

Application:	2024/1396
Case officer:	Harvey Moodley
Proposal:	Refurbishment of clubhouse comprising internal alterations, ramp access to main entrance, solar panels, outdoor terrace area, associated parking and alterations to fenestration and finish following demolition of detached garage.
Location:	Surbiton Hockey Club Sugden Road Thames Ditton Surrey KT7 0AE
Ward:	Long Ditton Ward
Applicant:	Mrs Carey
Agent:	Myles Taylor

Report

Representations: One letter of observation received which can be summarised as follows:

- Surbiton Hockey Club is a large, successful hockey club which requires improved facilities.
- Health and fitness benefits of hockey.
- Attend the Club throughout the season.

One letter of support received which can be summarised as follows:

- Supports many young people in the area.
- Provision of better facilities.
- Car park design an improvement.

Description

1. The application site relates to Surbiton Hockey Club on the southern side of Sugden Road in Thames Ditton. The site contains a detached two-storey clubhouse, a car park and three all-weather hockey pitches.

Constraints

2. The following constraints are of relevance:
 - Green Belt.
 - Tree Preservation Order.
 - Elmbridge Owned Land.

Policy

3. In addition to the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance, the following local policies and guidance are relevant to the determination of this application:
 - Core Strategy 2011
 - CS8 – Thames Ditton, Long Ditton, Hinchley Wood and Weston Green
 - CS16 – Social and Community Infrastructure
 - CS17 – Local Character, Density and Design
 - CS25 – Travel and Accessibility

- Development Management Plan 2015
 - DM1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development
 - DM2 – Design and amenity
 - DM7 – Access and parking
 - DM18 – Green Belt (development of existing buildings)

- Design and Character SPD 2012
 - Companion Guide: The character of Elmbridge (an overview)
 - Companion Guide: Thames Ditton, Long Ditton, Hinchley Wood and Weston Green

- Parking SPD 2020

Relevant planning history

4. Planning history:

Reference	Description	Decision
2024/0318	Replacement scoreboard and additional digital scoreboard.	Granted
2023/3531	Raised spectator seating area with associated changing facilities and storage at the ground floor (148sqm).	Granted
2022/2241	Confirmation of Compliance with Condition: 9 (Programme of Archaeological Work) of planning permission 2021/3860	Granted
2021/3861	Variation of Condition: 2 (Approved Plans) of planning permission 2018/3320 (Raised spectator seating area with undercroft storage containers) to alter wall design of storage containers.	Granted
2021/3860	Half training hockey pitch and alterations to existing overflow carpark.	Granted
2018/3320	Raised spectator seating area with undercroft storage containers.	Granted
2018/0188	Retention of marquee (108 sqm) for leisure purposes	Refused
2017/3924	Retrospective application for 3 storage containers.	Refused
2017/3922	Retrospective application for a single-storey outbuilding.	Granted
2012/2532	Single storey changing room block (239sqm) following demolition of existing block (153sqm)	Granted
2011/8414	14.85 metre high monopole with 3 x Vodafone and 3 x O2 antennas, 2 radio equipment cabinets and ancillary works in an enclosure	Refused
2011/0296	18 metre high monopole with 3 x Vodafone and 3 x O2 antennas, 2 radio equipment cabinets and ancillary works in an enclosure of up to 3 metre high	Refused
2010/1784	Replacement all weather hockey pitch, new fencing and 8 x 15m flood lights	Granted
2010/1306	Replacement all weather hockey pitch and new fencing	Granted
2008/0009	Variation of condition of 5 planning permission 1989/0281 (Installation of artificial grass playing area with 3 metre (10') high chain link fenced surround and eight floodlights on 15.2 metre (50') high poles) to allow extended hours of floodlighting operation to 22.00 Monday to Saturday	Refused
2002/1263	Installation of height barrier across entrance to sports ground and public footpath	Granted
2000/0149	Prior notification to carry out the following permitted development 15 metre mast with antennae transmission dishes floodlights and equipment cabin following removal of existing floodlight column	Raise No Objection

Proposal

5. The application seeks planning permission for the refurbishment of the clubhouse comprising internal alterations, ramp access to main entrance, solar panels, outdoor terrace area, associated parking and alterations to fenestration and finish following demolition of detached garage.

Consultations

6. Elmbridge Asset Management – Confirmed that the applicant may need landlord's consent under the terms of the lease.
7. Elmbridge Greenspaces – No comments received.
8. Elmbridge Tree Officer – No objection.
9. Sport England – No objection.

Positive and proactive engagement

10. The revised National Planning Policy Framework requires local planning authorities to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner to resolve problems before the application is submitted and to foster the delivery of sustainable development. This requirement is met within Elmbridge through the availability of pre-application advice.
11. Pre-application advice was sought prior to the submission of this application. Concern was raised with regard to the impact of the extensions and proposed new building/dome upon the openness of the Green Belt. The current application differs from the pre-application scheme through removing the extensions and building/dome.

Planning considerations

12. The main planning considerations in the determination of this application are:
 - The principle of the development within the Green Belt.
 - The design of the proposal and the impact upon the host building, the character of the area and the street scene.
 - The impact upon the amenity of neighbouring properties.
 - Highways and parking.
 - Very special circumstances and the planning balance.

The principle of the development within the Green Belt.

13. Paragraph 142 of the revised NPPF states:

'The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.'

14. Paragraph 143 sets out that 'Green Belt serves five purposes:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

15. Paragraph 152 of the NPPF sets out that:

"Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances."

