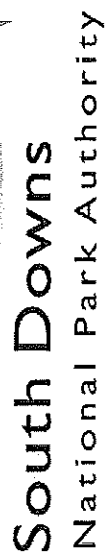


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South Downs
National Park Authority

Littlebourne Field, Hazeley Road, Twyford
SDNP/15/006886/FUL

Scale: 1:2488

10/6/15



Item No: 03
Case No: SDNP/15/00686/FUL
Proposal Description: Change of use from agriculture to sports activities field: including improvements to access and landscaping
Address: Littlebourne Field, Hazeley Road, Twyford
Parish, or Ward if within Winchester City: Colden Common and Twyford
Applicants Name: Twyford School
Case Officer: Jane Rarok
Date Valid: 18 February 2015
Recommendation: Application Permitted

Recommendation: That the application be Approved for the reasons and subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 10.1 of this report.

Executive Summary

The application is reported to committee because of the number of representations received contrary to the officer's recommendation.

1. Site Description

Littlebourne Field is an area of agricultural land adjoining Hazeley Road on its south side. It is approximately 2.8 hectares (approximately 130m road frontage and 230m maximum depth). The site fronts Hazeley Road between two houses; Littlebourne Lodge and Ravenhurst. Littlebourne house stands back from the road and is a relatively recent rebuilding of an historic house, which is reached via a long tree-lined drive with many mature specimens to the immediate south east of the site. The site shares a boundary with several houses and the Twyford Bowls and Lawn Tennis Club on Roman Road to the west. Twyford School and playing fields are to the north of the site. The nearest playing fields are opposite the site.

The site boundaries consist of a well kept native hedge along the road boundary with a metal field gate in the north west corner. The side boundaries comprise post and wire fencing, some hedging and many mature tree.

Levels on site fall away from the southern end to the north, with Hazeley Road.

The south-west corner of the application site falls within a Scheduled Monument where Roman remains have been recorded.

The site is not within Twyford Conservation Area but is within the South Downs National Park.

2. Relevant Planning History

None.

3. Proposal

The application is for a change of use of the land from agriculture to a sports playing field for Twyford School to comprise re-seeding, tree and hedgerow planting and insertion of a kissing gate from Hazeley Road.

4. Consultations

WCC Historic Environment Team

Archaeology

Although the current proposals seem relatively benign, some limited ground works are proposed, including the planting of new trees in the south of the site (to be retained as rough pasture). Although outside of the Scheduled area, such groundworks have the potential to affect buried archaeological remains due to their proximity to the Scheduled Monument and other archaeological remains known in the vicinity. Consequently, a programme of archaeological investigation and recording (in this instance a watching brief) is considered to form an appropriate strategy for mitigating the impacts of the proposed development on any surviving archaeological remains present within the application site. This can be secured through the attachment of suitable conditions (condition 3 & 4).

Historic Environment

The relevant historic environment considerations in this case are the effect of the proposals on the setting of nearby listed buildings and on the setting of the Twyford Conservation Area. The proposed site is sufficiently removed from the boundary of the Twyford Conservation Area, and any listed buildings not to cause any harm to their settings. There are no historic environment policy objections to the application.

Sport England South East Office

The new playing field could help address established playing pitch deficiencies identified by the school the proposal is supported by Sport England in principle. It will be necessary to assess the suitability of the site to accommodate pitches, it will be important that the ground conditions and pitch specification to prepare the site as a playing field are given careful consideration. Sport England recommends that a ground conditions assessment is undertaken by a sports turf specialist/agronomist who can recommend a scheme for preparing the playing fields to the required specification. The recommended scheme should then be implemented (condition 5 & 6)

Landscape - Trees

No objection subject to the development being carried out in accordance with the submitted Method Statement (John Parrington 7th May 2015) (condition 7).

