

**P/14/1238/FP**

COGNITA SCHOOLS LTD

**STUBBINGTON**

AGENT: MACDONALD  
PLANNING CONSULTANCY

CHANGE OF USE OF AGRICULTURAL LAND TO CREATE GRASS PLAYING PITCHES FOR MEON CROSS SCHOOL, PROVISION OF TOILET BLOCK AND 2 METRE HIGH WELD MESH PERIMETER FENCING

MEON CROSS SCHOOL - LAND EAST OF BURNT HOUSE LANE FAREHAM  
HAMPSHIRE

***Report By***

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***Amendments***

A number of amendments have been made to the application since it was originally submitted. The amendments include the following:

- Improvements to the section of Burnt House Lane that links the school to the site
- Entrance gate to pitches to be set back to provide space for vehicles to turn
- Lockable bollard to restrict access along Burnt House Lane to refuse vehicles and the emergency services
- Signage warning drivers that Burnt House Lane is not a through road
- Incorporation of a green/sedum roof to the toilet block
- Ecological requirements including the addition of a thorn hedge around the perimeter
- Attenuation pond in the west of the site to improve surface water drainage

***Site Description***

The site is a 2.4 hectare piece of agricultural land located to the east of Burnt House Lane, Stubbington. The site is located outside of, but adjacent to the urban area and is within the Stubbington/Fareham strategic gap.

The land to the north and east of the site consists of agricultural land of an open character. There is also agricultural land to the immediate south of the site, with Meoncross School located approximately 140m to the south. The land to the west of the site is of an urban character and contains residential properties and allotments.

The site is accessed via Burnt House Lane. The section of road to the south of the site is not surfaced and contains large pot holes. The condition of the road is poor and as a result it does not experience a high volume of traffic.

***Description of Proposal***

The application proposes a change of use of the site from agricultural land to grass sports pitches for use by Meoncross School. The application also proposes the following:

- 2m high wire mesh perimeter fence and thorn hedge;
- Small, timber clad toilet block with a flat, sedum roof and a septic tank in the south west corner;
- Soakaway and attenuation pond along the west boundary;
- Lockable bollard on Burnt House Lane to restrict through traffic to use by the emergency services and the refuse vehicle only;

- Signage to warn vehicles of no through road;
- Re-surfacing of section of Burnt House Lane between the site and Meoncross School

### ***Policies***

The following policies apply to this application:

#### **Approved Fareham Borough Core Strategy**

- CS4 - Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- CS5 - Transport Strategy and Infrastructure
- CS6 - The Development Strategy
- CS14 - Development Outside Settlements
- CS15 - Sustainable Development and Climate Change
- CS16 - Natural Resources and Renewable Energy
- CS17 - High Quality Design
- CS21 - Protection and Provision of Open Space
- CS22 - Development in Strategic Gaps

#### **Development Sites and Policies**

- DPS1 - Sustainable Development
- DSP3 - Environmental Impact
- DSP4 - Impact on Living Conditions
- DSP14 - Supporting Sites for Brent Greese and Waders
- DSP53 - Sports Provision

#### **Fareham Borough Local Plan Review**

- DG4 - Site Characteristics
- C18 - Protected Species

### ***Relevant Planning History***

The following planning history is relevant:

### ***Representations***

28 objections were received in response to the plans originally submitted. Neighbours were re-consulted regarding the amendments to the proposal and at the time of writing 4 representations had been received (Any additional representations received will be summarized on the day of the committee).

The following concerns were raised:

- Burnt House Lane is not suitable for additional traffic or parking of cars.
- Have the owners of the section of road to be re-surfaced agreed to the work?
- Additional use of Burnt House Lane would make access by the emergency services impossible
- The use of a bollard will make it very difficult for larger vehicles to turn.