16. Paragraph 153 of the NPPF goes on to state that:

"When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations."

17. The NPPF sets out a list of exceptions that are not considered to be inappropriate development in paragraph 154. This includes exception c) which allows extensions or alterations of a building are permitted provided that they do not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.

18. Policy DM18 of the Development Management Plan 2015 is in line with the NPPF and states that support will be given to proposals within the Green Belt provided that they do not result in an increase beyond 25% in volume and footprint over and above the original building.

19. In this case, as per the pre-application advice provided, it is clear based on the planning history of the site that the clubhouse has been extended significantly in the past meaning the 25% footprint and volume allowances have already been exceeded. Therefore, any further enlargements would be considered to be disproportionate additions that constitute inappropriate development.

20. In this case, the majority of the development comprises refurbishment of the existing clubhouse which includes alterations to the fenestration and external finish which would all be confined within the extent of the existing building in order to ensure there is no increased impact upon the openness of the Green Belt.

21. However, the application also proposes an increase in the size of the external terrace area which would feature a footprint of approximately 155m², a substantial increase over the existing, relatively modest terrace. The terrace would also be raised with a height of 0.4m, thereby increasing its visual prominence. The proposed terrace would also feature formalised external seating arrangements, increasing the intensity of its use. It is commonly accepted when considering

development proposals in the Green Belt that the intensification of the use of activities on land constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

22. Therefore, given the previous extensions to the clubhouse combined with the excessively large terrace area and associated increase in the intensity of the use of the land, unacceptable harm to the openness of the Green Belt would occur and the proposal comprises inappropriate development. The principle is therefore found to be unacceptable.
23. It is noted that residential parking spaces are proposed which would serve the existing ancillary accommodation within the first floor of the clubhouse. A condition should be imposed if permission is granted to confirm that this accommodation should continue to be occupied as ancillary to the hockey club as opposed to independent residential units.

The design of the proposal and the impact upon host building, the character of the area and the street scene.

24. Policy CS17 of the Core Strategy 2011 stipulates that new development should deliver high quality, inclusive sustainable design which maximises the efficient use of urban land integrating sensitively with the local townscape, landscape and heritage assets. Policy DM2 of the Development Management Plan 2015 requires all new development to be high quality design.
25. The proposed refurbishment of the clubhouse would bring it up to modern standards in terms of its appearance. Other than the terrace, increases to the size of the building are not proposed so there is no concern regarding scale and design of any extensions. The use of timber cladding, white render, aluminium grey doors and windows would all be appropriate materials. Vertical timber cladding would be used as per the pre-application advice. The terrace would be comprised of timber decking which would also be appropriate. Given the siting of the clubhouse, there would be no public views of the proposal so there is no concern regarding the impact upon the street scene of Sugden Road. Overall, the alterations to the clubhouse are considered to respect local character in accordance with Policies CS17 and DM2.

The impact upon the amenity of neighbouring properties.

26. Policy DM2 – Design and Amenity of the Development Management Plan 2015 states that to protect the amenity of adjoining and potential occupiers and users, development proposals should be designed to offer appropriate outlook and provide adequate levels of daylight, sunlight and privacy.
27. Due to the nature of the development, there would be no adverse impact upon neighbours in terms of light or outlook given that the scale of the building would not be extended. A raised terrace is proposed which can often have the potential to impact neighbours in terms of privacy however in this case it would be set to the south of the clubhouse away from the closest neighbours so there is no concern in this regard. Any noise is likely to be comparable to the existing clubhouse. The proposal would therefore accord with Policy DM2.

Highways and parking.

28. Policy DM7 states that parking provision should be appropriate to the development and not result in an increase in on-street parking stress. Policy DM7 states that parking provision should be appropriate to the development and not result in an increase in on-street parking stress. Furthermore, layout and siting of accesses should be acceptable in terms of amenity, capacity, safety, pollution, noise and visual impact whilst the proposal should minimise the impact of vehicle and traffic nuisance, particularly in residential areas.
29. The proposed development would not result in any additional impact of concern upon the local highway network given that it comprises primarily refurbishment to the existing clubhouse. Some additional car parking spaces are proposed however – three staff spaces and two residential spaces which would serve the existing ancillary accommodation. The Council's Parking SPD sets out that car parking spaces should measure 2.5m x 5m. In this case, the residential spaces would comply although the staff spaces would measure 2.4m in width. However there is no concern given that the shortfall is minor and there would be sufficient space to the north side of these spaces.

Very special circumstances and the planning balance.

30. As per the principle considerations set out above, para. 152 of the NPPF sets out that "Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances."
31. In this case, it is accepted that the level of harm arising from the terrace is relatively low given its limited height. There are benefits to the proposal in the form of improvements to an existing social/community sports facility that also runs hockey teams which perform to a very high professional sporting level. These benefits are considered to constitute very special circumstances. The harm arising from the additional footprint of the terrace along with the previous disproportionate additions are therefore outweighed by the benefits.

Matters raised in representations

32. None to address.

Conclusion

33. On the basis of the above, and in light of any other material considerations, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with the development plan. Accordingly, the recommendation is to grant permission.

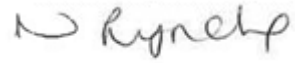
The proposed development does not require a CIL payment.

Elmbridge Borough Council

Issuing of planning decisions under scheme of delegation,
adopted May 2023.

Case officer: Harvey Moodley

Recommendation agreed:



Natalie Lynch
Team Leader

for Strategic Director
Date: 08 August 2024