

DELEGATED

APP. NO	09/00538/FUL
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CASE OFFICER	TEAM LEADER	HOPS/P M	COND. COLOURING		COND. MONITORING	Comino CHECKED	POSTED
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Proposal: Two Storey Front Extension

Site Location: Ballards Gore Golf Club Ballards Gore Stambridge

Legal Agreement: NO

Plan Numbers/Letters/Supporting Statements

Zoning:MGB

Parish Council - Canewdon Parish Council

Officer Report:

Planning permission is sought to construct a two storey front extension.

Ballards Gore Golf Club is a 50ha site which includes an 18 holes golf course, practise areas, golf clubhouse and pro shop. The site is located on the northern side of Gore Road within an area designated as Metropolitan Green Belt within the Councils Local Plan. The club house is sited some 25m back from the highway. The frontage of the site is lined with mature trees and hedgerows which screen the views of the clubhouse from Gore Road. The site also contains an Oak tree subject to a Preservation Order (TPO 98/08).

To the west of the application site is Halesville Cottage a Grade II listed building. This is the first of 6 residential properties to the west of the site. To the east of the site is the Shepherd and Dog public house. There is a scattering of residential properties to the southern side of Gore Road and also Gore Farm. The surrounding area remains predominantly rural in character.

A fire at the Golf Club in 2008 destroyed approximately half of the building, which has since been demolished. The remaining part of the building is in need of internal refurbishment. A detached building (to the east of the site) used as the pro shop also remains on the site. Since the fire in October 2008 the Golf Club has continued to operate.

An application (09/00537/FUL) for the rebuild of the part of the building destroyed by fire was recently refused as it was considered that no evidence has been presented to sufficiently justify overriding the strong presumptions against inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The development by virtue of the raised ridge height and increase in floor area as a result of the two storey front, rear and side extensions and the incorporation of front and rear dormers was considered to result in a material and excessive increase in the height and bulk of the proposed building in comparison to the existing building (prior to the fire), adding further additional volume, mass and scale to an already extended building, which was considered to be inappropriate and harmful to the openness and character of the

Metropolitan Green Belt. Furthermore the increase in floor area, especially at first floor level gives rise to a potentially significant increase in the activity occurring at the site and as a result the intensity in the use of the Green Belt, which is considered to erode its established rural nature.

Notwithstanding that the application 09/00537/FUL has been refused the details of the rebuilt section of the building are also included within the plans for this (09/000538/FUL) application, although do not form part of the development description. It is only the front extension which has been considered in the determining of this application.

The relevant planning history for the site is as follows:

- ROC/805/76 – Erect clubhouse and layout 18 hole golf course
- ROC/751/82 – Erect prefabricated shop and office
- ROC/626/86 – Extend clubhouse facilities and provide residential accommodation
- ROC/281/88 – Extensions and alterations to roof of approved clubhouse
- 683/92/ROC- Single storey rear sun lounge and extension with balcony over and external spiral staircase

The initial 1976 application granted consent for a modest sized clubhouse which was somewhat cross like in shape, and from the plans appears to be symmetrical, with a maximum width of approximately 25.1m and a depth of 21.9m.

An application for a prefabricated shop and office in 1982 shows the clubhouse building to have been extended slightly on the eastern elevation and as such the original cross shaped building was no longer symmetrical. It is considered that between 1976 and 1982 a small extension of approximately 34.32m² was added to the original building.

Planning permission granted in 1986 (ROC/626/86) gave consent for substantial extensions and alterations to the clubhouse. The plans show a significant extension to the west elevation of the original clubhouse, front extensions and a rear extension. A first floor was also created which provided space for a two bed roomed flat. Approximate floor space additions equate to an additional 798.72m² of floor area being added to the original clubhouse. This includes the 34.32m² added to the building between 1976 and 1982. Further to the significant increase in floor area the height of the building was also increased over the materially greater width of the resultant building. The appearance of the clubhouse no longer resembled that of the original clubhouse which was approved in 1976.

The application in 1988 proposed changes to the 1986 application. It is not overly clear from the plans what development was intended, although it appears that the first floor accommodation was increased, creating two billiard rooms and relocating and increasing the size of the flatted accommodation to provide two bedrooms, living room, kitchen, bathroom and dining room. There are no noticeable alterations to the building as a result of this development in comparison to the 1986 application. The roof structure appears to remain the same in external visual appearance.

It would seem that by comparing the 1988 approved plans and the existing first floor plans that a further room (indicated as an office on plan PO3) has since been created.

