

Old Fold Manor Golf Club Old Fold Lane Barnet EN5 4QN

Location

Reference: 15/03873/FUL

Received: 22nd June 2015

Accepted: 22nd June 2015

Ward: High Barnet

Expiry: 21st September 2015

Applicant: Mr Paul Grant

Proposal: Recontouring of western boundary alongside St Albans Road to form safety banks between 1 and 4 metres high. Creation of driving range with six covered range bay and attenuation pond, short game academy course, minor modification to hole 10. Temporary construction access from St Albans Road

RECOMMENDATION I:

That the applicant and any other person having a requisite interest be invited to enter by way of an agreement into a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and any other legislation which is considered necessary for the purposes seeking to secure the following:

1. Paying the council's legal and professional costs of preparing the Agreement and any other enabling agreements;
2. All obligations listed below to become enforceable in accordance with a timetable to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority;
3. Submission and approval of a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan covering a 25 year period, to be implemented in accordance with details approved under Conditions 9 and 12;
4. Submission and approval of details for tree removal works and tree planting works prior to commencement of Development which shall include a phasing program to require the developer to submit to the Council proof of the contract for the tree planting works prior to the commencement of the tree removal works.
5. Monitoring Fee - £500.

RECOMMENDATION II:

That upon completion of the agreement the Planning Performance and Business Development Manager/Head of Development Management approve the planning application under delegated powers and grant planning permission subject to the following conditions and any changes to the wording of the conditions considered necessary by the Planning Performance and Business Development Manager/Head of Development Management:

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

Drawing Nos. OFMGC-105.01, 02H, 03I, 04G, 05H, 06H, 07I, 8H, 9H, 10H, 11H, 12H, 13H, 14F, 15G, 16H, Ecoscope Tree Protection Plan Rev C September 16 Sheets 01 and 02.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning and so as to ensure that the development is carried out fully in accordance with the plans as assessed in accordance with Policies CS NPPF and CS1 of the Local Plan Core Strategy DPD (adopted September 2012) and Policy DM01 of the Local Plan Development Management Policies DPD (adopted September 2012).

- 2 This development must be begun within three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 3 a) The development hereby permitted shall be implemented only in accordance with the levels details as shown on the drawings hereby approved and retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out at suitable levels in relation to the highway and adjoining land having regard to drainage, gradient of access, the safety and amenities of users of the site, the amenities of the area and the health of any trees or vegetation in accordance with policies CS NPPF, CS1, CS5 and CS7 of the Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted September 2012), Policies DM01, DM16 and DM17 of the Development Management Policies DPD (adopted September 2012), and Policies 7.4, 7.5, 7.6 and 7.21 of the London Plan 2015.

- 4 a) Notwithstanding the details submitted with this application, a scheme of hard and soft landscaping, including details of existing trees to be retained and size, species, planting heights, densities and positions of any proposed soft landscaping, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development hereby permitted is commenced.

b) All work comprised in the approved scheme of landscaping shall be carried out before the end of the first planting and seeding season following occupation of any part of the buildings or completion of the development, whichever is sooner, or commencement of the use.

c) Any existing tree shown to be retained or trees or shrubs to be planted as part of the approved landscaping scheme or Landscape and Ecological Management Plan which are removed, die, become severely damaged or diseased within five years of the completion of development shall be replaced with trees or shrubs of appropriate size and species in the next planting season.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development and to preserve the character and visual amenities of the site and the conservation area in accordance with Policies CS5 and CS7 of the Local Plan Core Strategy DPD (adopted September 2012), Policy DM01 and DM06 of the Development

Management Policies DPD (adopted September 2012), the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (adopted 2016) and 7.21 of the London Plan 2016.

- 5
- a) No development shall take place until details of the location, extent and depth of all excavations for services (including but not limited to electricity, gas, water, drainage and telecommunications) in relation to trees on and adjacent to the site, along with the method of excavation and installation have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
 - b) The development shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with details approved under this condition.

Reason: To safeguard the health of existing tree(s) which represent an important amenity feature in accordance with CS5 and CS7 of the Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted September 2012), Policy DM01 and DM06 of the Development Management Policies DPD (adopted September 2012) and Policy 7.21 of the London Plan 2015).

- 6
- a) Notwithstanding the details hereby submitted, no development works in relation to the construction of the covered bays shall take place until details of the materials to be used for the external surfaces of the covered bays hereby approved have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
 - b) The development shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the materials as approved under this condition.

Reason: To safeguard the character and visual amenities of the site and wider area and to ensure that the building is constructed in accordance with Policies CS NPPF and CS1 of the Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted September 2012), Policy DM01 of the Development Management Policies DPD (adopted September 2012) and Policies 1.1, 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6 of the London Plan 2015.

- 7
- a) Notwithstanding the details submitted with this application, no site works or development (including any temporary enabling works, site clearance and demolition) shall take place until a dimensioned tree protection plan in accordance with Section 5.5 and a method statement detailing precautions to minimise damage to trees in accordance with Section 6.1 of British Standard BS5837: 2012 (Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations) which includes details of development phasing and the construction of the temporary haulage road and method of removal of this road following completion of the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
 - b) No site works (including any temporary enabling works, site clearance and demolition) or development shall take place until the temporary tree protection shown on the tree protection plan approved under this condition has been erected around existing trees to be retained on site. This protection shall remain in position until after the development works are completed and no material or soil shall be stored within these fenced areas at any time. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the protection plan and method statement as approved under this condition.

Reason: To safeguard the health of existing trees which represent an important amenity feature to the site and the wider area in accordance with Policy DM01 and

DM06 of the Development Management Policies DPD (adopted September 2012), Policies CS5 and CS7 of the Local Plan Core Strategy DPD (adopted September 2012) and Policy 7.21 of the London Plan 2016.

- 8 a) Notwithstanding the details submitted with this application, no site works or development (including any temporary enabling works, site clearance and demolition) shall commence on site until a detailed tree felling and pruning specification has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- b) All tree felling and pruning works shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved specifications under this condition, and the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan, and all in accordance with British Standard 3998 (Recommendation for Tree Works).

Reason: To safeguard the health of existing trees which represent an important amenity feature in accordance with Policy DM01 of the Development Management Policies DPD (adopted September 2012), Policies CS5 and CS7 of the Local Plan Core Strategy DPD (adopted September 2012) and Policy 7.21 of the London Plan 2015.

- 9 a) No site works (including any temporary enabling works, site clearance and demolition) or development shall be commenced until details of a Landscape Management Plan for all landscaped areas for a minimum period of 25 years have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- b) The Landscape Management Plan shall include details of long term design objectives, management responsibilities, maintenance schedules and replacement planting provisions for existing retained trees and any new soft landscaping to be planted as part of the approved landscaping scheme.
- c) The approved Landscape Management Plan shall be implemented in full in accordance with details approved under this condition.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development in accordance with Policy DM01 of the Development Management Policies DPD (adopted September 2012), Policies CS5 and CS7 of the Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted September 2012) and Policy 7.21 of the London Plan 2015.

- 10 a) No development or site works shall take place on site until a Construction Management and Logistics Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority.

The plan shall provide for:

- i. details of the routing of construction vehicles to the site, hours of access, access and egress arrangements within the site and security procedures;
- ii. site preparation and construction stages of the development;
- iii. the methods to be used and the measures to be undertaken to control the emission of dust, noise and vibration arising from construction works;
- iv. a suitable and efficient means of suppressing dust, including the adequate containment of stored or accumulated material so as to prevent it becoming airborne at any time and giving rise to nuisance;
- vi. noise mitigation measures for all plant and processors;

- vii. details of contractors compound and car parking arrangements;
- viii. Details of a community liaison contact for the duration of all works associated with the development;
- ix. details of hours of construction activities detailing scheduling of deliveries, loading and unloading of plant and materials;
- x. a schedule of deliveries including maximum vehicle movements per day, and days within the months when deliveries will take place, over the life of the construction works.

b) The development shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the measures detailed within the plan approved by this condition.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and good air quality in accordance with Policies DM04 and DM17 of the Development Management Policies DPD (adopted September 2012), the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (adopted October 2016) and Policy 5.3 and 5.18 of the London Plan (2015).

- 11 No development shall take place until an archaeological written scheme of investigation (WSI) has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. For land that is included within the WSI, no development shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed WSI, which shall include the statement of significance and research objectives, and:
- A. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works;
 - B. The programme for post-investigation assessment and subsequent analysis, publication and dissemination and deposition of resulting material. This part of the condition shall not be discharged until these elements have been fulfilled in accordance with the programme set out in the WSI.

Reason: In order to protect the heritage assets of archaeological significance within the application site in accordance with Policy DM06 of the Development Management Policies DPD.