- There is no provision for vehicles to turn
- The applicants lied on the application form when they stated that the application did not propose any changes to roads.
- The fields are constantly flooding with drainage flowing onto Burnt House Lane and residents' gardens. Additional development would exacerbate the situation.
- Flooding of Burnt House Lane would make access to the site by pupils very difficult
- The drainage figures in the plans are estimates.
- Does the drainage plan allow for climate change?
- Who would be responsible for damage to residential properties by flood water?
- The Environment Agency wanted to create a wetland habitat in the field, but could not reach an agreement with the land owner.
- How will the septic tank operate in flood situations?
- The flood risk assessment states that previous flooding has been exacerbated by debris blocking the culvert, however the environment agency have not confirmed this. The Environment Agency should provide information as to the operation of the culvert.
- The flood risk assessment states that no records have been provided to suggest that the site has been affected by groundwater flooding. The absence of records regarding flooding does not provide evidence that an event does not occur.
- The flood risk assessment allows for a 1 in 100 year event with a 30% increase allowed for climate change, however the area is prone to flooding every year.
- Wildlife would be disturbed
- A 2m fence would be visually inappropriate
- A 2m fence would not be high enough to contain balls
- Impact of noise on residents
- Building on the site would set a precedent for future development in the area
- Resurfacing Burnt House Lane would create a rat run for motorists
- Increased traffic on Burnt House Lane would damage the culvert
- How will the school enforce parking within the campus?
- Signage should be erected that restricts use of the road to use by residents and allotment holders only
- Barriers on the road would prevent access by the emergency services

- Yellow lines are needed to restrict parking
- Who will monitor the maintenance of the toilet block and septic tank?
- The need for sports facilities is not sufficient justification for the proposed development
- The proposed toilet block would have an adverse impact on residents' outlook
- The proposed development would impact on the security, safety and well being of residents
- The proposal will generate additional pupils as the school is advertising a new sixth form from September 2015
- The pitches should be located on land directly adjacent to the school. The Council should intervene to enable a compromise to be reached.
- The applicants are a business and are keen to increase their marketability by providing better sports facilities.
- The use of the facilities by a wider range of people, that is other than by pupils would be of concern.
- The proposed pitches would restrict use of footpaths by dog walkers.

1 letter of support.

- Parking requirements are likely to be low and easily capable of being accommodated within the school campus.
- Use of the land as sports pitches is preferable to housing development

### **Consultations**

Director of Community(Environmental Health - Contaminated Land)  
No objection

Director of Planning & Development (Building Control) - The Environment Agency should be consulted. A porosity test will be required to justify the use of a septic tank. Timber construction should be kept at a minimum of 1m from the site boundary line.

Director of Planning & Development (Highways) - An access management plan should be provided to avoid parking on Burnt House Lane.

Director of Community & Streetscene (Refuse and Recycling) - No objection.

Director of Planning & Development (Ecology) - Acknowledge that the proposed development does not include lighting therefore no mitigation is required.

-Agree that there is a low probability of reptile presence therefore agree that the precautionary approach to be taken towards strimming is acceptable.

-The Solar Farm in the east of the gap resulted in loss of habitat for birds. The site will result in further loss of land that may provide habitat for birds. Concerns regarding the loss of habitat for birds.

Environment Agency - The EA's original response requested further details regarding the proposed drainage of the site. The applicant subsequently submitted a drainage strategy and flood risk assessment. The EA's updated comments are outstanding.

Southern Water - No objection

-Building Control should be asked to comment on the adequacy of soakaways to dispose of surface water from the proposed development.

-The Environment Agency should be asked to comment on the proposed use of a septic tank.

-Should any sewer be found during construction works, an investigation will be required to ascertain its condition, the number of properties served and potential means of access before any further works commence on site.

Sport England - Support the proposal. Recommend that the applicant commissions a ground conditions assessment by an agronomist who can advise on the best scheme to prepare the playing fields.

Use of the facility by the community would be supported.

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service - No objection

Hampshire County Council Highways - No objection

Hampshire Police - No objection

### ***Planning Considerations - Key Issues***

Principle of development

The site is located outside the urban area, therefore policies CS6 and CS14 are applicable. Policy CS6 The Development Strategy, prioritises the use of previously developed land, within the urban area, taking into consideration biodiversity, potential community value, the character, accessibility, infrastructure and services of the settlement and impact on both the historic and natural environment. Policy CS6 also requires development to provide environmental enhancement where possible and states that development which would have an adverse effect on the integrity of protected European sites which cannot be avoided or mitigated to be refused.

