission.

- 6.7 The trees that it is proposed be removed are a row of Leylandii cypress. The trees are not native do not reflect the local landscape character, in principal removal could be acceptable. However these trees do have a role in the local landscape. They are located towards the skyline as viewed from outside of the golf course. Views from across the valley to the north show a well wooded ridge line. The removal of these trees would leave a gap. The trees are unstable and are approaching the end of their life and would likely fail or be removed in the future.
- 6.8 The proposed amendment was to replace the removed trees with six hazel trees. The applicants have amended the application and now it is proposed to plant two areas of woodland, around 1,500 trees would be planted. This adequately replaces the loss of the Leylandii, and will develop to a significant landscape feature that should enhance the area of the Green Belt and wider views into the site and across the valley.
- 6.9 The applicants state that if the trees are removed this would give rise to safety concerns and so some remodelling of the landform is necessary. The proposal would provide for safety for golfers and a good landform.
- 6.10 The proposed landform will change views within the site and some views from the southern boundary. However this is limited and not linked to public vantage points. The NPPF says that certain uses of land would may not be inappropriate development where the maintain openness. In this context the proposals as discussed are modest compared to the existing permission and fit within the existing scheme, so the final proposal will not be likely to have a greater impact upon openness. However the works will extend the duration of the development slightly. In these circumstances the proposal can be considered inappropriate development. The impact upon the green belt is small and the very special circumstances are the need to remove the unstable trees their replacement with two woodland blocks which would enhance the green belt are considered to clearly outweigh the harm to the green belt.

Highways

- 6.11 The proposal would require around a further 12 weeks of importation. There have been complaints about lorries from the site depositing mud on the highway. Locally towards Ware there have been flooding problems which may have been associated with blocked highway drains. These issues have been investigated and are being dealt with separately but do not appear to be the direct consequence of the Chadwell Springs site. There is a need to continue to monitor the access point during wet weather and ensure that measures are taken to deal with any mud taken on the road. The proposal is of relatively

short duration and should mostly be completed during dryer weather and so further controls are not required. The Highways Authority do not object to the proposal

Ecology

- 6.12 The felling of the trees needs to be undertaken carefully to ensure that any wildlife is not adversely disturbed. Leylandii trees are not generally considered to be of high ecological value but may be used by nesting birds. A condition can ensure that this matter is properly investigated and dealt with.
- 6.13 The proposals include measures for enhanced surface water drainage and a condition can ensure that the proposed scheme is carried out as approved.
- 6.14 The proposals are not likely to increase any risks from noise and dust and existing controls should be adequate for this.

7 Conclusions

- 7.1 It is therefore recommended that to approve planning permission subject to conditions relating to:-
1. Time Limit for development
 2. Approved plans
 3. Access improvement
 4. Noise monitoring
 5. Wheel Washing Facilities
 6. Limit of Operations Concerning Completion of Final Remodelling
 7. Hours of construction, working and deliveries
 8. Vehicle Movements
 9. Vehicle Log/ Origin of Materials
 10. Construction Traffic Management Plan
 11. Dust
 12. Lighting
 13. Surface Water Drainage Scheme
 14. Surface Water Infiltration
 15. Timescales for Soil Handling
 16. Tree protection measures
 17. Root Protection Zones
 18. Archaeological Scheme of Investigation
 19. Commencement of Archaeological Investigations
 20. Habitat Creation Plan/ Management
 21. Use of Development Following Archaeological Investigations
 22. Felling of Leylandii trees and ecological protection.

Background information used by the author in compiling this report

Planning application reference 3/1210-12 and supporting documents
Consultee responses
Relevant policy documents