

Richard Turnbull
Planning Officer
Chiltern District Council
King George V Road
Amersham
Buckinghamshire
HP6 5AW

6 April 2010

Your Ref:
Our Ref:

Dear Mr Turnbull,

Proposal: Outline planning application with matters of access only to be considered in detail at this stage. The redevelopment of the site to provide a mixed use comprising up to 232 dwellings (Use Class C3); a residential care home for 74 bedrooms and up to 3,370 square metres (Use Class C2); community facilities up to 1,100 square metres (Use Class D1); together with open space, landscaping and car parking; served from new and altered vehicle accesses from Gold Hill East, and Grange Road, and a new pedestrian access off Market Place, and with associated off-site highway works

Site: Holy Cross Convent School, The Grange, Chalfont St Peter, Chiltern, Gerrards Cross, SL9

Thank you for your letter dated 18 March 2010, inviting Sport England to comment on the above planning application. Sport England's assessment of the application is contained within this letter. Please note that Sport England **objects** to this application.

The Proposal

The application site comprises the former Holy Cross Convent School buildings and playing field land.

The application proposes the demolition of the former convent school buildings and the redevelopment to provide a mixed used scheme comprising up to 232 dwellings, a residential care home and community facilities.

The application does not propose to retain any of the existing playing field land and no proposals have been put forward to re-provide replacement playing field in another offsite location.

Playing Fields Policy

Sport England's adopted Playing Fields Policy, 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England (1996)', sets out a policy presumption against development that would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of, all or any part of a playing field, or land last used as a playing field. The aim of this policy is to ensure that there is an adequate supply of quality pitches to satisfy the current and estimated future demand for pitch sports within the area (whether the land is in public, private or educational use). This policy objective is also embodied within 'Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation'.

Sport England will, therefore, oppose development on playing fields in all but exceptional circumstances. These exceptional circumstances are where, in the judgment of Sport England:

E1 - A carefully quantified and documented assessment of current and future needs has demonstrated to the satisfaction of Sport England that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment, and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport.

E2 - The proposed development is ancillary to the principal use of the site as a playing field or playing fields, and does not affect the quantity or quality of pitches or adversely affect their use.

E3 - The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming, or forming part of, a playing pitch, and does not result in the loss of, or inability to make use of any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins), a reduction in the size of the playing area of any playing pitch or the loss of any other sporting/ancillary facility on the site.

E4 - The playing field or playing fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development would be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of the development.

E5 - The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field or playing fields.

Interpretation

The proposed development results in the loss of playing field land, such that it must accord with at least one of the above exception policies to be considered acceptable to Sport England and accord with PPG17.

The applicant considers proposals to accord with exception Policy E1 as set out at Para 5.134 – 5.136 of the submitted Planning Statement. However, having carefully considered the Sports Pitch Strategy for Chiltern District Council, 2006, I cannot draw the same conclusion, and disagree with the assertion that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment. The 2006 Sports Pitch Strategy clearly sets out that there was a deficit of two pitches in 2006 on a Saturday.

The 2006 Sports Pitch Strategy rightly excludes the Goldhill Common pitch as it has no changing provision and rightly assumes that the oversupply of pitches on a Sunday does not compensate for the undersupply on Saturday. This is because league games played on Saturdays are not interchangeable with Sunday fixtures and vice versa.

It should also be noted that the 2006 Sports Pitch Strategy was produced nearly our years ago and assuming participation in sport has grown in this time, in line with the Bucks County

Council *N18 Adult participation in Sport* target, the demand for pitches will also have also increased. To gain clarity on existing football pitch demand, I have contacted the Football Association who will advise accordingly to follow.

In light of the fact that the applicant has relied on the general conclusions of the Chiltern Open Space Recreational Strategy and not the detailed findings of the Sports Pitch Strategy for Chiltern District Council 2006, I find that the case put forward in favour of Policy E1 is flawed. As such I disagree that the application accords with exception Policy E1 and I do not consider that the applicant has sufficiently demonstrated otherwise.

As such Sport England **objects** to this application.

We will duly reconsider the merits of the application on receipt of any additional information submitted which seeks to address the objections raised herein.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I trust that you have found the above comments of assistance in developing this document and policies contained therein.

Yours sincerely



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