

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Thomas Howe.....

**APPLICATION
REFERENCE**

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF
DEVELOPMENT**

APPLICATION SITE

24/01585/FP

Installation of two 4m high metal fences

Pirton Sports And Social Club

Walnut Tree Road

Pirton

Hitchin

Hertfordshire

SG5 3PX

Submitted Plan Nos

2413-00 2413_00_A3 2413_01_A3 2413_02_A3

1.0 Policies

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 Extensive site history.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Neighbour Consultation** – None received.

3.2 **Parish Council** – No objection.

3.3 **Ecology** – *“Thank you for consulting me on the above application, I would have no ecological objection to the proposal.”*

3.4 **Archaeology** – *“I consider that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest.*

I therefore have no comment to make upon the proposal.”

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The application site comprises the sports fields off Walnut Tree Road, Pirton. The site is within the Green Belt.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Planning permission is sought for the extension of 2 No. 4m high metal fences to the rear of the existing football fields.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 The key issues for consideration are as follows:

- The principle of the development in the Green Belt.
- The acceptability of the design of the proposed development and its resultant impact on the character and appearance of the area.
- The impact that the proposed development would have on the living conditions of neighbouring properties.
- The impact that the proposed development would have on car parking provision in the area.
- The impact that the proposed development would have on the environment.

Impact on Green Belt:

4.3.2 Chapter 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) notes that great importance should be attached to the Green Belt and that the main aim of Green Belt policy is to keep land permanently open. Paragraph 152 states that *“Inappropriate*

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

- 4.3.3 Paragraph 154, b) of the NPPF states an exception for development in the green belt is *“the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it”*.
- 4.3.4 The site comprises playing fields associated with Pirton Sports and Social Club, and appears to be publicly available and open. Football pitches are marked out, and the plans indicate that the fences would be at the end of these pitches. Given their association with the pitches, I consider that the first matter within the exception is suitably met. Submitted information advises that the fences would be painted dark green and would measure approximately 4m in height. Whilst the fences would be relatively significant in height, given their relatively transparent appearance, their colour and their siting/use in relation to the playing fields, I do not consider that they would contribute unacceptable harm to the openness of the Green Belt.
- 4.3.5 Given the above, it is therefore considered that the proposed fencing are considered to be acceptable with regards to its relationship with the Green Belt and is therefore compliant with Chapter 13 of the NPPF and Policy SP5 of the North Herts Local Plan 2011-2031.

Design and Appearance:

- 4.3.6 Policy D1 of the Local Plan states that development will be granted provided the design of the development appropriately and positively responds to the site’s local context together with other criteria to encourage a positive and sustainable form of development. These policies are broadly consistent with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 4.3.7 The proposed fences would appear publicly within the sports fields and the surrounding area. Their green appearance and siting in relation to these facilities is considered to result in a suitably in keeping form of development that does not appear out of place or that contributes to harm to the visual amenities of the surrounding area. I consider it is prudent to retain the green colour of the fence by way of a condition to reduce visual harm in design terms, together with harm to the visual openness of the Green Belt.
- 4.3.8 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan and the core principles set out within Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The design and appearance are therefore acceptable.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties:

- 4.3.5 Policy D3 of the Local Plan permits development that does not result in unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and where necessary encourages the use of mitigation measures to reduce these impacts. This is generally reflected by the provisions within the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 4.3.6 The development is situated within an isolated part of the wider site associated with the sports club. I do not consider that the built form of the fences would result in unacceptable dominance or overshadowing for neighbouring occupiers given that they are set a significant distance from residential dwellings and would allow for light to pass

through. They may result in a very modest increase in the intensity of the use of these playing fields, resulting in noise impacts, however, when compared to existing, I do not consider that this would be unacceptable.

- 4.3.7 Given the above, it is considered that the proposed development would result in no unacceptable detrimental impact upon neighbouring occupiers and is therefore compliant with Policy D3 of the local plan and the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Environmental Implications:

- 4.3.8 The proposed development, by virtue of its limited scale in general terms together with the sustainable location would have no significant implications for the local environment in terms of carbon emissions and therefore would be generally in compliance with Section 14 of the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain:

- 4.3.9 The development falls under the de minimis exemption given that it would not impact > 25 square metres of onsite habitat, as defined under article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. Ecology provided representation and have no objections to the proposal in ecological terms.

Archaeological Impacts:

- 4.3.10 Archaeology have provided representation on the application, and have not raised any objections and have advised that the development is unlikely to impact upon archaeological assets on the site.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 The proposed development is considered acceptable and is considered to comply with the necessary provisions of the Local Plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework. Grant conditional permission.

4.5 **Alternative Options**

- 4.5.1 None applicable.

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. The fences hereby approved shall be finished in dark green paint to the posts and mesh and shall be retained in this condition unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of preserving the openness of the Green Belt and for ensuring the development holds an acceptable visual relationship with its surroundings, to comply with the provisions of Policies D1 and SP2 of the Local Plan 2011-2031 and Section 13 of the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain

This development is not subject to the statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan condition because it is considered exempt under the statutory exemptions (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>) or transitional arrangements in respect of the biodiversity gain condition.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance. 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  Shaun Greaves Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 23 October 2024	

