

**LOCATION:** Barnet Cophall Playing Fields, London, NW4 1PS

**REFERENCE:** H/00924/13

**Received:** 04 March 2013

**Accepted:** 19 March 2013

**WARD(S):** Mill Hill

**Expiry:** 14 May 2013

**Final Revisions:**

**APPLICANT:** EPR - Greenspaces

**PROPOSAL:** Alterations to the playing fields (Area D) including a reinforced grass area for informal play and car parking area with posts.

**RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Barnet Cophall Playing Fields #1, Barnet Cophall Playing Fields #2, Area D, Design and Access Statement.

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 DM01 of the Adopted Barnet Development Management Policies DPD (2012) and CS NPPF and CS1 of the Adopted Barnet Core Strategy DPD (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. Before the development hereby permitted commences, the following details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with these details.

- Details of the materials to be used for any posts, fences and gates in association with the development and their siting.
- Details for the materials to be used for the reinforced grass area.

Reason: To ensure that the development has an acceptable impact on the openness of the green belt in accordance with policy DM15.

4. The car parking area hereby approved shall only be used by users of sports pitches on Area A, Area B, Area C, or Area D as shown on plan Barnet Cophall Playing Fields #1 and not for any other purposes.

Reason: To safeguard highway and pedestrian safety, in accordance with policy DM17 of the Adopted Development Management Policies (2012).

## **INFORMATIVE(S):**

1. The reasons for this grant of planning permission or other planning related decision are as follows: -

i) The proposed development accords with strategic planning guidance and policies as set out in The Mayor's London Plan: July 2011 and the Adopted Barnet Core Strategy (2012) and Development Management Policies DPD (2012).

In particular the following policies are relevant:

Core Strategy (Adopted) 2012: CS5, CS7, CS10, CS11

Development Management Policies (Adopted) 2012: DM01, DM02, DM03, DM04, DM15, DM17.

ii) The proposal is acceptable for the following reason(s): - The proposals would facilitate improvements to existing sports pitches within the borough in accordance with Adopted Core Strategy Policy CS7, and would not harm highway safety or the openness of the green belt.

iii) In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF, the Council takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals, focused on solutions. The Local Planning Authority has produced planning policies and written guidance to guide applicants when submitting applications. These are all available on the Council's website. A pre-application advice service is also offered. The Local Planning Authority has negotiated with the applicant / agent where necessary during the application process to ensure that the proposed development is in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and guidance.

## **1. MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### National Planning Policy Framework

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 Government's 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 July 2011

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.

The Mayor's Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (November 2012) provides guidance on how to implement the housing policies in the London Plan.

### Relevant Local Plan (2012) Policies

Barnet's Local Plan is made up of a suite of documents including the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Documents (DPD). Both DPDs were adopted on 11 September 2012.

Relevant Core Strategy DPD (2012): Policies CS NPPF, CS1, CS5, CS7, CS10, CS11.

Relevant Development Management DPD (2012): Policies DM01, DM02, DM03, DM04, DM15, DM17.

### Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance

The Council adopted a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) "Sustainable Design and Construction" (June 2007), following public consultation. This SPD provides detailed guidance that supplements policies in the adopted Local Plan, and sets out how sustainable development will be delivered in Barnet. Part 6 of the SPD relates to generic environmental requirements to ensure that new development within Barnet meets sufficiently high environmental and design standards.

The Council is currently consulting on the following two supporting planning documents to implement the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPDs. These are now material considerations. The Residential Design Guidance SPD (consultation draft November 2012) and Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (consultation draft November 2012) are now material considerations.

### Relevant Planning History:

<b>Site Address:</b>	Copthall Playing Fields NW4
<b>Application Number:</b>	W/00344/A
<b>Application Type:</b>	Full Application
<b>Decision:</b>	Approve with conditions
<b>Decision Date:</b>	21/08/1967
<b>Appeal Decision:</b>	No Appeal Decision Applies
<b>Appeal Decision Date:</b>	No Appeal Decision Date exists
<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>erection of two semi-detached, three bedroom groundsmen's houses.</b>
<b>Case Officer:</b>	

**Site Address:** Copthall Sports Centre  
**Application Number:** W/00344/F  
**Application Type:** Full Application  
**Decision:** Approve with conditions  
**Decision Date:** 14/06/1978  
**Appeal Decision:** No Appeal Decision Applies  
**Appeal Decision Date:** No Appeal Decision Date exists  
**Proposal:** **Erection of a building to provide squash courts, changing facilities and clubhouse, and the formation of a car park on a site to the north of the recently constructed swimming pool at Copthall.**

**Case Officer:**

H/00928/11 - The erection of a community sports stadium - Approved - 30/03/2012

Consultations and Views Expressed:

Neighbours Consulted: 74                      Replies: 2  
Neighbours Wishing To Speak 0

The objections raised may be summarised as follows:

- Extra traffic (in addition to the current problems we have with the new Saracens rugby stadium, the swimming pool/gym, and Hendon Rugby Club), noise, pollution, congestion, and disturbance, and loss of conservation area.