- 12 Prior to the commencement of any works on site, a detailed Ecological Management Plan, along with a schedule of monitoring, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These shall expand upon the outline principles set out in the submitted Ecological Impact Assessment and Habitat Management, Creation and Aftercare report and provide for the protection of species on the site, and for protection of existing and proposed habitats. The techniques, measures and monitoring shall be implemented in full during the course of construction and prior to the first occupation/use of the development hereby approved, and maintained as such thereafter.

Reason: In order to protect the habitats and biodiversity of the site, in accordance with Policy DM16 of the Development Management Policies DPD.

- 13 No development works shall take place until the means of vehicular access to the site from St Albans Road, the site compound and site haulage/access road have been constructed in accordance with any consents/permissions obtained from the relevant Authority.

Reason: To ensure the proposed development is implemented in accordance with the approved details and from a safe and useable access point from the public highway, to avoid danger to highway safety and to avoid damage to trees in accordance with Policies DM01, DM06 and DM17 of the Development Management Policies DPD.

- 14 The details required to be submitted pursuant to Conditions 5, 7, 8 and 10 imposed by this Planning Permission shall be submitted to the LPA for consideration at the same time.

Reason: To enable the proper consideration of matters relating to tree, hedgerow, protected species and habitat protection and areas of the site to be used for construction activities, in accordance with Policies DM01, DM15, DM16 and DM17 of the Development Management Policies DPD.

RECOMMENDATION III

That if the above agreement has not been completed or a unilateral undertaking has not been submitted by 29 April 2017, unless otherwise agreed in writing, the Planning Performance and Business Development Manager/Head of Development Management REFUSE the application under delegated powers for the following reason(s):

The proposed development does not include a formal undertaking to provide for a long term landscape management plan and to ensure the proposed replacement planting is implemented in accordance with the terms of this application. The proposal would therefore not address the impacts of the development, contrary to Policy CS15 of the Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted September 2012), Policy DM01 of the Development Management Policies DPD, and the Planning Obligations SPD (adopted 2016).

Informative(s):

- 1 In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals, focused on solutions. The LPA has produced planning policies and written guidance to assist applicants when submitting applications. These are all available on the Council's website. A pre-application advice service is also offered and the Applicant engaged with this prior to the submissions of this application. The LPA has negotiated with the applicant/agent where necessary during the application process to ensure that the proposed development is in accordance with the Development Plan.
- 2 Any and all works carried out in pursuance of this consent / notice will be subject to the duties, obligations and criminal offences contained in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Failure to comply with the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) may result in a criminal prosecution.
- 3 The applicant is advised that written schemes of investigation will need to be prepared and implemented by a suitably qualified archaeological practice in accordance with Historic England Greater London Archaeology guidelines. They

must be approved by the Local Planning Authority before any on-site development related activity occurs.

- 4 The applicant is reminded that as the owner of the land with a Public Right of Way (PROW), that the PROW must be kept clear of all obstructions and maintained open for public access.
- 5 The applicant is advised that, under the terms of the Water Resources Act 1991, and the Thames Land Drainage Byelaws 1981, the prior written consent of the Environment Agency is required for any proposed works or structures, in, under, over or within eight metres of the top of the bank of the Kitts End Stream designated a 'main river'.

Officer's Assessment

1. Site Description

The application site relates to areas of land forming part of Old Fold Manor Golf Course. The golf course sits on the northern boundary of the London Borough of Barnet and abuts the boundary with Hertsmere (within the county of Hertfordshire). The site boundaries are demarcated by the A1081 St Albans Road to the west, Old Fold Lane, Kitts End Road, Hadley Highstone and Hadley Green West to the east, and Sunset View to the south. Immediately to the north of the site are open agricultural fields.

The entire site is within the Green Belt and the Monken Hadley Conservation Area and the central-eastern part is within an Area of Special Archaeological Interest. The site is traversed by two public footpaths. The site also contains part of the registered battlefield of the Battle of Barnet.

The site contains an 18 hole golf course, a club house (Grade II Listed), and three small sized outbuildings.

The application site is owned by the London Borough of Barnet, however the golf club signed a 125 year lease in September 2000.

2. Site History

None relevant to the current scheme.

3. Background to this proposal

The application site's western boundary is parallel to St Albans Road. This boundary is demarcated by a line of trees. Specifically, the line contains a row of poplar trees (up to 23 metres in height) and an understory of Oak and other species at a much lower height.

During previous visits to the site, the council's Greenspaces and Streets Arboricultural Officer has reviewed the current status of the poplar trees along this boundary. His comments are included at section 5.2 below. The Officer has noted that many of the poplar trees along the boundary are in very poor condition and therefore require treatment (which may comprise pollarding or removal). The tree survey submitted with this application (detailed below) includes a detailed assessment of each poplar tree in the row, and concludes that the entire group is unsustainable in the long term. Falling trees and limbs from trees would represent a risk both to highway users, and users of the golf course and the public footpaths which bisect it.

It is recognised that if the entire row of poplar trees has to be felled, the boundary with St Albans Road would be opened up. This would increase the risk of stray golf balls being able to exit the course and hit or interact with users of the public highway unless other measures are put in place. This would represent a considerable highway safety concern. It is also recognised that the main alternative to bring an immediate stop to this safety matter would be for the relevant holes parallel to St Albans Road to be closed. The closure of these holes, as the applicant explains below, would reduce the course to a 15 hole golf course and this would reduce how attractive the course would be for new and existing members, and be likely to adversely impact the viability of the business.

In order to address these problems, this application has been submitted. The proposed recontouring works, along with the proposed additional planting, are intended to form a new boundary enclosure to the golf course, in order to mitigate against the adverse impacts that could result both to highway safety and to the golf club as a result of the

proposed tree removals. The contouring works are also design to redirect the play lines to encourage play to take place in a direction away from St Albans Road.

4. The proposed development

This application seeks the removal of the remaining 44 Poplar trees which line St Albans Road (in September 2013 there were 74 Poplar trees, however in the intervening period 30 have been felled due to their condition. This matter is explained in detail in Section 5.3 below). The removal of the trees would result in the St Albans Road boundary of the golf course (and holes 6, 7 and 8 of the course) being exposed.

In order to mitigate against the safety implications of the mostly open boundary which would result (as discussed in detail below, the Poplar trees are to be removed but the Oak and other vegetation would be retained), this application proposes the re-contouring of the western boundary alongside St Albans Road to form safety banks between 1 and 4 metres high. The banks would be formed by material to be imported to the site. Replacement planting is then proposed on the raised bank. As well as forming a raised bank along the St Albans Road boundary, the landform would extend into the course, in order to shift the playlines of holes 6, 7 and 8 away from the road. The shape of the landform would be such that golf balls would roll off it and back toward the course rather than towards St Albans Road.

The importation phase of the scheme would be undertaken via a new temporary construction access from a point on St Albans Road to the north of the application site, within Hertfordshire. This temporary haulage road would be constructed through the adjacent fields and part of the golf course to provide access. This element would be subject to a separate application to Hertsmer Borough Council as local planning authority.

Approximately 88,858 cubic metres of recovered soils would be brought to the site, by 3- and 4- axle rigid tipper wagons up to 10m in length. The duration of importation phase is likely to be around six to seven months. It is anticipated that the site will receive an average of around 75 deliveries per day, which equates to around 9 per hour.

In addition, the application includes the creation of a driving range with six covered bays, an attenuation pond, a short game academy course, and minor modifications to land levels at hole 10.

The proposed driving range covered bays would measure 19.5 metres in width, 5.6 metres in depth, and have a sloping roof 4.3 metres high. They would be located at the southern end of the proposed driving range, which in turn is located toward the north of the golf course and abuts its northern boundary. It would be approximately 330 metres from St Albans Road.

The proposed attenuation pond would be located to the north of the site, adjacent to the driving range. Water would drain from various points within the site to this pond. The short game course would comprise the creation of three short holes in a triangular area to the west of the driving range. The holes would be all created by moulding material which is to be imported into the site to alter the topography. The modifications to the 10th hole are required as a result of this hole being in a low lying depression which currently suffers from water pooling and poor drainage. The works would bring the depression flush with the surrounding playing surface.