Policy CS14 states that built development on land outside defined settlements will be strictly controlled to protect the countryside and coastline from development which would adversely affect its landscape character, appearance and function. The supporting text states that: "...development in the countryside, outside the settlement boundaries will be strictly controlled and will focus on meeting agricultural, countryside recreation, leisure and tourism needs i.e. needs that can only be met in this type of location".

The site is located within a strategic gap, therefore Policy CS22 is applicable. Policy CS22 states that land within a strategic gap will be treated as countryside and development proposals will not be permitted either individually or cumulatively where it significantly effects the integrity of the gap and the physical and visual separation of settlements.

Policy DSP53 specifies the criteria that proposed sports facilities and pitches must meet and states that proposals for new sports pitches will be permitted on sites within or adjoining the settlement boundary provided it:

- Would be compatible with the character of the site and its surroundings;

- The site is accessible by a variety of modes of transport and the amount of traffic generated could be accommodated by the local highway network without harming road safety;
- The proposal would not be detrimental to the amenity of neighbouring residents by reason of undue noise or traffic;
- A need for the facility has been established.

The site is located within an area that is shown by the current policies map as being 'uncertain' for Brent Geese and Waders. Policy DSP14 is therefore also applicable.

Policy DSP14 states that development on sites categorised as being 'uncertain' for Brent Geese and Waders, may be permitted where studies have been completed that clearly demonstrate that the site is not of 'importance'.

The proposed use of the site for playing pitches is required as there is insufficient space within the existing campus to incorporate the pitches and pupils currently have to travel to another site. The proposed use of the site for pitches is therefore acceptable in principle subject to satisfying the requirements of the relevant policies listed earlier in this report.

#### Effect on the character of the area and the strategic gap

In terms of built development, the proposed use of the field as a sports pitch would include the addition of a 2m high perimeter fence, an entrance gate and a small toilet block in the south west corner of the site. The modest proportions of the toilet block, combined with its rustic design (timber clad with a sedum roof) and its position in the south west corner of the site against a backdrop of existing mature trees would result in it having a negligible impact on the character of the area.

The proposed fence and entrance gate would be of a wire mesh design, similar to that allowed around the perimeter of the solar farm in the east of the gap. The wire mesh fence and gate would be visually permeable. The proposed thorn hedging (to be planted on the outside of the fence) would screen the fence and help obscure it from view as it matures and increases in size.

The proposed sports pitch incorporates limited built form and therefore the site would retain its existing open character. The proposed toilet block and perimeter fencing would be visible from within short distances, however they would not create an urban character. The site forms a small part of this section of the strategic gap and the proposed use would not visually or physically diminish the gap, nor would it result in a coalescence of the settlements.

#### Effect on residential amenity

The proposed use of the pitch as a sports pitch does not include the addition of any large structures, therefore the impact on resident's outlook would be minimal. The nearest residential property is approximately 20m west of the site. The use of the sports pitch would result in increased levels of noise, however the use of the pitches would be by the school only and therefore would not be intensive. In addition, it is recommended that a condition is included which prevents the use of megaphones. It is recommended that the hours of use of the pitches is restricted by condition.

#### Flooding

The site is not in a medium or high risk flood zone, however residents have raised concerns

regarding existing problems with surface water drainage from the fields onto Burnt House Lane. The application is supported by a flood risk assessment and a surface water drainage strategy. The flood risk assessment proposes:

- The applicant will clear and maintain the ditch where it borders the site and the culvert beneath Burnt House Lane;
- An 8m wide buffer of undeveloped land will be maintained adjacent to the watercourse;
- Surface water runoff will be discharged into the ground either by a soak away or into the proposed attenuation pond;
- The drainage system will be designed to discharge of runoff arising from a 1:100 year flood event including an allowance for a 30% increase due to climate change.