Hendon Rugby Club has objected on the following grounds:

- The club generally supports the investment and promotion of community sport on Copthall Playing Fields but this should not be at the expense of Hendon RFC.
- The proposals would deprive essential parking for players, officials, and spectators.
- Greenlands Lane would be unable to cope with increased use as it is a narrow road, how will emergency vehicles access the site?
- Parking spaces at rugby club are closer to many of the football pitches so will be used by footballers.

Internal /Other Consultations:

- Sport England - No comments received at time of writing report, comments will be reported in the addendum to the committee.
- Traffic & Development - No comments received at time of writing report, comments will be reported in the addendum to the committee.
- Transport for London, Road Network Development - No comments received at time of writing report, comments will be reported in the addendum to the committee.

Date of Site Notice: 04 April 2013

## 2. PLANNING APPRAISAL

### Site Description and Surroundings:

The site is the southern part of Cophall playing fields, located adjacent to Champions Way. The site is designated as open space.

The site forms part of the existing Cophall complex including Cophall Stadium, Metro golf and Mill Hill and Hendon Rugby Clubs.

### Proposal:

The proposals are for alterations to playing fields to include a reinforced grass area for informal play and car parking area with posts.

The proposals are associated with the reconfiguration of existing sports pitches on the site.

The table below shows how the pitches would be altered.

<b>Current Layout</b>	<b>Proposed Scheme</b>	
<b>11 a side Football</b>	14	10
<b>9 a side Football</b>	0	5
<b>7 a side Football</b>	1	4
<b>5 a side Football</b>	0	4
<b>Cricket Tables</b>	3	3
<b>Onsite Parking</b>	50 (Informal)	200 approx

### Planning Considerations:

The main issues are considered to be:

- The impact of the proposals on open space and sports provision within the borough
- The impact on the character and openness of the green belt
- The impact on highway and pedestrian safety

#### *Policy Context*

Policy CS7 states that A Greener Barnet will be created by meeting increased demand for access to open space and opportunities for physical activity, by tackling deficiencies and under provision; securing improvements to open spaces including provision for children's play, sports facilities and better access arrangements, where opportunities arise.

*The impact of the proposals on open space and sports provision within the borough*

A Playing Pitch Assessment was commissioned in 2009 by KKP. This demonstrated that there is significant demand for junior football pitches within the borough and that the number of pitches did not cater for demand. The assessment has identified that there is likely to be a surplus of senior pitches and deficiency of junior pitches by 2015. The plans involve the re-configuration of the existing pitches to create 13 new pitches to meet demand for mini and junior pitches.

The most recent adopted Playing Pitch Assessment in 2003 showed that there are issues with poor quality playing pitches at the site, believed to be due to poor drainage.

Whilst the proposals would result in a loss of some adult pitches to enable the creation of the junior pitches, there is potential for these to be used on Saturdays as well as on Sundays which they are currently used to make better use of the pitches and account for changing demand.

It should be noted that planning permission is not strictly required for the reconfiguration of the sports pitches, but is for the associated works such as the creation of a car park area.

The proposals would facilitate improvements to sports pitches within the borough, which is consistent with the policy aims of improving the provision of sports pitches and access to these. This is a significant consideration in favour of the application.

#### *The impact on the character and openness of the green belt*

The playing fields are located within the green belt and the proposals need to be considered against green belt policy. (Policy DM15)

There is an existing hardstanding on site which would be removed as part of the proposals and replaced with a reinforced grass area.

The edges of this area would be marked with wooden posts in order to stop vehicles driving onto the pitches. In principle the need for this is understood however details would need to ensure that this does not harm the open nature of the green belt.

The proposed parking area would be increased in size. The existing hardstanding would be relayed, and the new additional parking area would be constructed in reinforced grass which would help preserve the visual amenities of the green belt. Exact details of the materials need to be provided to ensure that this does not harm the open nature of the green belt.

The parking area is accessed from an existing gate to the south-east of the parking area. A new access would be provided for maintenance purposes to the south, close to the boundary of the site.

