

Our reference: COM521007657

Application number: 2023/0866

Application address: St Georges Hill Lawn Tennis Club, Warreners Lane, Weybridge, KT13 0LL

Name: Mr Crellin

Address: Longmoor East Road, Weybridge, Surrey, KT13 0LD

Comment type: You object to the planning application

Date of comment: 02 Jun 2023

Comment: We live in East Road, in close proximity to the Applicant tennis club and are long term members of the club. We do not wish to prevent the club from improving its offering to members. However, that can only be on terms that there is no diminution in the use, enjoyment and amenity values of our property and others in East Road and beyond, adjoining the Applicant's property. The residents of St. George's Hill, including East Road, have long established amenity value in their properties. Presently, we normally hear only occasional vehicles passing, contractors collecting garbage twice weekly, the sound of gardening equipment in use and birdsong. We enjoy very quiet use of our houses and equally quiet use of our gardens. We socialise regularly in our gardens whenever the weather permits, and cannot countenance any loss of such amenity, whether from noise or light pollution or any other factor emanating from the proposed development and use of three padel courts.

This application is for three courts to be used for approximately 14 hours a day, virtually every day of the year. Padel is undoubtedly an extremely noisy, fast and furious game. The sound a padel bat makes on contact with the ball, and the ball makes rebounding off the walls of the court, is very, very loud, and staccato and travels a considerable distance to which is added the noise of the excited and competitive players themselves.

The Applicant has employed an expert to report on sound emissions, who appears to say, having tested at the gates of neighbouring property- at the busiest times of day for vehicular traffic, it seems- that there is no more sound emission likely from the use of the courts than those neighbouring properties already experience. Sounds are cumulative, and additional sound audible at our boundaries is unreasonable.

The expert's test comparison appears to be of one court in use. The application is for three courts to be very heavily used many hours a day, the noise will be three times that of a single court at a rate of probably a thousand or more bat/ball "clacks" and a higher number of ball on wall sounds per hour of use. If such never ending use is audible in any neighbouring garden, or worse still the house on such land, that is unreasonable and a substantial interference with use, enjoyment and amenity value of the properties concerned.

Experts, even acting in good faith, can be wrong. They are, of course, paid to put the best blush they can on their client's case.

Any risk of damage to or loss of amenity value to neighbouring property is manifestly unreasonable. If the Applicant is so sure that there will be no such loss or damage to neighbouring properties, it will agree to conditions being imposed on any grant of planning consent. Those conditions must be cogent, strictly and clearly worded, and fully and undoubtedly enforceable in event of breach.

As to noise, something like:

"No noise shall be emitted or emanate from the courts at any time following construction so as to be audible at all beyond any existing boundary of the Applicant's property as presently owned

and of which the application site forms part.

As to light, the roof structure proposed is some form of opaque material, not an enclosed roof, likely to release sound, but, more importantly, probably allowing a mushroom of light into the sky. That is unreasonable on any test.

Whilst the glass walls clearly emit light, that can perhaps be fully screened, (another suggested condition) but if there is any risk of emission of light reaching neighbouring properties, that is again unreasonable. If this problem cannot be prevented, then use of the courts outside daylight hours (but not before 8am) should be prohibited. Alternatively an absolute condition that no light shall at any time emanate from the site during construction or the courts when in use which is or can be visible beyond any existing boundary of the property as presently owned by the Applicant.

Of course, it would, overall, be better to reposition the site further away from neighbours to reduce these unacceptable risks.

It is also clear that those who write to support this application do so safe in the knowledge that their own home cannot be affected, as they do not live in proximity to the application site. Additionally, the number of supporters of the application represent only a very small proportion of the adult members of the club, so it seems this application is not widely supported in the club itself.

Finally, there should be a prohibition on the holding of padel events of any kind which involve the attendance of spectators.

This application should be refused, unless there are clear and fully enforceable safeguards for the amenity value of all neighbouring properties.