



Development and Conservation,
North Hertfordshire District Council,
PO Box 10613,
Nottingham,
NG6 6DH

Date: 28th January 2026
Our ref: 25/010/A/mc
Your ref:

Dear Sirs

**RE: EXTENSION OF EXISTING COVERED DRIVING RANGE AT BARKWAY PARK
GOLF CLUB NUTHAMPSTEAD ROAD, ROYSTON. SG8 8EN**

Please be advised that we have, today, lodged a Planning Application for the above scheme using the Planning Portal. For the sake of clarity, the submitted application comprises the following information:

- This Covering Letter;
- The Application Form and Certificates;
- The following Architectural Drawings:
 - 25/010/A/001 A – Location Plan
 - 25/010/A/002 A – EXISTING – Block Plan
 - 25/010/A/003 A – PROPOSED – Block Plan
 - 25/010/A/004 – EXISTING – Plans, Indicative Sections & Elevations
 - 25/010/A/005 B – PROPOSED – Plans, Indicative Sections & Elevations
 - 25/010/A/006 – HABITATS
- Small Sites Metric Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool

The application fee of £2,437 has been paid directly to the Planning Portal and will be forwarded to you in due course.

Design, Access and Planning Statement

Introduction

This Design, Access and Planning Statement (the Statement) has been prepared to support a Full Planning Application for the extension of the existing covered driving range at Barkway Park Golf Club. The proposals seek to extend the existing facility to provide 18 covered driving bays, utilising a timber-framed structure with timber-effect cladding and a mono-pitched roof that reflects the existing roof form. The proposal enhances the club's practice facilities and addresses year-round usability constraints associated with the current layout.

The Statement explains the design rationale, access considerations and the planning policy context that supports the development, including relevant North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2011–2031) policies and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

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Site and Context

Barkway Park Golf Club is an established 18-hole golf course located near Barkway in North Hertfordshire, set within rural countryside. The golf course was designed by Vivian Saunders and opened in 1992, forming a key leisure and sporting facility in the area. It comprises wide fairways, greens, clubhouse amenities and a driving range serving both members and visitors.

The existing drive range comprises a single storey, rendered block building with mono-pitched metal roof. To the south of this structure lie open grassed areas currently used for driving range activities, but these areas are largely unusable during winter months due to poor ground conditions.

Proposal Overview

The current proposals comprise:

- Extension of the existing driving range building to provide a total of 18 covered bays with artificial turf mats, addressing seasonal usability limitations.
- Timber framed construction with timber-effect cladding externally and a mono-pitched felt roof reflecting the existing roof architecture, ensuring visual continuity and appropriate scale.
- The four bays at each end of the range will be angled inward to improve safety and ensure golf balls are contained within the driving range area.

The proposed extension remains a modest enlargement of an existing sporting facility, enhancing the overall quality and utility of the driving range while maintaining its character.

Design Approach

The extension has been designed to respect the character and form of the existing building. Key design principles include:

- Material continuity: By adopting timber and felt roofing to complement the existing structure, the proposal maintains architectural coherence and a rural aesthetic.
- Appropriate scale and massing: The extension continues the existing form and scale of the building and does not overwhelm the surrounding landscape.
- Functionality: The bay layout maximises usage efficiency and ensures safety through bay orientation.

Access and Movement

Vehicular access to the driving range will continue via the existing access arrangements serving the golf club.

Pedestrian access within the site remains unchanged, with clear internal circulation to the range bays from the clubhouse and car park.

It is not anticipated that the proposal will generate significant additional traffic beyond existing use of the facility.

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Planning Policy Context - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF is a material consideration and emphasises the role of planning in facilitating healthy and inclusive communities. Specifically:

- Paragraph 103 (Open space, sport and recreation): The planning system should enable access to high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation, and policies should be based on up-to-date assessments of local need. Proposals that enhance such facilities are encouraged.
- Paragraph 104: Where existing sports and recreation facilities are retained or enhanced, this supports community well-being and the provision of healthy lifestyles.

The extension represents the enhancement of an established sport facility, improving accessibility and year-round usability.

Planning Policy Assessment - Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the site comprises the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031 (adopted November 2022) and the Barkway and Nuthampstead Neighbourhood Plan.

Planning Policy Assessment - North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2011–2031)

Policy SP1 – Sustainable Development

Policy SP1 sets out the Council's overarching approach to sustainable development, requiring proposals to contribute positively to economic, social and environmental objectives.

Assessment:

The proposal supports social sustainability by enhancing an established recreational facility and enabling year-round participation in sport. The development is modest in scale, located within an existing developed area of the golf club, and does not result in unacceptable environmental impacts. The proposal is therefore consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

Policy SP10 – Healthy Communities

Policy SP10 supports development that provides or enhances facilities for sport and recreation, particularly where proposals contribute to healthier lifestyles and community wellbeing.