It is considered that subject to details of the posts and reinforced grass, the proposals would not harm the openness or visual amenities of the green belt.

#### *The impact on highway and pedestrian safety*

The proposals would include a parking area for the users of the sports pitches. Currently many cars park on Champions Way itself and it is considered preferable to have a dedicated parking area, particularly in terms of managing parking demand against the use of Cophall Stadium by Saracens. The parking area would be managed in that there would be a locked gate that teams playing at the premises would have a key to open; in order to ensure that the parking area is only used by users of the sports pitches. Furthermore, a planning condition is suggested to secure this.

Given this, it is not considered that the proposals would result in a harmful impact on highway and pedestrian safety.

### **3. COMMENTS ON GROUNDS OF OBJECTIONS**

Extra traffic (in addition to the current problems we have with the new Saracens rugby stadium, the swimming pool/gym, and Hendon Rugby Club), noise, pollution, congestion, and disturbance, and loss of conservation area. - *The proposals would help focus car parking to one part of the site and as a result would help reduce congestion as a whole across the Cophall complex. The site is not within a conservation area. Furthermore, AM kick off times have been moved back from 10AM to 9.30AM to help address any increased traffic flows.*

The proposals would deprive essential parking for players, officials, and spectators. - *Hendon Rugby Club has its own parking area so it is not clear why the proposals would prevent this.*

Greenlands Lane would be unable to cope with increased use as it is a narrow road, how will emergency vehicles access the site? - *The proposals would provide a dedicated parking area which should help reduce the number of cars parking on Greenlands Lane.*

Parking spaces at rugby club are closer to many of the football pitches so will be used by footballers. - *The proposals seek to provide a dedicated parking area for the football pitches so it is difficult to see how the proposals would encourage this. Furthermore, clubs using the facilities will be given maps showing where they can park. It will also be managed to ensure that Saracens supporters do not use these areas.*

### **4. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

The proposals do not conflict with either Barnet Council's Equalities Policy or the commitments set in our Equality Scheme and supports the council in meeting its statutory equality responsibilities.

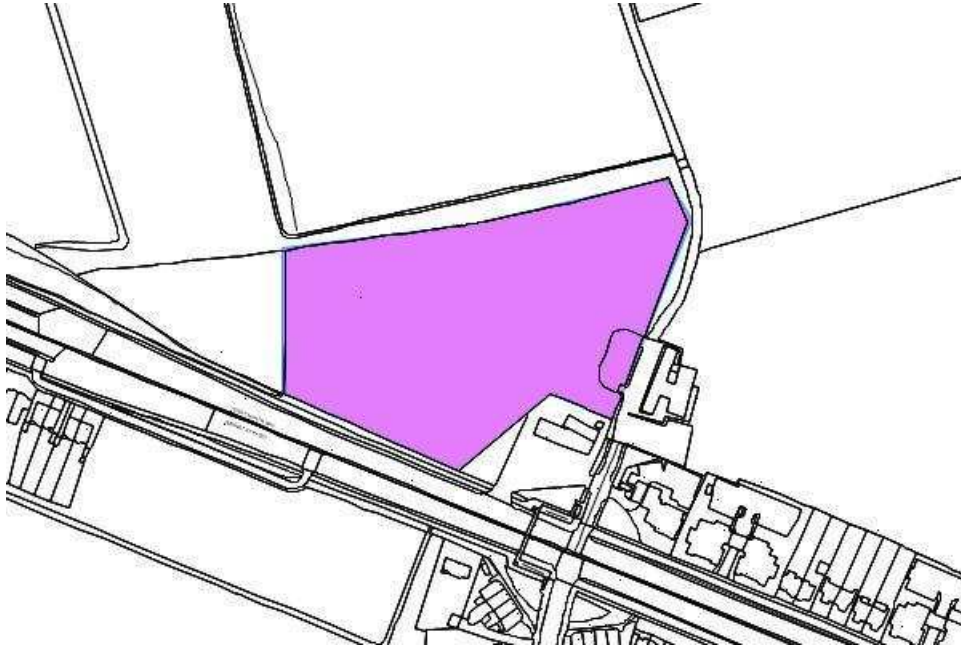
### **5. CONCLUSION**

The proposals would facilitate improvements to existing sports pitches within the borough, and would not harm highway safety or the openness of the green belt.

The application is recommended for **APPROVAL**.

**SITE LOCATION PLAN:** Barnet Copthall Playing Fields, London, NW4  
1PS

**REFERENCE:** H/00924/13



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