Ian Elvin - Engine (Highways)

The Design and Access Statement explains the use of the site is intended to relieve the pressure on the existing playing facilities primarily during school term time. Following initial highway concerns, a Risk Assessment for the crossing of Hazeley Road has been submitted which seeks to address this issue. On the basis of this information I do not consider the proposal will cause sufficient demonstrable harm to successfully sustain a Highway reason for refusal on highway safety.

Drainage Engineer - Patrick Aust

The contours of the field are to remain unchanged so surface water run off should not be affected once the new grass has become established. There will always be a time between seeding and establishment when storm water run off could increase as little or no vegetation is present to slow it down, so perhaps it would be prudent to carry out the work in the Spring rather than Autumn.

Parish Council Consultee

No objection but grazing of the top field important and should remain. The site should not be used on Saturdays, no cricket pitch to be allowed. Also comment that concern over the risk to the children crossing the road and if there is some traffic management that could take place – road width reduction.

5. Representations

21 representations received including Parish Council above:

13 Objection:

Highways

- Concern about children crossing Hazeley Road;
- Additional parking on the surrounding roads particularly Hazeley Road and Roman Road;
- Parking should be contained within the school premises;
- Increase in traffic from visiting players and their supporters;

Neighbour amenity

- Noise from children playing sport close to property boundaries particularly at weekends;
- Overlooking of gardens along Roman Road;
- Loss of outlook associated with a change of use from agriculture to sports field;

Drainage

- The site floods.

Archaeology

- Potential disturbance of archaeological remains in situ.

Ecology

- Proposal would result in impact on wildlife on site;

Character and appearance of the area

- Change of use from pasture land to sports field will have a detrimental impact on visual amenity and the village quality of Twyford.

Other

- Negative impact of the development would have on house prices
- Future pressure for additional buildings on site to support the sporting use (changing rooms, toilets, shelter, lighting etc)

5 Support and 3 comments:

- Twyford School contribute to community life by offering facilities for community use;

- Not an expansion of the school but addressing a lack of sports grounds to ensure the school to remains successful and competitive.
- Noise from children playing sport is not unacceptable.
- Concerns about wildlife have been addressed.

6. Planning Policy

Applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory development plan in this area is the Winchester District Local Plan Rev (2006). The relevant policies to this application are set out in section 7, below.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Circular 2010

Government policy relating to National Parks is set out in English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 and The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was issued and came into effect on 27 March 2012. The Circular and NPPF confirm that National Parks have the highest status of protection and the NPPF states at paragraph 115 that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in the National Parks and that the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations and should also be given great weight in National Parks.

6.2 National Park Purposes

The two statutory purposes of the SDNP designation are:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of their areas;
- To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of their areas.

If there is a conflict between these two purposes, conservation takes precedence. There is also a duty to foster the economic and social well being of the local community in pursuit of these purposes.

6.3 Relationship of the Development Plan to the NPPF and Circular 2010

Paragraph 2 states that planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

On 11 February the Council received confirmation from the Planning Inspector dealing with the Council's new Local Plan that the Winchester Local Plan Part 1 - Joint Core Strategy (LPP1) is sound subject to the Council accepting a number of modifications recommended by him. On 20th March 2013 the Council formally adopted the plan incorporating the Inspector's changes.

The policies set out in the LPP1 now form part of the development plan of the District and therefore applications must be determined in accordance with this plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Some policies in the 2006 Local Plan remain saved, even though the LPP1 has been adopted, and they deal primarily with detailed matters or with development management issues and these also form part of the development plan. In due course these saved polices will be replaced by policies in Winchester Local Plan Part 2.

The policies relevant to this application from the Local Plan Part 1 are Policy DS1 Development Strategy and Principles, MTRA5 Major Commercial and Educational Establishments in the Countryside, CP19 development within the South Downs National Park which should be in keeping with the context and setting of the National Park, policy CP20 relates to the conservation of heritage and landscape character.