An application in 1992 further extended the building by granting consent for a rear sun lounge with a balcony addition above. The sun lounge extension equated to a further 24m² of additional floor space.

With the addition of the sun lounge the total floor area increase equates to approximately 822.72m², which does not include the extension to the first floor accommodation, under the 1988 application, or the floor area which would be provided as a result of the introduction of the balcony. As such the planning history for the site between 1976 and 1988 shows that the original clubhouse has been significantly extended and altered.

The proposed extension

The proposed two storey front extension is sited on the western part of the building which was unaffected by the recent fire. The extension will be located in front of what is currently the entrance to the toilets. This front extension together with significant internal alterations will create one of two new entrances in to the clubhouse. This entrance will lead in to a considerably sized dining area. The design of the front extension replicates part of the building which can be seen on the rear elevation.

The proposed extension extends to a depth of 1.3m at ground floor out from the existing front face of the building. The extension is to a width of 9.45m up to eaves height and reaches a maximum ridge height of 8.5m. The roof of the extension is generously hipped in design but presents a significantly bulky appearance. It is considered that the bulky design and appearance of the proposed front extension increases the scale and mass of the building, which has already been extensively extended upon its original form.

The extension incorporates very little additional floor space to the ground floor, but does enable greater utilisation of the first floor space and increases this area by approximately 39.485m².

PPG2 provides Government advice with regard to the provision and safeguarding of Green Belts. There is a general presumption against inappropriate development within them. Such development should not be approved, except in very special circumstances (shown in paragraphs 3.2, 3.8 and 3.11 and 3.12 of PPG2).

Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. It is for the applicant to show why permission should be granted. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

One appropriate use within the Green Belt is for essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation. Essential facilities should be genuinely required for uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it. Possible examples of such facilities include small changing rooms or unobtrusive spectator accommodation for outdoor sport.

The design and access statement suggests that the clubhouse was accepted as being appropriate within the Green Belt. All of the facilities proposed within the replacement building are of a standard type seen within all golf clubs throughout the country. The statement goes on to say that none of the facilities proposed are excessive in size or floor space and the greater utilisation of floor space available within the roof minimises the overall requirement for development. The applicant believes that the proposed development can be considered to be essential facilities in relation to outdoor sport and recreation.

As far as the Council are aware the golf club functioned without cause for concern before the fire in 2008. No applications for extensions to the clubhouse were submitted to the Council before the fire took place. The application does not discuss or highlight why the proposed front extension is essential or necessary for the functioning of the club house. It is

appreciated that the business needs to remain competitive however no evidence has been submitted to indicate that the viability of the golf club is in doubt should this front extension not be allowed. Furthermore no very special circumstances have been provided to justify that the development is appropriate within the Green Belt such that the development would outweigh any harm that would be caused. The fact that the applicant considers that the front extension would create a distinguishable entrance and will add visual interest, does not outweigh the harm that would be caused to the Green Belt and justify allowing this development. As no very special circumstances have been highlighted and it is not considered by the Council that the extension proposed (in excess of those granted consent in 1986/1988) is essential for sport and recreation, the development is considered to be inappropriate. In addition the Council consider that the proposed bulky front extension increases the mass and bulk of the building to a degree which impacts detrimentally upon the openness of the Green Belt. It is also shown in relation to an internal layout with two foyers to the building which is suggestive of a dining and social activity rather than relating to the outdoor sport and recreation at the Golf Club.

PPG 17 specifies the need for Local Authorities to provide open space, sport and recreational facilities for local communities and opportunities should be taken to improve the value of existing facilities. Within rural areas development should be designed with great care and sensitivity to its rural location. PPG 17 states that planning permission should be granted in Green Belts for proposals to establish or to modernise essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, where the openness of the Green Belt is maintained. Development should be the minimum necessary and non essential facilities for example, additional function rooms or indoor leisure, should be treated as inappropriate development. Very special circumstances which outweigh the harm to the Green Belt will need to be demonstrated if such inappropriate development is to be permitted. It is considered that the proposed development does not accord with the above specifications of PPG17, as it is considered that the proposed front extension to the building will erode the openness of the Green Belt and the development proposed is not required essentially for the sport/leisure use.

