

P/14/0042/FP

STUBBINGTON

LEE ON SOLENT GOLF CLUB

AGENT: LEE ON SOLENT GOLF CLUB

CHANGE OF USE FROM GRAZING LAND TO GOLF COURSE, INCLUDING ADDITION OF A DRAINAGE DITCH AND EARTH MOUNDS

LEE ON SOLENT GOLF CLUB BRUNE LANE LEE ON SOLENT HANTS PO13 9PB

Report By

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Site Description

The application site is located on the southeast corner of the junction of Broom Way with Brune Lane. Brune Lane runs southeastwards to Shoot Lane through the greens associated with Lee-on-Solent Golf Course and provides access to the Clubhouse which is located on the southwest side. The application site is currently used for the keeping of horses and comprises various paddocks with makeshift stable structures. The site is bounded to the north and west by significant hedgerows; to the south and east the land forms part of a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation which covers much of the area of the golf club. The terrain is flat.

Description of Proposal

The proposal is to create a dedicated junior course of 5 holes with low (600mm) mounding to the north and west topped with landscape planting. A drainage ditch is proposed running roughly northwest to southeast to meet with the existing drainage ditch running along the southeast boundary, through the existing woodland.

Policies

The following policies apply to this application:

Approved Fareham Borough Core Strategy

CS14 - Development Outside Settlements

CS17 - High Quality Design

CS22 - Development in Strategic Gaps

CS4 - Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

Development Sites and Policies

DSP13 - Nature Conservation

DSP3 - Environmental Impact

DSP8 - New Leisure and Recreation Development Outside of the Defined Urban Settlement

Fareham Borough Local Plan Review

C18 - Protected Species

DG4 - Site Characteristics

Representations

Five representations have been received raising the following issues:

- Disturbance to wildlife
- Potential for golf balls to hit passing vehicles
- Impact on SINC
- Impact on the countryside

Consultations

Environment Agency - No Comments

Natural England -

No objection in respect of proximity to the Wild Grounds SSSI; the Planning Authority should assure itself that the impact on locally important nature conservation sites is acceptable; the impact on protected species has not been assessed; the application may provide opportunities for biodiversity and landscape enhancements

Director of Planning and Development (Arboriculture) - No objection

Southern Water - No objection

Director of Planning and Development (Highways) -

Subject to the three adjacent gates from Brune Lane being kept locked, except for maintenance purposes, no highway objection is raised to the application.

Director of Planning and Development (Ecology) -

The site has been found to consist mostly of improved (horse-grazed) grassland, bordered by hedgerows and trees to the west and north, and by a ditch and mature trees to the east. Immediately to the south and within the east of the proposal site is the Lee-on-Solent Golf Course SINC. There are no particular protected species concerns which have been identified within the submitted report, however it is suggested that clarification is sought regarding the following points:

- The treatment of the watercourse to the east of the site, which appears to be crossed by the proposed access and be impacted by drainage works. It is unclear whether this will be a culvert or a bridged structure etc, and what the operational impacts on the watercourse will be in terms of water quality and quantity. It is possible that Ordinary Watercourse Consent may be required.
- The treatment of trees. According to the DAS no trees will be affected, however it appears that the new access (including for maintenance vehicles) is proposed through the trees in the east of the site.
- No detailed planting plans have yet been provided. Clarification is sought as to whether native planting (of trees, scrub) and wildflower seeding is proposed as part of the scheme, in order to enhance the biodiversity of the site.
- The impact to SINC habitat (including loss), which is within the footprint of the proposed access works.
- Potential for Great crested newts to be present and impacted by the proposals. From mapping it appears that there are several ponds within proximity to the site, which appear to have not been assessed within the ecological work carried out.

Planning Considerations - Key Issues

The Key Issues in this case are:

- The Principle of the Development
- Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area
- Highways
- Ecology

Principle of development

The application site is located in the countryside which forms part of the strategic gap. The aim of the strategic gap is to maintain the physical and visual separation of settlements as set out in Policy CS22 of the Fareham Borough Core Strategy. The proposal for an extension to the golf course will maintain the integrity of the gap so that there would be no conflict with this policy.

Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy specifically refers to 'built development' and seeks to ensure that development proposals do not harm the landscape character and appearance of the countryside. There is some 'operational development' associated with the application involving mounding and drainage. The proposed mounding would be low and is not such that it would harm the landscape character. The same applies to the proposed drain. It is not considered that the proposed development would conflict with this policy.