6.4 The South Downs Partnership Management Plan

The South Downs Partnership Management Plan (SDPMP) was adopted on 3 December 2013. It sets out a Vision and long term Outcomes for the National Park, as well as 5 year Policies and a continually updated Delivery Framework. The SDPMP is a material consideration in planning applications and has some weight pending adoption of the SDNP Local Plan.

The following Policies and Outcomes are of particular relevance to this case:

General Policy 1

Conserve and enhance the natural beauty and special qualities of the landscape and its setting, in ways that allow it to continue to evolve and become more resilient to the impacts of climate change and other pressures.

General Policy 9

7. The significance⁷ of the historic environment is protected from harm, new discoveries are sought and opportunities to reveal its significance are exploited.

General Policy 48

Support the towns and villages in and around the National Park to enhance their vital role as social and economic hubs.

General Policy 49

Maintain and improve access to a range of essential community services and facilities for communities in the National Park.

8. Planning Policy

The following policies of the Winchester District Local Plan Rev (2006) are relevant to this application:

- DP3 General Design Criteria
- DP4 Landscape And The Build Environment
- CE28 Sustainable Facilities
- HE1 Archaeology

9. Planning Assessment

Principle of development

The proposal is for the change in use of a parcel of agricultural/pasture land to a sports playing field.

There is no specific policy which relates to providing additional sports fields for schools, but it is considered this proposal is in line with the spirit of CP7 which seeks to provide

recreational land throughout the District and MTRA5 which supports continued development of educational establishments in the countryside. Similarly, saved policy CE28 supports the development of recreation facilities in the countryside provided the open and undeveloped nature of the countryside is protected and that the development does not require buildings or structures of a type harmful to the rural character of the area.

The proposal is considered to accord with these policies; assurances have been received that there are no plans for buildings on this site as none are required because these facilities are all present at the school site a 200m walk across the adjacent playing fields. Pupils, staff and visitors would use the existing facilities within the school's grounds and then walk to the site. The only structures proposed on site would be goal posts, which would be removed at the end of the school term, and pitch markings which are also temporary by nature.

The Design and Access Statement states that levels along the playing field will remain unchanged (although there is a fall in levels across the site) but that some seeding with a grass species mix suited to sports activities will take place. This excludes the portion of land to the rear of the site which will remain unaffected by the proposal. This is the section of site closest to the Roman Villa (scheduled monument) shown to be retained as rough grass.

LPP1 policy CP19 requires that development should be in keeping with the context and setting of the South Downs National Park. This site is on the very edge of the settlement boundary for Twyford with residential dwellings either side and sports fields and community facilities on the opposite side of Hazeley Road. In terms of context, the site is well related to the settlement of Twyford and does not appear isolated or remote. The very limited changes to the appearance of the field (erection of goal posts) will ensure that the development would not have a significant detrimental impact to the rural character and setting of the area.

The development is unlikely to have an impact on the scheduled Roman Villa to the south west corner of the site as the proposal relates to the northern part of the site outside the Scheduled area. However, given the proximity to this Scheduled area it is considered appropriate to impose a condition requiring a programme of archaeological investigation and recording (in this instance a watching brief) as an appropriate strategy for mitigating the impacts of the proposed development on any surviving archaeological remains present within the application site. The development will not have a detrimentally harmful impact on the landscape character and therefore it is considered that the proposal meets the terms of LPP1 policy CP20.

The site is not within the conservation area or in close proximity to Listed Buildings to warrant concern on Historic Environment grounds.

Impact on neighbour amenities

The Council has received assurances that the use of the site would be confined to games training during day light hours and School term time only (weekdays and Saturdays only). There is no proposal to use the site on Sunday or for competitive matches which might draw additional visitor (players and supporters) to the site. This can be secured by way of a 'hours of operation' condition (condition 8). Additional information in the form of an open letter from the School's Bursar states that competitive matches would be held closer to the school site where there is access to parking, changing facilities and refreshments.