The above measures will provide a 35% reduction in run-off rates for a 1:100 year storm as compared to the existing situation. The proposed drainage system would therefore provide a net benefit to the site. A condition can be used to ensure that the measures proposed within the flood risk assessment and the surface water strategy are adhered to in perpetuity.

### Ecological issues

The application is supported by a phase 1 Habitats Survey which addresses a number of issues, which will each be examined.

The proposed use of the site does not include any lighting, therefore disturbance to bats is not of concern.

The perimeter of the site has the potential to provide habitat for reptiles therefore precautionary pre-construction measures are proposed.

The site forms a relatively small part (1.1%) of a much larger area which is identified as being 'uncertain' in terms of its use by Brent Geese and Wading Birds. The proposed use of the site would result in the addition of mown grass and would only contain 1 small toilet block (20.85 sqm, which would incorporate a green/sedum roof). The ecologist has raised concerns about the loss of habitat for birds, however the use of the playing pitches would be by Meoncross School only and would therefore not be intensively used. The site would consist of Mown Grass and would remain available for use by Brent Geese or other Wading Birds when it is not in use by pupils and in any event the area of the site is relatively small in terms of the larger area identified for birds. Indeed, the sports pitches to the west of the Eastern Road, Portsmouth frequently contain Brent Geese and demonstrates that the proposed use is unlikely to deter Brent Geese from using the site.

Golden Plovers use parts of the wider Fareham farm field, however the survey data did not record them within the application site itself. The site is adjacent to an area of allotments and Burnt House Lane which is a popular route for people walking their dogs. Recordings of Golden Plover indicate that they prefer the quieter areas in the north and south of the wider field. The ecological report concludes that although Golden Plover have not been recorded within the site itself, it would remain accessible by Golden Plover.

The proposed addition of a thorn hedge around the perimeter of the site would help to increase the biodiversity of the site in line with the requirements of the NPPF and the LPA's duty under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006).

### Parking and highways issues

The pitches would sometimes be used for matches with pupils from other schools. Any

visitors to the school would be required to park in the school campus where they would use facilities within the school for changing before walking up Burnt House Lane to the pitches. Residents have raised concerns about the potential for visitors to want to park in Burnt House Lane as this is an existing problem caused by parents dropping pupils off at the school. To ensure that the parking is actively monitored, the school would be required to produce a management plan, which would involve input from residents of Burnt House Lane. Details of the management plan and management group are to be agreed by condition.

The section of Burnt House Lane which links the school to the site is in a poor state of repair. To facilitate access to the pitches, the applicant has agreed to carry out improvements to the road. The details of the improvements to the road would be secured by condition if the application is positively determined by the committee but it is agreed that it will be in the form of rolled gravel surfacing.

Residents have raised concerns regarding the improvements to the road and fear that it would become attractive to people wanting to race and/or use it as a short cut. To address these concerns the applicant has agreed to install a lockable bollard to the east of no. 16 Grassmere Way. The lockable bollard would not stop people driving onto this section of Burnt House Lane from either end, but it would prevent through traffic (with the exception of the refuse vehicle and the emergency services who would be able to unlock the bollard).

Although residents have stated that they don't wish to encourage through traffic, they have also raised concerns regarding the installation of a bollard, as drivers may subsequently use residents' drives to turn in. To address this concern, the applicant has submitted amended plans which position the gate further into the entrance to the field to provide drivers with increased space to turn and leave Burnt House Lane in a forward gear. The applicant has also agreed to install a sign on the western boundary of the site and at the entrance to the school to warn drivers that the road is not a through road. (Details of the signage would be secured via condition).

## Conclusion

The proposed use of the site as a sports pitch by pupils from Meoncross would be an appropriate use of the land which would not have a significant adverse impact on the character of the area, the integrity of the strategic gap or residents' amenity. The proposed improvements to Burnt House Lane will make it more accessible to both pupils of Meoncross School and existing users and the management plan will prevent 'problem' parking in the area. The proposed surface water drainage strategy will decrease the rate at which water drains from the field, therefore also benefitting neighbouring residential properties.