Key points from the applicant's various supporting documents have been summarised below:

Design and Access Statement May 2015

- The club has experienced year on year loss since 2010. Over the past 5 years the club has lost 20% of its junior players and holds a continually aging membership profile. The club suffers from a lack of modern practice facilities. The club is also concerned with the unstable state of the Poplars to the western boundary.
- The scheme has been designed to rectify four existing problems with the golf facility - financial viability of the facility, aging membership profile of the club, unstable state of Poplar trees to western boundary, and non-EIGA (European Institute of Golf Course Architects) compliant safety margins.
- The club is experiencing the effects of structural changes in the golf industry. The traditional customer base is now an aging market. Management have followed a policy of diversifying the experience and functions of the facility in order to reduce losses. The club has been forced to implement cut-backs in maintenance and staffing costs. Membership fees have been frozen and the joining fee removed, with incentives for new members increased if they take out 12 months subscriptions.
- The Poplars along the St Albans Road boundary are unstable. The Lombardy Poplar is a fast-growing tree native to Italy which grows up to 50 feet tall with a spread of 10 to 15 feet. The tree is commonly found on golf courses as it can be used to quickly create a privacy wall, safety screen or hedge. It is notoriously susceptible to canker which causes lesions to appear on branches. The trees were pollarded 8-10 years ago and this has allowed water to ingress to the top of the trunks, leaving nearly all the trees with decay at the pollarding points. In some instances, water ingress has rotted the entire interior cavity, presenting the club with a serious safety risk. Since September 2013, 11 of the 72 over-mature Poplar trees have fallen. A further 11 have since been removed. During recent tree surgery work, the condition of two Poplars was such that the trunks were almost completely hollow and the trees categorised as dangerous. The club see little option other than the remove the entire row of Poplars.
- The Poplars are approximately 8 metres apart but due to the angle of play form an effective screen up to 25 metres in height along the boundary. Once removed, the boundary hedgerow retained would include mature Oaks up to 10 metres high, a far less effective screen in both height and density. Modern golfing technology means even novice golfers can hit the ball much further than the original design intent. Combined with the loss of the Poplars, there is a greater risk that golf balls could leave the golf course and strike vehicles or pedestrians using St Albans Road.
- The existing driving range is proposed to be reoriented, playing from south to north. This will improve the direction of play (away from the sun) and the walk to the range bays, provide a modern and exciting practice range, and provide a well-drained playing surface and all weather bays, meaning the range can be used throughout the year.
- It is proposed to introduce a three hole short game course, to provide a vital practice facility. To give this a sense of realism, the landscape will be used to separate and screen the holes from each other.
- The 10th hole consists of a low-lying depression which is heavily used and has poor drainage. Moulding will be used to improve drainage and allow golfers to avoid walking through boggy ground.
- Due to advances in golf club and ball technology, the golf industry has devised accepted safety models applied to golfing developments. When applied to holes 6, 7 and 8, the St Albans Road is too close and without the existing physical barrier there is a greater potential threat of vehicles being struck by errant shots. The Poplars form a functional barrier of 20-25 metres, and once removed only the 6m undercanopy will remain. To achieve protection, 20-25 metre nets could be installed. However, highly visible artificial

structures of this height would be considered by almost any Local Planning Authority to be harmful to the sensitive contribution of a Green Belt and Conservation Area designation. Once the Poplars are removed, the only alternative in reducing stray golf balls reaching the road is to limit lateral dispersion from each shot. The proposed mounding does not purport to be a physical barrier to stop every errant shot from existing the site, though it will form such for topped, thinned or snap hooked shots which tend to fly a lot lower. At the 6th hole the proposed landform will alter the terrain to create a reverse incline (*ie sloping down toward the course*) which will provide greater ball containment.

- The design proposal therefore increases safety in a more naturalistic, aesthetic and practical manner than having high netting. The appearance of the landform has been designed to blend in with the existing golf course topography which features irregular undulations. The works will also provide visual and audible screen benefits of the road, to create a more tranquil experience when playing the roadside holes.

- Seven options were considered in respect of the landform. (1) do nothing, which was unacceptable as works must be carried out to trees from a health and safety perspective. (2) Remove poplars and no further works - would increase the likelihood of balls striking vehicles on the public highway. (3) Remove Poplars and close holes 6, 7 and 8 - would create a 15 hole golf course, likely to result in the death of this historic sporting facility. (4) Remove Poplars and move holes 6, 7 and 8 - There is no free land on the course to relocate the holes, in part due to the siting of the significant mature trees. (5) Remove Poplars and provide netting - Netting would be a virtually failsafe solution but it can be difficult to obtain planning permission, especially in sensitive areas due to its imposing appearance and resultant harm to visual amenity. Netting is uncommon and would appear out of character with the tranquil and gentle landscape which the user of the recreational resource is expecting. Lower netting would provide a less effective screen. (6) Remove the Poplars and provide uniform 9 metre landform - this would overcome the issues of providing out of character netting, and could be grassed over to provide a softer solution but it would appear at odds with the character of the existing golf course. (7) Remove Poplars and provide undulating 1-4 metre landform with fairway interventions - this would better reflect the topography of the undulating and rolling golf course, is the minimum height necessary to have any reasonable safety benefit (would not provide a 100% effective safety barrier) and would have a decreased effect on the character of the existing landscape.

- Three options were explored for the short game course, with the preferred option using remodelling to maximise the quality of the course and create a stimulating facility.

- Four options were explored for the driving range, with the preferred option being to re-orient the range and use remodelling to engage users and contain most balls.

Design and Access Statement: Supplementary Addendum March 2016

- A further inspection of the trees was undertaken on 30 November 2015 in response to a significant limb falling onto the course during a storm. During the inspection, the rapid decline of the poplar trees was noted. The council's tree officer [Officer Note: The tree officer referred to was acting on behalf of the Greenspaces and Streets team of the London Borough of Barnet as landowner, and not advising in any capacity in respect of the Local Planning Authority] noted re-pollarding would not be advantageous in the future. He also noted that some of the 11 trees showing extensive decay have also had their root structure dynamics changed due to the loss of adjacent trees.

- This leads to the inevitable conclusion that the club must do something to ensure balls do not leave the site and hit vehicles and pedestrians on the adjacent public highway once the poplars are removed.

- Amendments have been made to the scheme in light of Historic England's comments.

- The proposed grading to the roadside landform has been reduced in height and gradients softened for a more natural and less complex landform. Contour lines are smoother.

- The high points of the mounding to the driving range have been reduced by between 1m and 3m, and the highest part of the range reduced by 2.1m from 6m.
- The high point of the central landform to the three hole academy course has been reduced by 2m and the gradient shallowed from 1:3 to 1:7. This creates a landform more sensitive to the surrounding landscape topography.

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment April 2015

- Previously investigations into the Battle of Barnet include metal detector transects on the east and west sides of the Great Northern Road and to the north-east of the Old Fold Manor in the early 2000s. No conclusive evidence for the battle was found during the survey and it was concluded that any potential battlefield artefacts within the golf course may be poorly preserved.
- In 2005 The Battlefields Trust undertook a study of Barnet and this led to a reinterpretation of the battle site, moving the centre of the action 1km to the north-east of the current Registered Battlefield boundary.
- The medieval period is well represented within the study area. There are remains of the moated Old Fold manor. The partially infilled moat remains, close to the modern day clubhouse.
- Barnet (1471) was a decisive battle during the Wars of the Roses and ended with the death of the Earl of Warwick, popularly known as 'The Kingmaker' due to his vast wealth and powerful position at court. The battle was the climax of an impressive campaign by King Edward IV and his victory secured the English throne for the House of York until the defeat of Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485.
- The Battle of Barnet is a Registered Battlefield of national importance. Battlefields are considered to have four main areas of significance: as turning points in history; in the evolution of tactics and skills of war; as the resting place of soldiers; and for the topographical and archaeological evidence which can increase our understanding. Barnet represents a crucial turning point in the Wars of the Roses and as a result has considerable associative value.
- The construction of the road safety bund will involve the removal of turf and importation of graded material to construct earth mounds. Remodelling of the practice ground would involve topsoil stripping of up to 300mm over the area. In the absence of mitigation this has the potential to remove any archaeological deposits or artefact scatters within the topsoil. The introduction of imported material has the potential to introduce foreign objects which may mask or confuse the results of a future metal detector survey. However the application of an appropriate survey would mitigate these impacts.
- As the topography of the golf course has been substantially altered through a century of maintenance and development, it is unlikely that this matches the terrain during the late medieval period. There will be at most a negligible impact on the current appreciation of the topography of the battle site.

Flood Risk Assessment June 2015

- Flood risk is low and therefore flood risk mitigation measures are not required.
- Offsite impacts can be mitigated by the use of precautionary swales at the foot of slopes and management of runoff using an attenuation pond.
- Construction impacts can be mitigated using silt fences (generally a woven polypropylene geotextile used to protect water quality from sediment/loose soil).