All sporting activities would be supervised by staff and the site would be used for routine school games as the school's timetable allows, bearing in mind the existing sports field provision. Noise made by children enjoying outdoor play is not considered to be materially harmful to neighbour amenities and is limited to the duration of the games lesson of 30-60 minutes, during term times only.

There is significant screening around the site with mature trees along both side boundaries, set within a 12-15m buffer zone between the site's outer edge and the playing field. This landscape belt provides visual screening and filters views when trees are not in leaf. The nature of the sporting activity on site, with supervised school children during the school term, is unlikely to result in any material overlooking of neighbouring properties or loss of privacy.

Impact on character and appearance of the area

The site has a sense of enclosure and containment due to the surrounding hedgerows and mature trees along the boundaries and some within which lends it a parkland character. The site will remain grassed with the southern end retained as existing. It is possible that from within the site the sports playing field would appear more manicured with pitch markings, but no formal structures other than removable goal posts proposed. Existing hedgerow and trees would be retained and some additional tree planting proposed. The landscape plan (462-P-04 Rev B) indicates existing stock proof fence will be replaced by rabbit proof fencing, the difference usually in the size of the mesh. Details of the fencing can be controlled by condition (condition 9).

It is considered that the site is well screened, the trees and hedges retained and protected, and in this respect the character of the site retained. No formal buildings or structures are proposed other than goal posts which will be removed at the end of the school term. The 'change' relates to the physical activity on site rather than a visual change in character.

Highways

The Council's highways officer raised concerns about road crossing safety and parking. In response to these concerns the applicant has advised that children will access the site from the School grounds, crossing Hazeley Road at the point where there is an overlap of existing pavements and good sightlines. A supporting Risk Assessment suggests that high visibility jackets would be worn by supervising staff and sufficient staff accompanying each group of children using ratios set out in the Risk Assessment. Should a child be injured or require the toilet, the child would be escorted back by an adult. Both supervising staff and children would practice the "Walking Bus" procedure set out in the Risk Assessment. The intervisibility between drivers and pedestrians crossing the road complies with the normal minimum recommended stopping sight distance of 43 metres for a road subject to a 30 mph speed limit.

The supporting information suggests that the use of the site for additional sports playing fields will not lead to additional traffic along Hazeley Road and that the School has adequate parking, which would not change as part of this application. Furthermore, it is proposed that the site is used for games training and any interschool matches, which could give rise to additional vehicular traffic from visitors and adult spectators, would be held on the fields close to the School using the School's existing car parking, changing rooms and other facilities. Should there be an occasion when parents or spectators go to Littlebourne Field then they will be advised to use the school existing parking and walk the 200m across the School grounds to the site.

On the basis of this information, the highways officer has withdrawn his objection.

Ecology and trees

The trees and hedgerows on site are to be retained and will be protected by appropriate fencing in accordance with the Method Statement (John Parrington 7th May 2015). The use of the site as a sports playing field is considered a soft or benign use unlikely to have a negative impact on the surrounding trees.

An Ecology Report has been submitted in support of the application. It states that a phase 1 Habitat Survey has been undertaken and concludes that the site holds little floristic ecological value and does not provide suitable habitat for protected species such as reptiles. It identifies that it does have foraging potential for bats, barn owls and other birds which will be unaffected by the proposal as the surrounding trees and hedges are retained. The report states that there is evidence of badger activity on site and that this also will be unaffected by the proposal. The change in fence type, it states, is unlikely to prevent or exclude badgers from using the site to traverse and/or forage. One mechanism for ensuring this is Natural England's recommendation for using 'badger gates' within rabbit proof fencing, see condition 9.

The whole field will be subject to a Landscape Management Plan which will be drawn up landscape architect and ecologist and required by condition, to include badger gates above. This plan will include an appropriate cutting regime for both parts of site, the sports playing pitch area and the rough grassland to the south.

The ecology report concludes with a series of mitigation, wildlife enhancements and best practice advice, including bat and bird boxes around the site, mowing regime, which can be condition.

10. Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposal to change the use of a parcel of pasture land on the edge of Twyford's settlement boundary to a sports playing field is considered acceptable in policy terms subject to conditions relating to archaeology, trees and landscape and ecological management plan and enhancements. The proposal is unlikely to result in any detrimentally adverse impacts on neighbouring properties from noise or overlooking/loss of privacy.

11. Recommendation

It is recommended that the application be approved subject to the conditions set out below

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans:

Plan Type	Reference	Version	Date on Plan	Status
Plans - Additional Tree Plan			0.04.2015	Approved
Plans - site survey plan	52-P-03		2.02.2015	Approved
Pans - landscape plan	52-P-04-B		2.02.2015	Approved

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

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

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)./ To comply with Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

03. No development/demolition or site preparation shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological mitigation work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation that has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. No demolition/development or site preparation shall take place other than in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the LPA. The Written Scheme of Investigation shall include:

1. An assessment of significance and research questions
2. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording
3. Provision for post investigation assessment, reporting and dissemination
4. Provision to be made for deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation (archive)
5. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation.

Reason: To mitigate the effect of the development upon any heritage assets and to ensure that information regarding these heritage assets is preserved by record for future generations, in compliance with policy HE.1 of the Winchester District Local Plan Review.

04. Following completion of archaeological fieldwork a report will be produced in accordance with an approved programme including where appropriate post-excavation assessment, specialist analysis and reports and publication.

Reason: To ensure that evidence from the historic environment contributing to our knowledge and understanding of our past is captured and made publicly available, in compliance with policy HE.1 of the Winchester District Local Plan Review.

05. No development shall take place unless and until:

- a) A detailed assessment of ground conditions of the land proposed for the new playing field land as shown on drawing number 462P04 rev B shall be undertaken (including drainage and topography) to identify constraints which could affect playing field quality; and
- b) Based on the results of this assessment to be carried out pursuant to (a) above of this condition, a detailed scheme to ensure that the playing fields will be provided to an acceptable quality (including appropriate drainage where necessary) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England.

The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme within a timescale to be first approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England.

Reason: To ensure that site surveys are undertaken for new or replacement playing fields and that any ground condition constraints can be and are mitigated to ensure provision of an adequate quality playing field.

06. The playing field pitch shall be used for Outdoor Sport and for no other purpose (including without limitation any other purpose in Class D2 Use Classes Order 2005, or in

any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification).

Reason: To protect the playing field from loss and/or damage, to maintain the quality of and secure the safe use of sports pitch/es..

07. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the 'Sequence of Operations' as set out in the Arboricultural Method Statement (Enviro Plant, John Parrington, 7th May 2015). No deviation from that document unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the retention and long term protection of the trees and hedges on site in accordance with local plan policies CP20 and DP4.

08. The use of the sports playing field shall be restricted to school term time only, Saturday mornings between 9am and 12.30pm and at no time on Sundays or Bank Holidays, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: to protect the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties and in accordance with policy DP3.

09. No development shall take place until a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This document shall include details of the proposed fencing, including "badger gates" in appropriate locations and the seeding and cutting regime. Development shall be carried out in accordance with that approved plan.

Reason: To ensure that continuing enhancement and maintenance of the site for its proposed use and nature conservation.

10. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the mitigation/enhancement/best practice section of the KP Ecology Ltd report (dated 30th January 2015).

Reason: To secure an appropriate scheme of ecological mitigation and enhancement to accord with policy CP16.

11. No lighting, whether free standing or affixed to an existing structure, shall be provided on the site at any time.

Reasons: in the interests of the amenities of the locality and to accord with policy DP3.

Crime and Disorder Implications

It is considered that this planning application does not raise any crime and disorder implications.

Human Rights Implications

This planning application has been considered in light of statute and case law and any interference with an individual's human rights is considered to be proportionate to the aims sought to be realised.

Equalities Act 2010

Due regard, where relevant, has been taken of the National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equalities Act 2010.