Draft Policy DSP8 of the Fareham Borough Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies is a policy which may now be afforded significant weight in the decision making process and is encouraging of new leisure and recreation development outside the defined urban boundaries subject to meeting the requirements of a sequential test, that (subject to their scale) they meet the requirements of an impact assessment and that there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on the highway network. In this case, a sequential test is not considered appropriate or necessary since, not only is a countryside location required for the golf course use but also the location is dictated by the existing golf course. Whilst the reference to an impact assessment does not mean the submission of an Environment Impact Assessment nonetheless the site does fall within the scope of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011; under these regulations golf courses and associated developments are considered to be Schedule 2 developments if they are over 1ha in area. The area of the application site is 2.35ha so that it may be considered under the regulations as possible Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development. Although no 'screening request' has been submitted to determine if an EIA is required the regulations set out three tests in determining if one should be submitted -

- The characteristics of the development
- The location of the development and
- The characteristics of the potential impact

In this case it is considered that the particular characteristics of the development, being an extension to an existing golf course, in relation to the location which is well related to the existing course, the characteristics of the land which is flat and well screened, and the potential for there being an impact, which is low, are such that an EIA would not have been sought.

Since the development is for a junior course it is expected that golfers will either cycle to the site or be taken by adult golfers so that the impact on the highway network is likely to be small. Detailed matters relating to the access arrangements are set out further below.

In view of the above it is not considered that the proposed development would conflict with draft policy DSP8.

Impact on character of the area

The locality is important as countryside forming part of a strategic gap but less so for its specific landscape characteristics since the area is relatively flat. The existing use of the land for the keeping of horses with its associated makeshift stable structures does not harm the character. The proposed golf greens will provide a well maintained area with additional planting which may be seen as a positive contribution, but in any event a coulf course is not an unusual feature to be found within the countryside.

Highways

The Director of Planning and Development (Highways) did raise some initial concern over matters of:

- the access to the site and
- hazard from balls being hit over the highway

Access - the application shows the provision of a new gravel path from the eastern side of the site to existing gates onto Brune Lane. The concern was that if this were intended for use by the golfers then this could be a encouragement to park on the highway verge (albeit wide at this point) or for junior golfers to be walking to the site along Brune Lane. The applicants have confirmed that the access to the greens for golfers will be informal and from the existing greens to the south and thence from the clubhouse; the gravel access is to be for green maintenance only. The Director of Planning and Development(Highways) is satisfied that this will be acceptable.

Hazard from Golf Balls - The applicants have clarified their design ethos in respect to the holes. They confirm that of the five holes, No.4 was of concern as this is closest to Broom Way. They point out that the hole was shortend to 91m to obviate the need to use clubs that could result in 'hooked' balls. For added protection they have proposed additional planting between the hole and Broom Way. Brune Lane is protected by trees. They have referred to the similar design of Holes 14, 15, 17 and 18 of the main course that are similar design. The Director of Planning and Development (Highways)is satisfied that this will be acceptable.

Ecology

No in principle objection has been raised by Natural England or the Director of Planning and Development (Ecology) although a number of points of clarification have been suggested.

1. Treatment of Watercourse - the applicants have confirmed that the watercourse would be bridged so as not to impede flow. Neither the Environment Agency nor Southern Water have objected to the development and it is proposed to add a condition, should permission be granted, to provide details of the bridge.

2. New Access - the applicants have confirmed that the new access into the field is through the existing trees and will be constructed by the removal of minimum topsoil and laying of 150mm of Gravel scalping's again similar to other tracks on the course. This access is only required for maintenance equipment grass cutters and similar. These machines are designed to have a low impact on the soil and do not affect the tree roots. Construction machines will use the existing field access points off Brune Lane which will be closed on completion.

3. Treatment of trees - No objection has been raised by the Director of Planning and Development (Arboriculture).

4 Planting - The applicants have confirmed that they are happy for this detail to be conditioned.

5.Impact on SINC - the applicants have reiterated that the proposed site other than the maintenance access falls outside of the SINC. They have referred to their Ecological survey which sets out the criteria for which the SINC was designated and which confirms that the area to be lost to the access does not support any of the habitats or features for which the site was designated.

5. Great Crested Newts - The applicants have confirmed that the nearest pond is located in the woodlands between the sixth seventh and eighth fairways. This is approx. 250m distance from the application site on the other side of Brune Lane where there is no natural or man made crossing for newts. There is also a small pond adjacent to the clubhouse 175m distance which has a Carp population and does not support newts. For these reasons it is not considered that there will be any conflict with the interests of this protected species.

Conclusion

The application site is closely related to the existing golf course use and is appropriate within the countryside. The scale form, location and impacts of the development are not such as to require an EIA and the development is therefore considered to be in line with the adopted Policies of the Fareham Borough Core Strategy, the Fareham Borough Local Plan Review and the emerging Fareham Borough Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies. It is not considered that there would be any adverse impact upon the ecological interests of the adjacent SINC nor that the development would result in any unacceptable highways safety issue.