Tree Survey Report June 2015

- Of the thirty individual, and groups of trees surveyed, two have been assessed as category A, 21 as category B and the remainder as category C or lower.
- The Poplar trees within G1 will be removed to facilitate the creation of a landform to reduce traffic noise to the golf club, create a visual screen and prevent stray balls entering

the carriageway. The trees have been topped in the past and are beginning to present a management issue for the golf club. Several of the trees are in poor condition, and are all overhanging a busy A-road. All would need topping again in the near future if they are retained. The trees are unsightly immediately following topping. Their removal will allow the trees beneath to thrive and the new woodland group of mainly oak will be more sustainable for the future.

- A detailed survey of the poplar trees in group G1 was undertaken as many are in a poor condition and their management will become an issue for the golf club regardless of the proposal.

- The trees are in excess of 20m in height and were last pollarded 8-10 years ago. If they were to be retained they would need to be re-pollarded in the next 6 months.

- The poplar trees are prominent on the St Albans Road, however there is a belt of young oak and other species growing beneath which will benefit from the removal of the poplar trees.

- Poplar trees are generally brittle and it is apparent several have been removed historically, presumably for safety reasons. The removed trees appear to show signs of decay and disease and it is suspected this is present in the bulk of the trees as they are all reaching the end of their potential safe useful life expectancy.

- A total of 51 poplar trees were surveyed in detail. Of these, five have been graded as category U [ie those in such a condition that they cannot realistically be retained as living trees in the context of the current land use for longer than 10 years] and the remainder category C2 [ie trees of low quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 40 years].

Construction Traffic Management Strategy April 2015

- Whilst the golf course lies within London Borough of Barnet's administrative boundary, a temporary haul road is proposed to be constructed to facilitate the proposed works, and this would be within the jurisdiction of Hertsmere Borough Council.

- Accident data for the A1081 St Albans Road shows 5 personal injury accidents in the 5 years to November 2014. Three occurred near the entrance to The Shires whilst the other two were closer to the roundabout north of the application site.

- The temporary haul road would run parallel to the main road, through adjacent fields. St Albans Road would be kept free of soil by the use of wheel cleaners.

- Recovered soils would be brought to the site by 3- and 4- axle rigid tipper wagons up to 10m in length. The duration of importation phase is likely to be around six to seven months.

- It is anticipated that the site will receive an average of around 75 deliveries per day, around 9 per hour. This equates to an increase of around 1% of the current average weekday flow of the A1081.

- Drivers of all delivery vehicles will conform to a routing plan whereby they must arrive at and depart from the site from/to the north via the A1(M) J1/M25 J23 at South Mimms. They will be instructed to not use the route via High Barnet or Trotters Bottom or Dancers Hill Road.

- Capacity assessments show the road has two way flows in the order of 1200 vehicles per hour, within the capacity of around 3000. The proposed junction, with 9 HGVs turning left into and right out of the access in each hour, would operate well within capacity.

Construction Noise Assessment February 2015

- Noise predictions indicate that the construction effects meet low threshold limits. For the majority of the construction period, works will be further away from noise sensitive locations. The construction noise is considered to be within acceptable levels for temporary construction activities at the nearest noise sensitive locations.

Ecological Impact Assessment June 2015

- The site is predominantly improved grassland. The overgrown hedgerows provide habitat for nesting birds and are of some wildlife value. Tall ruderal vegetation is present along field margins and is of low botanical value. Wetland habitat is limited to a small number of ditches.
- Trees on site have a low potential for use by roosting bats. The habitat present is suitable for foraging bats. No badger setts were discovered within the development area.
- There would be some unavoidable impacts upon habitats present within the site, however these impacts are considered to be short term and minimal. There would be an area of rough grassland lost, however this habitat is not rare throughout the locality and is of low conservation benefit. A small area of boundary hedgerow would be temporarily removed to provide access but would be replanted post-construction.
- A number of Lombardy poplar trees would be felled to provide space for a noise-reducing bund.
- There would be no anticipated operational impacts upon bird populations in the locality.
- Several trees due to be felled have crevices which are considered to have a very low potential for use by bat species. No evidence of use by bats was found.
- Site surveys identified the use of the site by a single grass snake. Based on the species, the number present and the presence of suitable alternative habitat elsewhere in the locality, any impact on grass snake is considered to be low.
- Great Crested Newts have been recorded in one pond which is outside the site works boundary and the number present indicated that the population is at the lower end of a medium sized population. The impact of the proposal without mitigation or enhancement is considered to be low on a national scale and medium on a local scale.
- Enhancement and avoidance measures are proposed which are expected to provide a net biodiversity gain. These include the creation of a 550 square metre seasonal pond managed specifically for amphibians, invertebrates and botanical diversity; the creation of 642 linear metres of open ditches sown with native marginal vegetation; the creation of 11250 square metres of wildflower grassland; the creation of 7500 square metres of native woodland habitat; 440 linear metres of native hedgerow; and the provision of 10 bat boxes; the creation of reptile and newt hibernacula.

Additional Ecological Information

- The majority of the habitat affected by the proposal is not considered optimal for amphibian or reptile species, as the improvements are largely concentrated on closely mown grassland. The proposed habitat creation is considered to provide an overall gain to reptile and amphibian habitat in the area.

Habitat management, creation and aftercare report June 2015

- Ecological enhancements and creations include 7500 square metres of deciduous woodland planting, 440 metres of hedgerow gapping up, the creation of 11250 square metres of wildflower meadow, 642 metres of ditch to be created to transport waters into a 550 square metre infiltration and wildlife pond, 5 bird and 10 bat boxes to be erected and two amphibian and reptile refugia to be created.

Archaeological Impact Assessment November 2015

- Recent and ongoing research has suggested that the actual location of the battle lies to the north/northeast of the existing designated area.
- The study site can be considered likely to have a generally low archaeological potential for all past periods of human activity prior to the later Medieval period. The potential of the study site can be categorised as high should it lie within the location of the Battle of Barnet
- the potential will be much lower should the battle have taken place elsewhere.

- Metal detector survey within a 2.5ha area within the centre of the northern boundary did not identify any artefacts associated with the Battle of Barnet and concluded that if the battle was fought across the golf course, this area played a peripheral role, if involved at all.
- The impact of the redevelopment proposals on the Battlefield comprises the introduction of fill material onto the existing topography. This can be mitigated against (by the use of archaeological monitoring during the ground works), and is therefore considered beneficial if it helps to identify the location of the Battle of Barnet.
- The creation of the golf course can be considered likely to have had a negative impact on the pre-existing landscape, including the removal of former field boundaries together with landforming associated with the creation of fairways, bunkers, greens and tees. The action of tree roots from the poplar trees along the western boundary can be considered likely to have had an additional localised negative archaeological impact.
- The proposed mitigation comprises archaeological monitoring (watching brief) during appropriate groundworks (including the removal of trees and undergrowth).
- For the works within the northern area, to the driving range and short game course, metal detector work did not reveal any remains associated with the Battle of Barnet and it is thought unlikely that this part of the study site played a role in the landscape of the battlefield; it would have been very peripheral to the battle if involved at all.

Archaeological Metal Detector Survey November 2015

- A total of 73 artefacts of potential archaeological interest were recovered during the survey, none of which were thought to relate to the Battle of Barnet. Instead they primarily represent accidental losses and artefacts spread by manuring in the post medieval period.

Amended Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment March 2016

- The central landform at the academy course has been reduced in height by 2m. The slopes of the landform have also been softened with gradients changed from 1:3 to 1:7. This creates a landform which is more sensitive to the surrounding landscape topography.
- The grading has been reduced to the landform adjacent to St Albans Road, with a reduced height and gradients softened for a more natural and less complex landform. Contour lines are now smoother. The average height of the landform has been reduced from 1.85m to 1.36m.
- The high points of the mouldings to the driving range have been reduced by between 1m and 3m. The highest part, along the northern boundary, has been reduced by 2.1 metres from the originally proposed 6m. The highest part is now 4.5m in height, in this limited area alongside the retained mature boundary hedgerow which is 5-6m in height.

Consideration of Safety Netting Alternative September 2016

- The Poplars currently extend to around 20-25 metres in height. To achieve a physical barrier matching this form and scale the only option would be to install safety netting at a height of 20-25 metres along the line of the trees.
- For nets about 10 metres, considerable stanchions are required consisting of a metal lattice tower structure to bear the load of the nets themselves. The towers would be supplemented with 28mm netting. This would comprise a much safer arrangement than the existing trees given the poplars do not provide a continuous and failsafe barrier in the same way netting does. A direct comparison to the trees is not wholly applicable.
- The use of a less impacting poled netting arrangement set at a height below 10m alongside the boundary has been considered. However this would not achieve the same safety objectives as the proposed landform, which are to screen the busy A1081 and thus reduce the psychological effect on the golfer's shot, alter the playlines on the course so the 15 degree safety cone is moved backward away from the road, alter the incline of the fairways so a greater amount of shots end up toward the centre of play, provide a

semblance of a physical barrier, and utilise pine and birch trees which are fast growing to provide a natural safety barrier.