## **Recommendation**

PERMISSION subject to conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiry of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the procedures set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2010 and Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following



approved plans:

Planning, design and Access Statement prepared by Macdonald Planning Consultancy

Proposed summer site plan Drawing no. 101:14:P03C

Proposed winter site plan Drawing no. 101:14:P02C

Flood Risk Assessment dated March 2015 prepared by Ambiental Technical Solutions Ltd

Surface Water Drainage Strategy dated March 2015 prepared by Ambiental Technical Solutions Ltd

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. The measures contained within the surface water drainage strategy prepared by Ambiental Technical Solutions Ltd shall be implemented prior to the use of the site as a sports pitch and shall be adhered and maintained to at all times thereafter.

Reason: To prevent flooding of the site and adjacent area; in accordance with policy CS15 of the adopted Fareham Borough Core Strategy.

4. Before the development hereby permitted is brought into use, a parking management plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The management plan shall contain the following details:

-Details of members of the management group

-Frequency of meetings of management group

-Ways in which visitors will be informed of where to park

-Ways in which parking is monitored when visitors are invited to play against Meoncross on their pitches

-Strategy for dealing with people who don't park in the campus

-List of residents who will be invited to participate in the management group's review of the plan

The approved management plan shall be adhered to thereafter.

Reason: To ensure active monitoring of parking within the school; in accordance with policy CS5 of the adopted Fareham Borough Core Strategy.

5. Before the development hereby permitted is brought into use, details of the lockable bollard are to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The bollard shall be retained thereafter in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties; in accordance with emerging policy DSP4 of the Local Plan Part2: Development Sites and Policies.

6. Before the development hereby permitted is brought into use, details of improvements to the section of Burnt House Lane that links Meoncross School to the site, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved alterations to the road shall be implemented prior to the use of the site as sports pitches.

Reason: To ensure that the road is repaired to a satisfactory standard; in accordance with policy CS5 of the Fareham Borough Core Strategy.

7. Before the development hereby permitted is brought into use, details of improvements to the section of Burnt House Lane that links Meoncross School to the site, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved alterations to the road shall be implemented prior to the use of the site as sports pitches and shall be maintained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that the road is repaired to a satisfactory standard; in accordance with policy CS5 of the Fareham Borough Core Strategy.

8. Before the development hereby permitted is brought into use, details of signage regarding parking and access onto Burnt House Road is to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved signage shall be erected prior to the use of the sports pitches and shall be retained thereafter in perpetuity.

Reason: To protect the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties; in accordance with emerging policy DSP4 of the Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies.

9. The site shall be used only as a sports pitch and for no other purpose whatsoever.

Reason: To protect the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties; in accordance with emerging policy DSP4 of the Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies.

10. The site shall be used only as playing fields and for no other purpose whatsoever.

Reason: To protect the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties; in accordance with emerging policy DSP4 of the Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies.

11. The use of the playing fields hereby approved shall be between 09:00 and 18:00 hours Monday to Friday, between the hours of 09:00 and 13:00 on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays or Bank or Public Holidays.

Reason: To protect the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties; in accordance with emerging policy DSP4 of the Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies.

12. No megaphones or other sound amplifying equipment to be used within the site.

Reason: To protect the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties; in accordance with emerging policy DSP4 of the Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies.

