

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 4th October 2023

ADDENDUM TO SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT AND BUILDING CONTROL'S REPORT

Agenda Item No. 6

Reference: 23/5617/FUL

Clitterhouse Playing Fields, Claremont Road, NW2

Pages: 9-276

Further consultation response received

A further response was received from Golders Green Estate Residents Association following publication of the Committee report. The response reiterated the objections made in previous correspondence. Specific comments made in relation to:

- Concern about the visual impact of the proposed noise barriers.
- Concern that the space between the hockey pitches will create a corridor which will have minimal natural surveillance and will be prone to antisocial behaviour and crime.
- Floodlighting and impact of glow on higher surrounding areas.
- Queried the areas of lawn excluding paths and wildflowers, gardens and hedges in relation to the space available for spontaneous recreation.
- Reference to toxic compounds/material in artificial turf and infill (particularly rubber crumb) and whether levels will be harmful to players, and particularly young players.
- Lack of recycling facilities in the UK for artificial turf.
- Why is Clitterhouse Playing Fields being allowed to be polluted with toxic materials from rubber crumb and microplastics when it is designated as a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation?

Officer's response

- *Hedge planting and climbers are proposed to be planted in front of the proposed acoustic barriers to screen the structures.*
- *The southern extents of the hockey pitches where the acoustic barriers are to be located are some 42.2m apart. At their closest, the two hockey pitches will be 24.2m apart (note the acoustic barriers will not be in place and the fences will be more transparent). These distances are not considered to feel corridor like and will be visible from other parts of the playing fields. As a comparison, the width of Claremont Road is approximately 15m from front garden to front garden, and Cotswold Gardens is 12m. The Metropolitan Police were consulted on the application and raised no objection to the proposed development.*
- *The application includes a lighting assessment which concludes that with the design mitigations proposed, the scheme will not result in significant impacts on residential receptors. Glare associated with the installation will be limited, as the lighting has been designed to be directional so that it only lights the required surfaces.*

- *The scheme includes a multi-purpose lawn area as well as lawned spaces adjacent to and around the sports pitches which can be used for spontaneous and informal activity (e.g. children kicking a football around). There are also other spaces and facilities throughout the design for CPF for informal recreation such as picnics and other activities. A useful example is Claremont Park which shows that creating an attractive park environment can encourage greater and more varied use than extensive open grassed areas. The application was amended to confirm that the youth 11x11 grass football pitch originally proposed will not be provided as part of the proposed development. However, the multi-purpose lawn area is of a size that can accommodate a youth 11v11 pitch in the future should demand within the Borough require one. Any decision to mark out a youth football pitch would be taken by the proposed Board that will be set up as part of the new governance structure for CPF which will include a representative from the local community.*
- *The proposed artificial pitches will, as a minimum, comply with the mandatory industry standard but the Applicant is also seeking to find an alternative to the use of rubber crumb with a more sustainable material. Alternatives to rubber are already being used elsewhere, including at Bracknell Town FC, a football league club, who have a new surface for the 2023/24 season (<https://www.bracknellnews.co.uk/sport/23695934.bracknell-town-unveil-new-turf-league-season-approaches/>). Given the phasing of the works for CPF, it is likely that the 3G football pitches won't be constructed for several years, in which time it is likely that alternative dressing materials will be further tested. Draft Condition 27 of the committee report requires the submission and approval by the Council of details of the materials to be used in the construction of the 3G artificial pitches with a commitment to use a suitable, and reasonably available sustainable alternative to the rubber crumb infill/dressing.*

Online Petition

Officers are aware of an online petition hosted on a web page called '38Degrees' with the title 'Save Clitterhouse Playing Fields'. The petition has not been submitted to the LPA or the Council in any form. The petition indicates 1,440 signatures although there is no information on where the signatories live in relation to Clitterhouse Playing Fields. The petition makes the following points about the application, all of which have been taken into account and addressed in the Committee report:

- It's bad for the environment. These plans have failed multiple environmental reports. There will be light, noise and microplastic pollution. Damaging local bat and bird habitats. increasing flooding and reducing air quality PERMENANTLY. We should be rewilding these spaces, not urbanising them further.
- Parks aren't about profit, they're for everyone. The people of the local area have had no investment for over 30 years. The huge redevelopment of the park will take the only asset that's free to all and turn it into a commodity to buy. New facilities are supposedly 'multi-use' but surely playing on the grass is more inclusive of yoga, kite flying, dog walking, cricket, rounders, picnics ect. AND ITS FREE!
- The park doesn't meet the local need, its designed for and advertised to league level sports clubs all over Barnet. The park currently hosts a football club once a week, stretching local provision of parking and causing road blocks. The light, noise pollution, plastic water bottles and antisocial behaviour will effect residents on a daily basis; their tranquil park will become a living nightmare.