- A lower net along the road boundary would not provide significant safety advantages over the retained existing understorey hedgerow.
- The most directly comparable alternative would be to install a lower 8 metre fence. This would provide the same level of protection to the proposed development as it would alter the playline back to a central position. It would not increase in height over time but does have the advantage of being under 10m.
- A fencing alternative was scoped during preliminary discussions with the club, however a preference was shown for the use of soft landscaping materials due to the ability of such materials to harmonise with the existing golf landscape.
- The application sets out a preference to undertake the soft landscape feature which seeks to screen the A1081, reverse the fairway incline, create a low level physical barrier with mounding and planting, alter golf playlines, and retention and growing on of understorey.
- The poplars present a safety issue to users of the course and highway, and provide a real safety benefit to the boundary. This benefit is being eroded over time as more trees are shown to be unsafe. Selectively replacing these trees will not provide a long term solution to the situation. Replacement planting alone would not benefit from the immediate elevation change the proposed landform provides. The proposal will provide a significantly greater degree of safety over the open boundary once the poplars are removed.

Additional information in respect of Covered Range Bays February 2017

- The building would be constructed of timber shiplap cladding and will be relatively small in relation to normal range buildings.
- Policy CS NPPF states that the council will seek 'to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in Barnet'.
- Paragraph 89 of the NPPF states that new buildings for sports and recreation are permissible within the Green Belt provided they preserve openness. It is not therefore inferred within the NPPF that all new buildings for such purposes within the Green Belt harm openness, as there will indeed be circumstances where there are buildings that are appropriate, preserve openness, and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.
- As testimony to this fact, it is notable that an accepted authority on this issue Ouseley J in *Europa Oil and Gas Limited v. SSCLG* [2013] EWHC 2643 (Admin) is referred to in the judgement, as follows: *"Secondly, as Green Belt policies NPPF 89 and 90 demonstrate, considerations of appropriateness, preservation of openness and conflict with Green Belt purposes are not exclusively dependent on the size of the building or structures but include their purpose. The same building, as I have said, or two materially similar buildings; one a house and the other a sports pavilion, are treated differently in terms of actual or potential appropriateness. The Green Belt may not be harmed necessarily by one but is harmed necessarily by another. The one is harmed by because of its effect on openness, and the other is not harmed by because of its effect on openness. These concepts are to be applied, in the light of the nature of the particular type of development."*
- Therefore, the provision of a limited timber structure to assist with sport and recreation within the Green Belt, when taken together with its clear appropriate nature as a permissible new building under paragraph 89, should not lead to an immobile position that openness is automatically being injured, harmed or destroyed.
- The application scheme seeks to rectify the club's existing financial situation, in part by the provision of an all-weather driving range with a playable, well-drained surface and all weather bays to enable the club to rely on steady takings from the range all year round.

- The covered bays would include a teaching area, which is essential for the requirements of the Golf Mark and the club's teaching programme. It would be unacceptable for the club to cancel coaching sessions due to bad weather.
- The driving range and covered bays would help attract and retain members.

5.1 Public Consultation

Consultation letters were sent to 13 neighbouring properties. A site notice was displayed, and a notice published in the newspaper. In response to the rounds of consultation, 38 responses have been received, comprising 3 letters of objection, 31 letters of support and 4 letters of comment.

The letters of **support** received can be summarised as follows:

- The added benefits to the local community (Old Fold is open to all Barnet residents) delivered from this project and the removal of risk currently associated with the situation regarding the tree line along St Albans Road should not be underestimated.
- Proposals will give better opportunities to juniors starting the sport.
- Proposal would address safety issues regarding the trees along St Albans Road.
- The proposal will cause temporary disruption but the long term benefits for members, local residents and the flora and fauna outweigh the short term upheaval.
- The existing Poplar trees are becoming unsightly and dangerous.
- The application has been five years in the making and seeks to balance the needs of the golf club to develop the areas referred to, its needs to meet its health and safety obligations, and the needs of the local residents by improving the conservation area and providing a legacy for future generations.
- If permission is not granted, the risk of decaying trees falling onto the road and onto the golf course will increase.
- If permission is granted, the risk of falling trees will be removed, the vista will be improved for golfers and residents, the tree population will be increased.

The **objections** received can be summarised as follows:

- Object to the trees along St Albans Road being removed. They form a beautiful natural entrance into the town and would be greatly missed if removed. They should be maintained and a suitable replacement program implemented to safeguard their future.
- Application should be refused.
- Application is contrary to Barnet's planning policies. Scheme would have a negative impact on visual amenity and openness of the golf course which is in the Green Belt. It would include the removal of a tree-lined vista along St Albans Road and have a detrimental impact on views from the 11th hole.
- Proposal does not comply with green belt policy and there are no very special circumstances. The alleged financial position is not explained or substantiated and is not a planning matter.
- Proposal does not protect a very important heritage asset - the site of the Battle of Barnet as listed by English Heritage. It would also have an adverse impact on the Monken Hadley Conservation Area.
- The aims and objectives of the Watling Chase Community Forest would be undermined by the proposals given the destruction of over 250 perfectly healthy trees as well as the negative impact on biodiversity.
- Scheme does not make reference to it being a waste management scheme. The description of the mound as a safety landform is misleading. Golfing would be more dangerous if the existing screen of mature trees were replaced by a lower mound of inert material.

- Trees are not falling regularly, only a few have fallen over the last 10 years and could have been avoided if the golf club respected their obligation to manage and pollard them regularly. The fact these trees have not been properly pollarded is not a reason for uprooting them. An independent report has shown the trees could live for another 50 years. A planting programme using native species could be used to supplement and maintain the existing screen. The row of trees form a visually important screen and their wholesale removal in one phase would be detrimental to the landscape.
- The submission fails to describe the impact of 8000 lorry movements on residents and the local environment. There would be a deterioration in air quality and would be noise pollution.
- The application fails to confirm the volume of material to be deposited, or the type of the inert material.
- The club claim removal of trees to 6th, 7th and 8th holes would make the holes safer to play. This is ridiculous - first shots from the 6th and 8th holes would be aimed down the left hand side to ensure the second shot is easier to play. The existing tree screen makes these shots safe and replacing the trees with a smaller mound of inert material increases the chance of golf balls being hit into St Albans Road.
- The submitted expert report assumes all golfers can control their shots but the majority cannot do this, so it is inevitable that a significant number of shots will fly left toward St Albans Road. The trees currently stop balls flying onto the road and the low level mound would not do this.
- The proposed mound would be at best only a quarter of the height of the existing trees, resulting in more balls flying onto the highway.
- The grounds cited in letters of support should not be taken into account because they are not proper planning grounds, and are either factually incorrect or disingenuous. Most matters are pleading of individual circumstances.
- Financially the club will only receive about £100,000. They have not explored any other alternative fund raising for example an appeal for loans.
- If the 3 hole academy close was needed for the support of the youth programme, why did the club permit the pre-existing short course to be abandoned and overgrown.
- The lease requirement for the club to construct building has never been enforced, suggesting this breach has been waived.
- Proposal would result in noise, dust, fumes and traffic disruption involved with heavy vehicle movements, a loss of wildlife habitats, loss of ancient trees, destruction of a classic golf course design by Harry Colt, loss of ancient field boundaries and topographical features, and loss of archaeological remains.

The **representations** received can be summarised as follows:

- Hendon and District Archaeology Society have requested any approval include an archaeological condition.
- The Council should consider a condition preventing construction vehicles from using Old Fold Lane.
- Request tight constraints to any works approved, due to previous experiences of HGVs in connection with a neighbouring golf course development using Barnet High Street despite a commitment to not use that route.
- The site junction with the St Albans Road should be redesigned so that vehicles can only enter from the South Mimms roundabout direction and leave in the direction of that roundabout. The number of permitted landfill deliveries should be limited to 13000 and this is based on the applicant's document which states an average daily rate of 75 over a period of 8 months. There should be a maximum limit of 100 deliveries a day and site records of deliveries should be available at all times. The developers should be liable for the cost of any road repairs.

A petition containing 154 signatures was received in July 2016, noting that "we the undersigned fully support the proposals at Old Fold Manor Golf Club with the provision of new practice facilities which will enable us to implement a structured youth coaching scheme and attract more junior players, and to create a modest planted earth bank along St Albans Road which is a necessary safety feature following removal of the unstable Poplar trees. We urge the Development Control Committee of Barnet Council to support the golf club in its endeavours to become the best golf facility in the area. The club has been open as a community sports facility since 1921 and the proposed development will ensure its longevity for many years to come".