PERMISSION

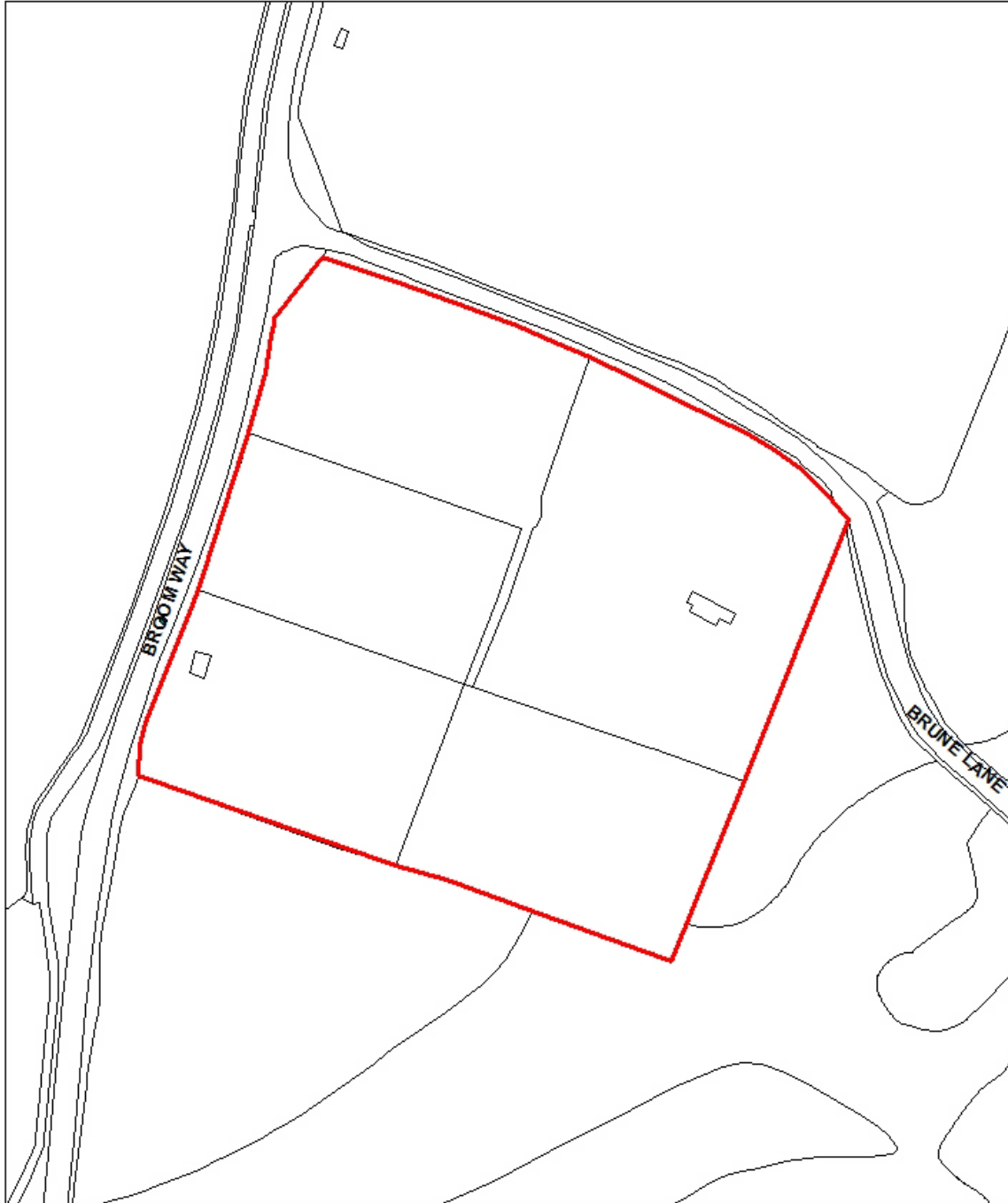
Details of proposed bridge and drainage ditch; detail of proposed access track; details of bat boxes as proposed in ecological report; development to be carried out in accordance with ecological report; access on to Brune Lane to remain locked unless in use for maintenance; landscaping detail to include biodiversity enhancements; landscape implementation; development to be used only in conjunction with the remainder of the golf course; submission of CEMP (Construction Environment Management Plan).

Background Papers

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FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL



LEE ON SOLENT GOLF CLUB
BRUNE LANE
SCALE: 1:1,250

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