Officer's response

- A Supplementary Environmental Statement (SES) has been submitted with the application. Chapter 14 of the SES provides an assessment of air quality for the proposed development. The application also includes an Ecological Impact Assessment, Bat Survey Report and Outline Bat Mitigation Strategy which assesses the impact of the proposed development and ensures that it would provide sufficient mitigation for protected and notable species as well as other ecological receptors to ensure there would be no significantly adverse permanent impacts notably on bats. A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment has also been carried out which shows that the proposed development would result in the enhancement of the Site's biodiversity value with 21.4% uplift in Habitat Units, 95.6% uplift in Hedgerow units and 11.4% uplift in River units.
- Out of the total area of 18.08 hectares at least 75% (13.61 hectares) of the playing fields will be free and accessible open space (for active and passive recreational activities such as yoga, kite flying, dog walking, ball games and picnics) as well as land for existing and improved habitats such as Clitterhouse Stream and the boundary hedgerows. Only 17% (3.58 hectares) of the space will include sports courts and pitches whilst a further 5.6% (1.01 hectares) of the space will be dedicated to play areas for younger children and facilities such as bouldering for older children and adults. The enclosed pitches therefore take up a lower percentage of the playing fields leaving the majority as open, unfenced space with facilities for leisure and recreation for other uses. The proposed facilities are designed to provide for a wide range of age groups and people with different interests and abilities. The array of new sports and play facilities provide opportunities for both young people and adults to keep active and have fun while the sports pitches will provide year-round use of the sports facilities, ensuring playability regardless of the weather. The landscape design will provide new planting and habitats for wildlife while significant areas of the park will allow for relaxation and other uses as well as a new network of paths and routes that improve connectivity, safety and security for users. Whilst it is acknowledged that a proportion of the site will be fenced off to facilitate the sports pitches and use thereof, the overriding benefits of the scheme as a whole are considered to outweigh the quantum of space enclosed. Clitterhouse Playing Fields are, and will remain, public playing fields owned by Barnet Council.
- The sports facilities mix includes the provision of 4 all-weather pitches and 2 MUGAs. These, in addition to the mini golf, will be pay to play. The charges for these facilities will be in line with other similar facilities within Barnet. All other facilities will be free to use. Revenue generated by the pay to use facilities will be used to offset the maintenance requirements of the free to use components of the scheme. It is very common for AGPs, tennis, netball courts and grass football pitches to be made available to community use on a pay-to-use basis and there are examples of this across Barnet. A draft 'CPF Sports Facilities: Public Accessibility and Affordability Framework' (April 2023) has been submitted with the Application (attached at Appendix I to the revised Planning Statement (September 2023)) and sets out the framework for the approach to providing discounted access, community access, school use and periods of free access to the sports facilities. The final Public Accessibility and Affordability Plan will be required to be submitted under Draft Condition 52 of the Committee report.
- The mix of facilities proposed in the Application has been informed by up-to-date evidence in respect of sport pitch and facility needs for the borough and thorough engagement with relevant bodies and groups. The proposed mix will deliver a better

level of provision (both in terms of range of sports and facilities and quality) and will enable a greater capacity of weekly usage (games and training) compared to grass pitches, particularly during the winter months.

- *CPF used to have a football club and stadium next door and historically had football pitches marked out and as a result would have been noisier in the past. The proposed development will derive social benefits through the provision of opportunities to take part in sports and recreational activities, thereby contributing to improving the health and wellbeing of those who choose to visit and use the facilities on offer. The extant planning permission for CPF and wider BXC regeneration area already allows the development of sports and recreational facilities at Clitterhouse Playing Fields, including artificial pitches, MUGAs and football pitches.*
 - *Subject to securing the mitigation measures set out in the relevant submission documents, the LPA is satisfied that the proposed development is not anticipated to generate any unacceptable or significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life of the occupiers of neighbouring properties as a result of noise arising from the site or in respect of causing obtrusive light in respect of light spill, glare or skyglow/upward light from the site.*
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