A second version of the above petition was received in February 2017 containing 62 signatures.

Further to the formal consultation process, since 27 January 2017 the following have been received. Many were also copied to members of the Planning Committee and many from people who have already registered comments under the formal consultation process.

43 letters of support, making the following comments:

- This is an important and exciting scheme and it is vital that it goes ahead.
- As a member of the golf club I fully support the proposals to regenerate Old Fold Manor Golf Club.
- The redevelopment of the course will allow the club to play a major part in the community, offering facilities to all ages for people to come and learn golf, enhancing wellbeing.
- New academy and practice bays will allow individuals from all walks of life to learn and play the game, and will attract more people.
- The replacement and replanting of many trees is now a must as a number are very old and many are past their life span.
- The club is an important local amenity for the area.
- Proposal would provide ecological enhancements to the area.
- Roadside bund would provide a safety barrier to prevent stray golf balls reaching the St Albans Road.
- Driving range would be more useable and attractive than the existing.
- Without the proposed training facilities, the club cannot get Golf Mark Accreditation.

4 letters of objection, making the following comments:

- Cannot see the need for any trees or Green Belt land in any area of 7 or more courses being used to prop up a business. The business should be about supply and demand.
- All courses in the area will have plans to use their land to stay afloat.
- Young people will not be drawn to an elite sport as golf is.
- Object to loss of trees which provide counter-traffic-pollution measures, absorb noise from traffic and provide wildlife habitat.
- Extra traffic and HGVs will be harmful.
- Proposal would result in large increases of traffic once the status of the club is raised, and therefore an increased danger to local residents.
- Proposal may increase light pollution.
- No consideration has been given that this is a quiet residential area.
- The reasons given in support of the application are not proper planning grounds, and are factually incorrect or disingenuous.
- The club has not explored alternative fund raising.
- Proposal would result in partial destruction of a golf course design by Harry Colt.

The Hertfordshire Golf Union (HGU) have raised the following comments to endorse the proposal:

- Old Fold Manor was one of the HGU's initial member clubs upon its inauguration in 1924. Many of their members have represented the County.
- The course has been the venue for many county and national events over the years. In addition to holding the Open Championship pre-qualifying rounds 2006-2010 and the Faldo Series for a number of years, the club is to host the County Colts Championship this year and County Championship in 2018.
- This project entails improving the existing facilities available at the club for current membership and when completed is likely to attract a wide range of local golfing enthusiasts with an emphasis on the younger age ranges - essential not only for the well-being of any Golf Club at the present time but also as a means to ensuring its future.
- Woodland Environmental is an established and proven developer which has previously completed successful schemes, most recently at Letchworth.

The Rt. Hon. Mrs Theresa Villiers MP

- While the Barnet Society neither supports nor objects to the proposals, the 12 points made in their letter should be addressed and where applicable incorporated as conditions if the planning committee is minded to approve the application.
- The number of trees to be planted should be confirmed.
- Battle of Barnet investigations should be completed before any works are commenced.
- I cannot therefore support this application in its present form.

The Barnet Society:

- The Barnet Society supports the proposals in principle but this depends on guarantees that the works would be executed with proper care. Specific conditions must be attached.
- Landform - contours marked to place a limit on the total volume of material imported that must not be exceeded.
- New drain should follow proposed contours and connect via chamber to drainage system.
- Specify shrub, grass and flower mixes and reference tree and shrub sizes to plans.
- The Design and Access statement says approximately 3000 trees would be provided which is insufficient. The plans only show 2835.
- Hedging should be used to re-plant gaps and existing hedging should be thickened.
- Rights of way and stile should be marked on the plans and reprovided.
- Boundary fencing should be post and rail.
- Method statement should be provided. There is a risk of lorry and foot traffic damaging roots, foliage and earlier phases of work. Statement should include topsoil heaps, how stripping, moulding, sculpting and planning will proceed within the tight constraints of existing vegetation, and clarity about protection of all retained trees and hedges.
- The correct planning season will be critical. Battle of Barnet investigations should be completed before ground is stripped.

Hendon and District Archaeological Society:

If the council approve this application, it should include an archaeological condition on the lines of that suggested in the conclusions of the Archaeological Assessment among the papers attached to the application.

Monken Hadley and Wood Street Conservation Area Advisory Committee: No comment.

5.2 Consultees

Hertsmere Borough Council

No comments have been received.

LBB Traffic and Development

Comment that based on the positions of the holes and trajectory it is expected that any wayward balls will be at low level and low velocity and therefore be captured by the proposed safety bund and would not reach the highway boundary. The safety bund and existing low level vegetation suitably screen the course from the public highway to reduce any distraction and risks to highway safety. Although the existing poplar trees create additional screening for drivers of distant viewpoints the temporary openness created by the loss of the trees is within the drivers periphery and therefore not impacted on the drivers view. The amount of the course visible from the public highway will lessen over time as the trees mature. A similar bund and tree approach can be seen at the entrance to The Shires golf course directly opposite with no issues.

LBB Greenspaces October 2015

It was clear certain trees within the line were in a very poor condition and required removal. Several of these have fallen due to internal defects. Any remaining ones have been addressed and there may be a few more that have been identified recently since my last inspection. Some of those that fell were not identified with defects but did become apparent once they had fallen. This indicated that they were all reaching the end of their safe useful life expectancy.

However, pollarding works would be sufficient to address the maintenance issues required on the line of mature Poplar trees and a phased removal programme would be suitable. This was one of the options discussed during our meetings concerning the trees within this site.

Officer Note: Since the above, the following advice has been given by the LBB Greenspaces Officer (January 2016) to the applicant's agent in respect of the trees:

- Several Poplar trees along the St Albans Road were found to have been showing signs of significant defects. The majority exhibited signs of decay around the regrown pollarded stems with several branches having been lost recently due to the weakened state of the unions. All trees along this stretch are currently at a stage where remedial works are necessary to reduce the risk of further falling limbs or trees and therefore need re-pollarding before spring.

- From inspection, 11 trees showed extensive decay on major limbs that warrant removal. Due to the fact that this decay has progressed well past current pruning unions, re-pollarding would not be advantageous for the future. Some of the 11 have also had their root structure dynamics significantly changed due to the loss of adjacent trees. As these trees have grown together as a boundary defence against the winds, the open gaps left by some of those now lost has increased the stresses on the current root structure, increasing the risk of tree failure.

- The trees that are in need of pollarding should not be left to regrow for more than 3-5 years to reduce the increased stresses around the decay points. Further pruning will exacerbate the presence of decay which will need monitoring every two years.

- From my last three years of viewing these trees, it has become clear that these trees are in decline. Although pollarding removes the risk of tree failure, this will accelerate the process of decay within the Poplar species causing the current pollard points to decay and deteriorate further.

LBB Planning and Development Tree Officer

- Concerns were raised in respect of the accuracy and completeness of the submission, however further clarification has since been received.

- Concerns have been received in respect of the adverse impact of the proposed recontouring on the character and appearance of the area, and in respect of the impact of the drainage works on the roots of retained vegetation.
- These matters are all addressed within the main body of the report.

Environment Agency

The Environment Agency have not raised any objections to the proposal. They have confirmed that the development will require an Environmental Permit which is issued by and administered through the Environment Agency.

Historic England - Archaeology

OFFICER NOTE: Since the submission of this application, four advice notes/consultation responses have been issued by Historic England. The first three of these (dated August 2015, October 2015 and January 2016) all raised objections to the application scheme. However the fourth note, issued in April 2016 following the receipt of an amended scheme which is assessed within this report, commented as follows:

I am writing to comment on the amended scheme submitted to you by Stuart Downs on 29th March. This response covers both Historic England's role as a statutory consultee and the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) archaeological advice provided to boroughs in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

We are pleased that the applicant has revised the landscaping proposals to take on board our comments. We agree that the proposed landform now follows the natural contours of the land and the use of shallower gradients and smoother contours to the earth modelling creates less intricate landform. Also the revised grading shows a more moderated approach to level changes whilst balancing the golfing aspirations

We note that in line with the tree officer's recommendation eleven trees have been felled and assume that re-pollarding of all remaining trees has now been carried out. We accept that in the long term the approach needs to be to fell the poplars and retain Oak species where possible.

The archaeological metal-detecting survey did not detect any battlefield remains so the necessary earthmoving is unlikely to cause significant harm to archaeological interest.

Recommendation: Historic England would not object to the amend landscape design and is now happy with the revised proposals. As a precaution against the possibility of battle related remains being revealed by the groundworks, and noting that the survey was not able to cover the entire application site, we recommend that consent is granted subject to conditions.