Assessment:

The proposed extension improves the quality and usability of existing sports facilities by providing covered driving range bays usable throughout the year. This represents a clear enhancement of recreational provision and aligns directly with the aims of Policy SP10. The proposal therefore complies with this policy.

Policy CGB1 – Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt

Policy CGB1 permits development in rural areas where it is appropriate in scale, respects the character of the countryside, and includes facilities for outdoor sport and recreation.

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Assessment:

The proposal constitutes an extension to an existing outdoor sports facility and is appropriate to its rural setting. The scale, form and materials are sympathetic to the existing building and do not adversely affect the open character of the countryside. The development therefore accords with Policy CGB1.

Policy D1 – Sustainable Design

Policy D1 requires development to achieve high standards of design, respond positively to local character, and ensure that proposals are visually appropriate in their context.

Assessment:

The extension reflects the existing building form through a mono-pitched roof and adopts timber-effect cladding appropriate to the rural setting. The scale and massing are subordinate to the wider golf course landscape. The proposal therefore complies with Policy D1.

Policy NE5 – Open Space Standards

Policy NE5 seeks to protect existing open space unless it can be demonstrated that the land is surplus to requirements or that alternative provision of equal or better quality is made.

Assessment:

The proposal does not result in the loss of public open space. The extension is located adjacent to an existing built structure within a private sports facility and improves the quality and functionality of recreational provision. The proposal therefore raises no conflict with Policy NE5.

Planning Policy Assessment - Barkway and Nuthampstead Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan supports the retention and enhancement of existing community and recreational facilities where proposals are sensitively designed and do not harm the rural character of the area.

Assessment:

The development enhances an established recreational facility, maintains the character of the golf club, and does not introduce inappropriate built form. The proposal is therefore consistent with the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Planning Policy Assessment - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) is a material consideration.

- Paragraph 103 supports access to high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation.
- Paragraph 104 encourages the retention and development of facilities that promote health and wellbeing.

Assessment:

The proposal represents the enhancement of an existing sports facility and improves year-round accessibility without material harm. It is therefore fully aligned with the objectives of the NPPF.

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Planning Policy Assessment - Planning Balance

The proposal accords with the Development Plan and relevant national policy. It enhances recreational provision, is appropriate to its rural context, and raises no material planning harm. There are no material considerations that indicate planning permission should be withheld.

Planning Policy Assessment - No Conflict Identified

<u>Policy</u>	<u>Policy Objective</u>	<u>Assessment Summary</u>	<u>Conflict Identified?</u>
SP1 Sustainable Development	To achieve sustainable development balancing social, environmental and economic objectives	The proposal enhances an existing recreational facility, supports year-round use, and results in no unacceptable environmental impacts	No conflict
SP10 Healthy Communities	To support development that enhances sport, leisure and community wellbeing	The extension improves the quality, accessibility and usability of an established sporting facility	No conflict
CGB1 Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt	To allow appropriate rural development including outdoor sport and recreation facilities	The proposal is an appropriate extension to an existing sports use, respects rural character and does not harm openness	No conflict
D1 Sustainable Design	To secure high-quality design responding positively to local character	The proposal reflects the existing building form and uses materials appropriate to the rural setting	No conflict
NE5 Open Space Standards	To protect existing open space and recreational land	The proposal does not result in the loss of public open space and enhances recreational provision	No conflict
Barkway & Nuthampstead Neighbourhood Plan	To retain and enhance community and recreational facilities	The proposal enhances an existing facility without harming local character	No conflict
NPPF (Paras 103 & 104)	To promote access to high-quality sport and recreation facilities	The proposal enhances existing facilities and supports health and wellbeing objectives	No conflict

Planning History and Precedent

A previous planning consent was granted (ref: 01/01100/1) in March 2002 for a single storey building providing 12 covered bays at the driving range. Although planning documents are not available online, the approval indicates a precedent for range development on this site.

An application for redevelopment of the practice range and adjacent field into a golf academy (ref: 09/01165/1CM) was refused in October 2009. Nonetheless, this confirms the long-standing intention to enhance practice facilities historically.

These historical consents demonstrate the club's operational history and a context for evolving driving range facilities.

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Summary and Conclusions

The proposed extension to the covered driving range at Barkway Park Golf Club:

- Supports enhanced sports provision, improving year-round usability and the quality of the facility;
- Respects local character and rural context through sensitive design, appropriate materials and scale;
- Aligns with national planning objectives set out in the NPPF to promote access to sport and recreation;
- Complies with local planning policies in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan which encourage the enhancement and retention of leisure and recreation facilities within the rural area.

Overall, we consider the proposal to be in accordance with the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework, and no policy conflict has been identified that would warrant refusal of planning permission.

On this basis, the proposal should be supported and recommended for approval.

We trust that the submitted information is sufficient to allow you to determine the application but, should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me using the details in this letter.

Yours faithfully



Mark Cotton BA (arch); Dip Arch. RIBA Chartered Architect

Director

For and on behalf of

architecture & design services ltd.