Policy LT13 is specifically aimed towards golf courses and the extension of existing facilities. Applications with regard to golf courses will need to satisfy the criteria of policy LT13 to be considered appropriate under this policy. Parts i, ii v, and vi are not considered to be applicable for this particular application. Part iv of policy LT13 states that where built development is proposed, preference will be for the use of existing buildings and will be restricted to those facilities that are essentially required to serve the use of the land for golf. The design and access statement states that with minor extensions to improve facilities and meet modern requirements accords with Council policy. It has not been demonstrated why the increase in internal floor area and the front extension is essential development for the use of the land for golf. Part vii considers the likely traffic generated from the golf club. It is questionable whether the proposed extension would give rise to an increase in vehicle movements. However should the increase in the size of the clubhouse and the provision of additional floor area give rise to an increase in the number of visitors attending the club house, this may result in the increase in the activity on the site, additional vehicle movements and consequently intensifying the use of the Green Belt.

Trees

The site is subject to tree preservation order No.98/08. This tree is sited behind the pro shop building to the east of the site. Consultations with the arboriculturist has confirmed that the TPO tree is a safe distance from the proposed positioning of the front extension so that it will not be affected as a result of the development.

Representations:

Canewdon Parish Council - A reasonable scheme, but query disabled access to the first floor, does not seem to be any in the plans

Essex County Highways – De Minimis

Woodlands (Trees) - The site is subject to tree preservation order No.98/08.

The nearest tree subject of TPO is considered at a safe distance so as not to be affected directly or indirectly by development. The proposal is considered low intensity; it will not impact upon any retained or preserved tree.

Natural England - Advises that the proposals as presented have the potential to affect species protected under European or UK legislation. Natural England refers to Standing Advice on protected species at:

http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/regions/east_of_england/ourwork/standingadvice/default.aspx

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When considering our standing advice, we suggest that the planning authority considers the following points:-

-The October 2007 Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Ecological Scoping report identifies habitats suitable for great crested newts, and confirms their presence by a specifically targeted (but incomplete) survey.

- The Design and Access statement describes possible impacts to great crested newts at paragraph 5.11.2, and reports that an 'update to this report... is currently being prepared.'

- Whether sufficient information (survey and mitigation) is currently available to inform the validation and granting of planning permission in light of the requirements of PPS9 circular paragraph 98 "the survey should be completed and any necessary measures to protect the species should be in place, through conditions and/or planning obligations, before the permission is granted."

- Whether appropriate good practise guidelines have been described in the submission which would negate the requirement for a full survey.

Historic Buildings Advisor - The concern is whether the proposed front extensions would have a negative impact on the setting of the grade II listed Halesville Cottage, which is adjacent to the golf club. The buildings are separated by approximately 50m of car parking and a mature hedged boundary. The proposed front extensions would give the building more presence but they follow the traditional hierarchy of design, being slightly lower in height than the existing building. The forward projection is not excessive and overall, they provide a unity of design that was missing prior to the fire. Though the wide spans and roof materials are not traditional, they take precedent from the rear wings and the style of the club house.

I consider that the works are sufficiently distant and of such a scale and design not be harmful to the setting of the listed building and I therefore have no objection to the proposal.

Archaeological Advice - As it is very unlikely that any significant archaeological deposits will survive on site, no recommendations for archaeological investigations will be made on this application.

Essex Ecological Services - Do not appear to be any ecological issues associated with this application. It is noted that there are Great Crested Newts in the ponds but these should not be affected by the proposal providing that the construction activity is kept within the footprint of the building. The separate survey as described in the design and access statement should be reviewed before development.

Policies:

Rochford District Replacement Local Plan (2006)
LT1 LT13 SPD5

Conclusions:

Refuse

CONDITIONS OR REASONS FOR REFUSAL:

- 1 The Replacement Rochford Local Plan (2006) shows the site to be within the Metropolitan Green Belt. Planning permission will not be given, except in very special circumstances, for the construction of new buildings or for the change of use or extension of existing buildings (other than reasonable extensions to existing buildings, as defined in policies R2 and R5 of the Local Plan). Any development, which is permitted, shall be of a scale, design and siting, such that the appearance of the countryside is not impaired.

The proposal for the extension to this building does not fall into any of the categories defined in PPG 2 as appropriate development within the Green Belt and it is the opinion of the Local Planning Authority that no evidence has been presented to sufficiently justify overriding the strong presumptions against inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The development by virtue of the bulky front extension in design and form is considered to be inappropriate and harmful to the openness and character of the Metropolitan Green Belt. The development is considered to be contrary to PPG 2 and as such constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

Informative:

- 1 The applicants is hereby made aware that notwithstanding the information presented on the submitted plans, the determination of this application has only considered the front extension, as described in the development description and has not considered the rebuilding of the part of the clubhouse building that was damaged by fire.