LBB - Lead Local Flood Authority

- The Flood Risk Assessment indicates that infiltration is not considered to be a suitable option. The London Borough of Barnet Surface Water Management Plan Infiltration SuDS Suitability Map indicates that a majority of the site lies within lands classified as 'Potentially Suitable' for infiltrating SuDS. As such investigation of infiltration SuDS would normally be advised. However, as use of an existing pond (expanding the pond) is proposed, this is considered to be an appropriate method of managing surface water as opposed to undertaking further ground investigations to verify the suitability of infiltrating SuDS. As such, the standard comment regarding adhering to the SuDS Hierarchy is considered to have been met by the applicant.

- Proposals indicate restricting runoff to the greenfield runoff rate plus allowance for climate change. As such the standard SuDS comment regarding adhering to S2 - S6 is considered to have been met by the applicant.
- Flood risk is considered to be low and flood risk mitigation measures proposed are considered to be adequate. No action is required regarding the Flood Risk Assessment.
- Details regarding the Adopting Authority have not been specified, however, it is assumed that the Old Fold Manor Golf Club will be the Adopting Authority. It is recommended that the applicant be asked to confirm that the Golf Club will be the Adopting Authority of the SuDS features and agrees to take on responsibility for the long-term operation and maintenance of the proposed SuDS.
- The use of precautionary swales and bunding to contain exceedance flow within the site is welcomed.
- Measures implemented for controlling run-off during the constructions period will require careful monitoring to ensure efficient and continued operation.

Thames Water

No comments.

6. Planning Considerations

6.1 Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance

The determination of planning applications is made mindful of Central Government advice and the Local Plan for the area. It is recognised that Local Planning Authorities must determine applications in accordance with the statutory Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, and that the planning system does not exist to protect the private interests of one person against another.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012. This is a key part of the Governments reforms to make the planning system less complex and more accessible, and to promote sustainable growth.

The NPPF states that 'good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people'. The NPPF retains a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This applies unless any adverse impacts of a development would 'significantly and demonstrably' outweigh the benefits.

The Mayor's London Plan 2016

The London Development Plan is the overall strategic plan for London, and it sets out a fully integrated economic, environmental, transport and social framework for the development of the capital to 2031. It forms part of the development plan for Greater London and is recognised in the NPPF as part of the development plan.

The London Plan provides a unified framework for strategies that are designed to ensure that all Londoners benefit from sustainable improvements to their quality of life.

Relevant policies include:

Policy 3.19 - Development proposals that increase or enhance the provision of sports and recreation facilities will be supported. Proposals that result in a net loss of sports and recreation facilities, including playing fields, should be resisted. Wherever possible, multi-use public facilities for sport and recreational activity should be encouraged. Where sports facility developments are proposed on existing open space, they will need to be considered carefully in light of policies on Green Belt.

Policy 7.16 - The strongest protection should be given to London's Green Belt, in accordance with national guidelines. Inappropriate development should be refused, except in very special circumstances. Development will be supported if it is appropriate and helps secure the objectives of improving the Green Belt as set out in national guidance.

Policy 7.19 - Development proposals should make a positive contribution to the protection, enhancement, creation and management of biodiversity.

Barnet's Local Plan (2012)

Barnet's Local Plan is made up of a suite of documents including the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Documents. Both were adopted in September 2012.

- Relevant Core Strategy Policies: CS NPPF, CS1, CS5, CS7 and CS9.
- Relevant Development Management Policies: DM01, DM02, DM04, DM06, DM15, DM16 and DM17.

Supplementary Planning Documents

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (adopted October 2016)

- Provides detailed guidance that supplements policies in the adopted Local Plan, and sets out how sustainable development will be delivered in Barnet.

Monken Hadley Conservation Area Character Appraisal

6.2 Main issues for consideration

The main issues for consideration in this case are:

- Whether the proposal comprises appropriate development in the Green Belt;
- Whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Monken Hadley Conservation Area and the locality as a whole;
- Whether the proposal would be harmful to other designated heritage assets;
- Whether the proposal would be detrimental to highway safety and the free flow of traffic;
- Whether the proposal would adversely impact on biodiversity;
- Whether the proposal would adversely impact on neighbouring amenity.

6.3 Assessment of proposals

Impact on the Green Belt

The NPPF (paragraph 89) notes that a local planning should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt. Exceptions to this are 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. Development Management Policy DM15 reflects this, and the supporting text to the policy notes that potentially acceptable Green Belt development such as golf courses can have a considerable impact on local character, appearance, accessibility and nature conservation value of the countryside, and that in line with DM01 and DM15, they should demonstrate their harmony with the surrounding countryside and impact on biodiversity.

The six covered bays to the driving range would enable six individuals to use this facility under shelter. The covered bays would both encourage and facilitate greater use of the driving range, which is also being reoriented to ensure users have their back to the sun, rather than attempting to play into the sun. The applicant has advised in their submission

that the existing practice ground is only partly fit for purpose, comprising of little more than an open area of flat grass which cannot be used in wet weather, and located a long way from the clubhouse at the bottom of a poorly draining slope. The proposed covered bays could also be used to provide a teaching facility. Overall, the proposed bays would enable the club to rely on steady income from the driving range throughout the year, rather than only in dry conditions.

To add additional support for the covered bays, the applicant's agent has advanced the following arguments:

- In common with the decline of the golf industry since 2008 the club has suffered a decline in membership. Whilst the actual loss in 2016 was lower than projected, due to the implementation of a junior coaching program and a marketing drive, the level of loss remains unsustainable. The proposed all-weather driving range will enable the club to rely on steady takings from the range all year around.
- The all-weather ability of the driving range would assist the club in achieving Golf Mark status.
- The driving range building would form part of the enhancement of this local sports and community infrastructure and allow the club to cater for members of the public of all ranges of golfing skills.

The proposed driving range building would introduce new built form into a Green Belt site. However the NPPF makes it clear that 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 may constitute appropriate development in the Green Belt. Paragraph 81 of the NPPF states that "local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation". In this instance, having regard to the size and position of the driving range building, to its design, and to its proposed use and the justification submitted for its need, it is not considered that this building would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The building would not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt, and critically, the position and design of the covered bays preserves the openness of the Green Belt.

The NPPF (paragraph 90) confirms that certain [other] forms of development are [also] not inappropriate in Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt. These include engineering operations.

The development subject of this application includes various engineering operations around the site, to create the proposed bund alongside the St Albans Road boundary and the raised features within the course itself including the alterations to the driving range and the creation of the short course.

The bund alongside St Albans Road would run parallel to the road. It would have a curved, naturalistic profile and edging to provide a slope up to its highest part. It would include some incursions into the course, in order to change the playlines to encourage play to be directed into the course rather than toward St Albans Road. The bund would have soft landscaping provided on top and this would be secured by condition.

The works to form a short game area (three short holes) would involve raising the ground levels by up to 4 metres. This area is set away from the boundaries of the site and is not in close proximity to any public footpath or access point. Given the mounds would be planted

with grass and other soft landscaping, these would not appear as intrusive features in the landscape. The changes to hole 10 would increase the land height to remove an existing depression in the land. Again this would be sited fairly centrally within the application site.

Having regard to the height of the proposed alterations, and the resultant visual impact of the proposed bund and levels changes (which would be grassed or planted with trees to ensure they assimilate into the surroundings), it is considered that these would constitute engineering operations which would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt.

Impact on the Monken Hadley Conservation Area and the locality as a whole

The Monken Hadley Conservation Area Character Appraisal notes that formal recreation facilities in the area include Old Fold Manor Golf Club. It notes this provides a pleasant visual contrast with the adjoining land uses. The course forms a large area of open space at the northern extreme of the borough.

As previously explained, the application has a number of components, each of which could have an impact on the conservation area and its significance. The main visual impact on the conservation area would result from the removal of the poplar trees along the boundary of the golf course and St Albans Road. The submission sets out in some detail how the poplar trees along this boundary are of a poor quality and are deteriorating in health. Many have been decayed to the extent that their trunks are entirely hollow, and this causes a considerable health and safety concern, both for users of the golf course and users of St Albans Road. This level of concern, and the poor condition of the trees has been ratified by the council's Greenspaces team. The applicant has concluded that given the poor quality of the trees, and their increasingly dangerous state, it is necessary for the entire line of poplar trees to be removed. A summary of the submitted Tree Survey Report is included within Section 3 above. The applicant has also commented that whilst pollarding would make the tree group safer in the short term, it is not the most appropriate long term option as the entire group of Poplar trees is at the end of its useful life.

