DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Anne McDonald.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
18/01164/FP	Car park extension only. (Amended plans received 21/02/19)	Letchworth Tennis Club Muddy Lane Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 3TB

Submitted Plan Nos

01A 02A 03H 02

1.0 Policies

LP39	Leisure Uses

LP55	Car Parking Standards
LP8	Development in Towns
SECT12	Conserving and enhancing historic enviro
SECT7	Requiring Good Design
SECT8	Promoting Healthy Communities
XD1	Sustainable Design
XD3	Protecting Living Conditions
XHC1	Community Facilities
XHE1	Designated Heritage Assets

2.0 Site History

2.1 There is an extensive planning history for the site. Of relevance is:

- 00/01146/1 which granted permission for the construction of two court indoor tennis courts, function room, croquet lawn, store, 7 external floodlit tennis courts, 1 unlit court and 62 parking spaces.
- 02/01703/1 – granted permission for the same but with three indoor courts instead of two.
- Further extensions were then granted in 2006, 2008 and 2009 for additional sheds, veranda extension, water storage containers and side extension to extend to the changing rooms.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 The application has been advertised with site and press notices and individual neighbour letters.

3.2 HCC Highways – no objection subject to a condition requiring a construction management plan. Officer note – this was recommended when the application proposed the new courts, domes and larger car parking area. Given that this application is now reduced to a smaller car parking extension only, I consider that this condition is unreasonable and therefore an not recommending it.

3.3 Neighbour comments - Replies have been received from six separate households, with some submitting more than one reply. All of these objected to the application, but these comments were made when the application proposed new courts and the dome structure, which has now been deleted from the scheme. The neighbours have been consulted on the amended scheme which is an extension to the car park only. Two households have commented on this amended proposal. Key points raised include:

- there is no need to remove the evergreen oak. This tree should be kept and parking space no.1 lost;
- the other trees should be re-planted elsewhere, not just felled / lost;
- the area marked as existing planting is a joke. It is just a few brambles on a heap of soil. Proper planting is needed along here;
- if any lighting is installed in the car park this should be a low level;
- the one way system should be enforced by installing one-way spikes to stop cars driving our of the entrance. This is routinely disregarded by evening users making Muddy Lane a hazard to other users;
- we do not consider that the club has made out a sufficient case for the need for additional parking;
- we are pleased that the car park has been moved off our rear boundary. However, this will not do away with the pollution caused behind our back garden and the noise will be a nuisance to us;
- we consider there should be a barrier to stop cars from over spilling and parking on the land rear of our garden fence;
- we want the lighting to be condition to be controlled;
- we would like replacement planting on site for the trees to be removed.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 Letchworth Tennis and Croquet club is positioned on the east side of Muddy Lane, rear (south) of houses on Baldock Road. The site has a car parking area extending to the south, along the west side (Muddy Lane) boundary, with the courts, croquet lawn and buildings extending to the east and south. There is an existing lawn area to the immediate east of the existing car parking area, rear of numbers 3, 5 and 7 Baldock Road, which has a semi-mature row of trees planted along it next to the car park. The application site is on this land. There are photos in Anite.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 The application is seeking full planning permission for works to the car park only. This shows a new car parking area for 26 cars on a current grass area to the west of the Croquet lawn. Two car parking spaces from the existing car park would have to be lost

to allow the new access driveway into the new parking area. Two dead trees from the existing car parking area are to be removed and five new spaces are to be added to the main car park, and a small area next to the indoor courts is to be re-configured to gain four more spaces. In total the car park proposes 93 spaces.

4.3 **Key Issues**

Principle

4.3.1 The existing car park has 60 spaces. A DAS has been submitted with the application which sets out that club has grown in membership numbers in 2011 with total membership growing from 800 to 1040 and the number of children on coaching programmes growing from 250 to 390 and as a result, there is pressure on car parking at peak times. Peak times are stated to be late afternoon and evenings on week days and all day at weekends.

4.3.2 The agent has set out the existing facilities on site against the Council's car parking standards as contained in the SPD Vehicle Parking Provision. These are:

"Parking based on various uses on the site:
Tennis Courts 4 spaces per court 11 x 4 = 44
Squash Courts 4 spaces per court 2 x 4 = 8
Gym 1 space per 15m2 304 / 15 =20
Bowls 50 spaces per hectare 0.22 x 50 = 11
Cafe 1 space per 5m2 175/5 = 35
Treatment rooms 3 spaces per consulting room 2 x 3 = 6
Total: 124 spaces

Complex floor area: 2600m2 (some of which is internal courts)
You will be aware there are already on site cycle parking facilities.