13. No external lighting shall be installed on the site.

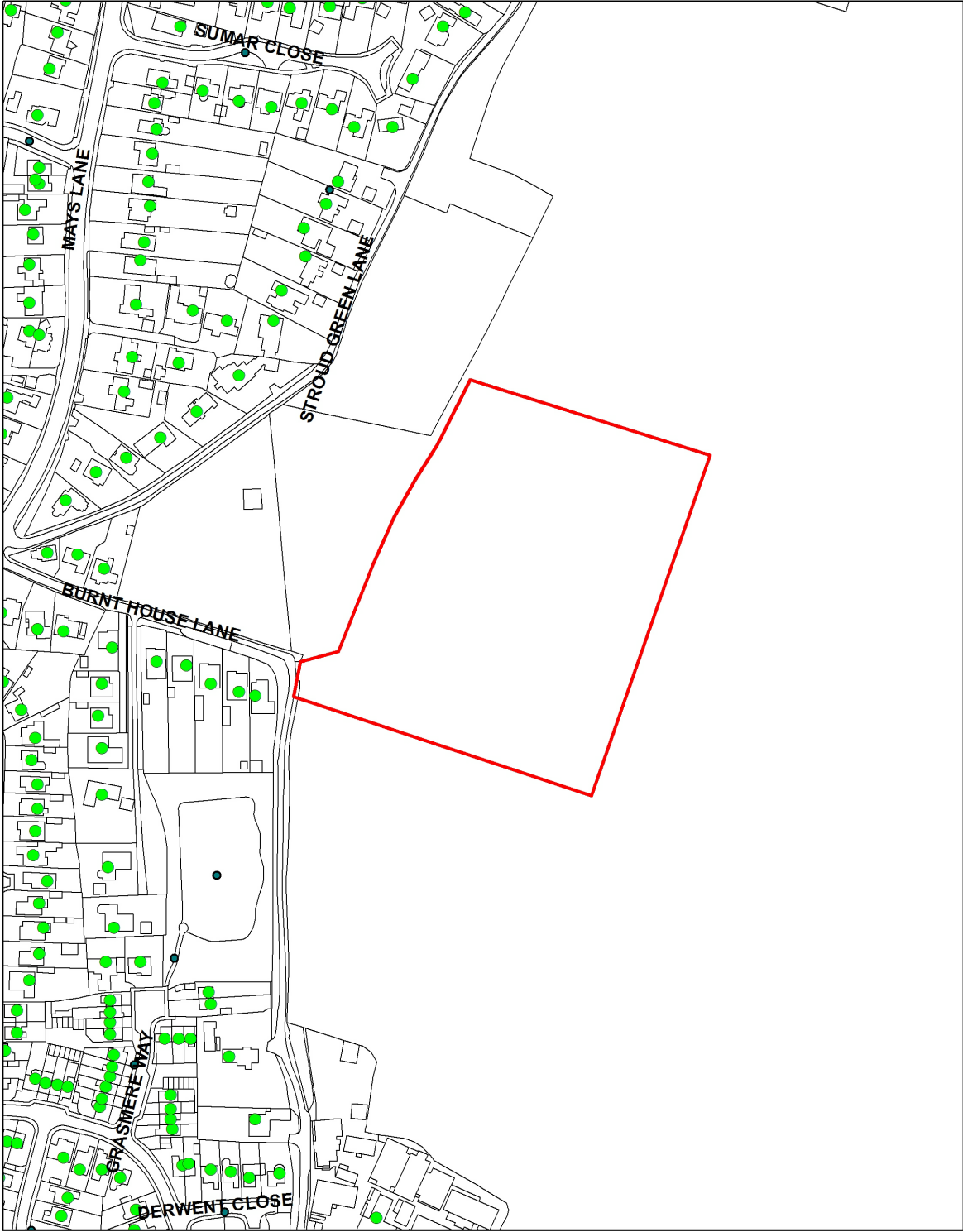
Reason: To protect the rural character of the area and to avoid any disturbance to bats; in accordance with policies CS4 and CS14 of the Fareham Borough Core Strategy and emerging policy DSP53 of the Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies.

14. Before the development hereby permitted is brought into use, details of the hedging to be planted on the outside of the perimeter fence, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved hedging shall be planted before the site is brought into use. Any hedging plants that die or become, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, seriously defective, shall be replaced within the next available planting season with others of the same species, size and number as originally approved.

Reason: To protect the rural character of the area and to increase biodiversity; in accordance with Policies CS4 and CS14 of the Fareham Borough Core Strategy and emerging policy DSP53 of the Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies.

# FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL



Meon Cross Playing Field  
1:2500



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