St Albans Road is one of the main routes into the Borough of Barnet from the north, providing direct access from junction 23 of the M25. The road runs between agricultural fields and open countryside, with the boundary hedgerows replaced by thicker boundary vegetation and the tall poplar trees south of the borough boundary line. The trees either side of St Albans Road give the road a semi-rural and verdant ambience not typical of the entrance to a London Borough. The loss of the row of poplar trees on the golf course side will change the character of this part of St Albans Road considerably. However, it should be noted that the application does not propose the removal of all vegetation from the boundary. The lower height vegetation and trees will be retained as part of this application. The submitted tree survey report confirms that the removal of the poplar trees will enable these lower species to thrive. In addition, this application proposes a landscaping and planting scheme. New woodland planting is proposed on top of the bund which is to be constructed alongside the vegetation to the St Albans Road boundary. Over time, this would mature and reach a height and density which would enhance the verdant character of this part of St Albans Road. It is acknowledged that the loss of the poplar trees would have a temporary adverse impact on the character and appearance of St Albans Road, and this part of the conservation area. However, given that the life of trees is finite, and that these trees have been assessed as being in a poor condition and that the tree loss is proposed to be mitigated against by substantial new planting which would be secured by planning condition, it is considered on the whole that the proposal would in the long term preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The proposed alterations to the driving range and the levels changes to form the short course would be set well within the application site, further from public viewpoints. The alterations would comprise levels changes which would reflect the grassed and vegetated character of the remainder of the site and would be complemented by additional planting. As a result these are considered to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and the wider locality.

The proposed driving range bays would be functional in appearance. The finished material and colour would be controlled by condition, to ensure that it assimilates acceptably into the wider landscape. The bays would be located well within the site and would be viewed in the context of the character of the site as a golf course. The range bays are not considered to be detrimental to the character or appearance of the conservation area or the wider locality.

It is noted that the site is also within the Watling Chase Community Forest. The aim of the Forest is to see the area under positive and appropriate management, including a substantial increase in trees and woodland. The current application includes the management of existing trees and the planting of new areas of woodland and these would not conflict with the aims of the forest

Impact on other designated heritage assets, namely listed buildings, area of archaeological significance and the registered battlefield

The application affects a designated heritage asset of archaeological and historic interest, the registered site of the Battle of Barnet. This is the only registered battlefield in London

When this application was originally submitted, Historic England (a statutory consultee) objected to the planning application. Their primary concern was that the proposal would substantially alter the existing landform, because the extensive re-contouring on the western boundary would be up to 4 metres high. In addition, concerns were raised at the intricate nature of the landform, which was considered alien to the general simple fall in the topography. Insufficient evidence had been submitted to demonstrate that the topography of the golf course had already been substantially altered. Concerns were also raised in respect of the impact of the proposal on archaeological potential. The submitted documents suggested that the soil may not be conducive to the preservation of artefacts but Historic England advised that this claim was unsubstantiated and simplistic. Following receipt of Historic England's objection, the applicant prepared a report "Archaeological Impact Assessment 2015) to address the outstanding matters. In April 2016, Historic England provided formal comments on the final scheme and report. Their comments are summarised at section 4.2 above. Subject to conditions, Historic England are satisfied with the report and research undertaken by the applicant. Historic England are satisfied that the landform now follows the natural contours of the land, with shallower gradients to better reflect the existing topography. On the basis of Historic England's advice, it is not considered that this scheme would be detrimental to the historic significance of the battlefield, or archaeological matters at the site.

The golf course contains two Grade II Listed Buildings - Old Fold Manor House, and the clubhouse building of the Old Fold Manor Golf Club. The proposed works are considered to be located sufficient distance from each building such that they would not result in any harm to the significance of these designated heritage assets.

Impact on Highway Safety

The council's traffic and development team have been consulted on this application and have raised no objections to the proposed development.

In respect of the impact of the landscaping works along the boundary with St Albans Road, as previously noted the removal of the Poplar trees is required from a health and safety perspective, given their poor structural state and the potential risks to highway users and users of the golf course.

As the trees stand within the boundary of Monken Hadley Conservation Area, if the applicant wished to remove the trees outside of the formal planning application process, it would first be necessary to give six weeks' written notice of intended treeworks to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), in accordance with s211 of the Act. It is not possible to grant consent subject to replacement planting nor refuse a s211 notice of intent; if the LPA wishes to control treatment of tree(s) subject of such notification, it must make a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). An application for TPO consent would then be required and would be determined in accordance with the provisions of the relevant legislation. In considering the appropriateness of making an Order, the LPA would take account of the public amenity value of the trees but also their condition, including the assessment made by the Greenspaces' arboricultural officer. If the applicant chooses to pursue this option, the Traffic and Development team would not have any power to comment on the removal, and therefore the permanent retention of the trees would not be secured. As the applicant explains in their submitted statement, the removal of the trees would result in a significantly increased probability of cars being struck by golf balls. The proposed mound and woodland planting has been designed to reduce this risk.

The Traffic and Development team have reviewed the specifics of the mound, and note that 'it is expected that any wayward balls will be at low level and low velocity and therefore be captured by the proposed safety bund and would not reach the highway boundary'. They also comment that the proposed bund would act as a screen to reduce any distraction by road users.

In respect of the proposed haulage road and its access from St Albans Road, this would take place within Hertsmere Borough and would need to satisfy the local highway authority, Hertfordshire County Council, that the arrangements are appropriate. The submitted documents note that delivery drivers would conform to a routing plan whereby they must arrive at and depart from the site from/to the north via the A1(M) J1/M25 J23. This would be secured by condition to ensure that the vehicular movements associated with the proposed development are not harmful to amenity or highway safety within Barnet.

Impact on biodiversity

The comments raised in the applicants' Ecological Assessment (summarised at section 3 above) are noted.

In respect of the removal of the trees, the submitted Ecological Assessment notes that trees on the site have a low potential for use by roosting bats. Of the trees on site which were found to have crevices of 'low potential for use by bat species', no evidence of use by bats (such as droppings or staining) was found. The applicant's ecologist also considers that the use of the site for foraging by bats is unlikely to be affected by the proposals as hedgerows will largely be retained and the structure of grassland with interspersed woodland will remain following completion.

In respect of the impact of the haulage road, re-contouring, drainage changes and increased intensity of use on protected species, the applicant has advised that the majority of the habitat affected by the proposal is not considered optimal for either amphibian or reptile species. This is because the works are largely concentrated on closely mown grassland. The haul route falls largely on arable farmland which is regularly disturbed. The proposal includes the creation of 7500 square metres of deciduous woodland, 440 linear metres of species rich hedgerow 642 square metres of open drainage ditches, 550 square metres of wetland habitat and 11250 square metres of wildflower grassland. This proposed habitat enhancement is considered by the applicant to provide an overall gain to reptile and amphibian habitat in the area. Having regard to the location of the proposed works, and the extent of proposed new habitat to be created, it is considered that the proposal would provide for the retention and enhancement of biodiversity, in accordance with Policy DM16.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

The proposed landform along the St Albans Road boundary, and levels changes within the site, would be sufficient distance from the neighbouring residential properties such that it would not harm the amenities of the occupants of these properties. It is acknowledged that construction works could have some impacts in terms of noise and associated disturbance, however such activities would be short term and would not cause any permanent harm.

6.4 Response to Public Consultation

The comments received are addressed in full as part of the appraisal above.

7. Equality and Diversity Issues

The proposal does not conflict with either Barnet Council's Equalities Policy or the commitments set in the Equality Scheme and supports the Council in meeting its statutory equality responsibilities. It is not considered that any particular group with specific protected characteristics (as defined by The Equalities Act 2010) would be prejudiced by this application.

8. Conclusion

The application sets out the benefits it would bring to highway safety, as a result of the inevitable and necessary (as argued by the applicant) loss of the existing row of Poplar trees along St Albans Road. In addition, the potential benefits to Old Fold Golf Club as a business are noted, in terms of improvements to their existing facilities and the mound ensuring no long-term restrictions to the use of the course. Very limited weight is attached to the business benefits as a consideration in favour of the proposed development, as ultimately the development falls to be assessed under its compliance with the development plan.

In addition, it is noted that the loss of the trees alongside St Albans Road would clearly alter the appearance in the short term of this part of the road. However this planning application includes planting and in the longer term would preserve the character of the area.

Taking into account the overall gains that would be achieved as a result of this application, including the additional planting and resultant landscape and ecological mitigation against the loss of the row of Poplar trees, the highway safety benefits resulting from the mound and planting following the inevitable exposure of the St Albans Road boundary, the improvements to facilities the club is able to offer and the potential overall positive impacts on the viability of the club, it is considered that this application would comply with the

development plan, and overall not result in an adverse impact either on the Green Belt, the character and appearance of the conservation area, on trees and biodiversity, or on highway safety. The application is considered to accord with the requirements of the Development Plan and is therefore recommended for approval.

SITE PLAN