4.3.3 The Council's car parking standards also require for one space per 10 staff on site in addition to the above. The club has not yet replied to let me know how many staff they have on site at a time, but this is immaterial as the above shows that based on the Council's car parking standards the club can have a maximum of 124 spaces without additional spaces for staff and the indoor complex area. The club has 60 spaces now and are proposing 93 with this application. The club sets out that at peak times parking is congested, and these figures demonstrates this. I therefore have no objection to the principle of this application, and even at 93 spaces, this is still well below the car parking standards of 124 spaces.

Impact

4.3.4 Overall, I consider that these additional spaces will have a minimal impact on the setting and appearance of the club and Conservation Area. I note that five youngish trees will have to be removed from the back edge of the existing car park to allow the access to and part of the new car parking area. A landscaping condition is recommended to ensure replacement planting on the site and for some screening of the extended parking area, so no objection is raised to this. The trees to be removed, whilst being attractive, are not magnificent specimens in their own right, and in my view are not so worthy of tree preservation order protection to keep them to prevent the car park extension works from occurring.

4.3.5 I note that neighbour's have expressed concern regarding impact from noise and disturbance and fumes from the car parking area. The size of the proposed car parking area has been significantly reduced in size, and pulled further off the neighbour's rear fence line. Whilst the new car parking area is closer to the neighbour's rear fence line than the existing car park, the new area is linked off and close to the existing parking area. Given that there will already be a degree of noise and fumes from the existing car park, I consider that the increased noise and fumes from the new parking area, when set against the noise and fumes from the existing area, will not be so obviously demonstrable to justify the refusal of this application for this reason. Therefore, whilst I have some degree of sympathy to neighbours for this concern, I cannot support this concern in this instance.

4.3.6 The landscaping condition will ensure that there is some increased planting along the west and north sides of the car park as a minimum. In time, this will grow up and offer a degree of protection in views from the neighbours.

Conditions

4.3.7 Neither the application form or plans set out what the surface of the car park is to be. The existing car park has a rolled shingle finish. I have therefore recommended a condition stating that if the surface of the car park is not to match the existing, then these details need to be submitted to and agreed by the Council.

4.3.8 The plans do not show any lighting for the car park area, either the existing area or the proposed area. Given the close proximity of the residential properties, I consider that this should be bollard lighting and only on for the times from dusk until the club closes. A condition is therefore recommended regarding this.

4.3.9 The agent has confirmed agreement regarding pre-commencement conditions for the lighting and landscaping.

4.4 **Conclusion**

4.4.1 No objection. Grant conditional permission subject to the following conditions:

5.0 **Recommendation**

5.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions**:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

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

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out wholly in accordance with the details specified in the application and supporting approved documents and plans listed above.

Reason:To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which form the basis of this grant of permission.

3. Before any development commences on site, full details of the landscaping is to be submitted to, and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. As a minimum, this landscaping is to include replacement planting for the trees to be removed from the existing car parking area, as well new trees / landscaping around the west and north boundaries of the new car parking area to visually screen this area from neighbours. The approved details are to be implemented on site in the first planting season following the commencement of the car park extension works.

   Reason - to ensure the site is adequately screened both to protect the setting and appearance of the Conservation Area and to protect views from the neighbouring occupiers.

4. Before any lighting is erected within either the existing or hereby approved car parking area, the details of the lighting must be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. Only the agreed details can be erected on site. Any lighting:

   - must be bollard style lighting;
   - can only be on for the hours from dusk to closing time of the club.

   Reason - to prevent light spill and impact on the neighbouring occupiers.

5. The surface treatment of the extended car parking area is not specified. If the new car park surface is not to match the existing car park, then the details of this must be submitted to,and agreed in writing by, the Local Planning Authority.

   Reason - visual impact on the setting and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. The Council acted proactively through positive engagement with the applicant during the determination process which led to improvements to the scheme. The Council has therefore acted proactively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraph 38) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Signed  Simon Ellis Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF

Date: 29 April 2019	