

SECTION '2' – Applications meriting special consideration

Application No : 13/04122/FULL1

Ward:
Chislehurst

Address : Beaverwood Lodge Sports And Leisure
Club Beaverwood Road Chislehurst
BR7 6HF

OS Grid Ref: E: 545467 N: 170958

Applicant : Mr M Humphreys

Objections : YES

Description of Development:

Installation of 4x15m tall flood light masts housing 16 floodlights

Key designations:

Conservation Area: Chislehurst
Biggin Hill Safeguarding Birds
Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area
Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area
Green Belt
London City Airport Safeguarding
London City Airport Safeguarding
London City Airport Safeguarding Birds

Proposal

The proposal seeks permission to erect 4 floodlighting masts around the existing sports pitch. The masts will have a height of 15m and will each house 4 floodlights.

The proposed use of the floodlights will be from 1500 to 2130 on Mondays to Saturdays, and 1500 to 1900 on Sundays.

The use of the land will not be altered and will remain as a sports pitch for Ebbsfleet Utd Football Club.

There is a significant need for good quality floodlit grass pitches in the Borough. The pitches will be used by a range of groups/organisations and it is likely that the pitches will be used from 18:30pm to 20:30pm on a Tuesday and Thursday evening for training by Ebbsfleet Utd FC, a semi-professional team that plays in the Conference South.

Location

This site, which comprises of the sports pitches and pavilion for the Beaverwood Sports Club, is located on the eastern side of Beaverwood Road. The site is located within the Chislehurst Conservation Area and is also designated Green Belt land. The site is bound to the south by residential dwellings and is opposite the Beaverwood School for Girls which is on the western side of Beaverwood Road. To the north there is a Council depot and to the east is an agricultural site.

Comments from Local Residents

Nearby owners/occupiers were notified of the application and no representations were received.

The Chislehurst Society has commented that the height of the masts and their illumination may impact harmfully on the amenities of neighbouring residential properties.

Comments from Consultees

No Environmental Health objections are raised. The lights will have some impact on the residents nearby however due to the design and position of the lights, any impact would be acceptable.

Natural England has not assessed the proposal for impact on protected species. Natural England has stated that Local Planning Authorities should refer to the Standing Advice when assessing such applications, as this is a material consideration. The Local Authority should consider securing measures for biodiversity enhancements and landscaping enhancements should the Local authority be minded to grant permission.

The Advisory Panel for Conservation Areas did not inspect the application.

The Leisure and Culture department has not commented on the application.

Planning Considerations

The application falls to be determined in accordance with the following policies of the Unitary Development Plan:

- BE1 Design of New Development
- BE11 Conservation Areas
- G1 Green Belt
- NE5 Protected Species
- ER10 Light Pollution

London Plan

- 3.19 Sports Facilities
- 7.15 Reducing Noise and Enhancing Soundscapes
- 7.16 Green Belt

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is of relevance; Section 9 'Protecting Green Belt land' in particular. The NPPF advises Local Authorities to plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, including the provision of opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation (para. 81).

The Supplementary Planning Guidance for the Chislehurst Conservation Area is also a consideration.

Planning History

Planning permission was granted under ref. 12/00383 for a single storey detached building to provide function room/ bar, kitchen, changing rooms, toilets, gym and offices for a temporary period during redevelopment of the site with building permitted under ref. 11/00904.

Conclusions

The main issues for consideration in this case will be the impact of the floodlighting and columns on the openness and visual amenities of the Green Belt and the amenities of neighbouring residential properties (both in terms of any light spillage/glare and visual impact, and noise and disturbance arising from the increased use that the lights will facilitate). The impact on the Chislehurst Conservation Area and the impact on protected species are also considerations.

The application includes a Planning and Design Statement, and technical details of the proposed lighting. The Planning and Design Statement makes the following points in support of the application:

There is a significant shortage of floodlit grass pitches in Kent. The Beaverwood Club has a tennis court with floodlights which is currently not in use as it is housing temporary facilities pending the demolition and re-construction of the main clubhouse. The floodlights are not in a condition to be relocated and will be taken down in due course. A new set of lights is to be erected around one of the two football pitches. There is no community loss because the tennis court floodlights are no longer in use and these merely replace the existing lights and are a much higher specification in terms of light filter. The only house in view of the pitch is owned by the owner of the Beaverwood Club who has no objection to the proposal. Ebbsfleet Utd FC will run a series of community coaching days in the summer for local youngsters in Bromley. The pitch will also have new drainage and irrigation systems put in with rainwater being recycled to water the pitch and dug outs will be put in also so that the facility can be used for local prestige cup finals etc by youth teams in the area. Once this work is completed local teams will be able to use the pitches which means there will be around 120/150 users per week.

In support of the application, the Club has stated that the floodlighting is required to meet their training needs during winter months. Paragraph 89 of the NPPF advises that the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries is an exception to inappropriate development as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. The proposed floodlights could, in light of this guidance, be

considered an appropriate facility to support outdoor sport and recreation, and may therefore be considered as acceptable Green Belt development in principle. Whilst the lighting columns would, at 15m in height, result in a degree of harm to the openness and visual amenities of the Green Belt, Members will note that the proposal would provide improved training facilities for the sports club, allowing greater levels of use during the darker winter months. Therefore, whilst the proposal would give rise to a degree of actual harm to the openness and visual amenities of the Green Belt by virtue of the height and number of floodlighting columns proposed, it may be considered that the benefits that will arise would outweigh this harm, resulting in an improved use of open land for outdoor recreation and this may be considered to constitute the very special circumstances to allow planning permission to be granted. The provision of improved outdoor recreation is considered to comply with the NPPF and would therefore not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

The site lies within the Chislehurst Conservation Area. The Supplementary Planning Guidance for the Conservation Area does not provide specific guidance for floodlighting. It is considered that although the proposal would add four tall structures, they would be sited away from the important vistas of the Conservation Area and would therefore not impact detrimentally on its character. The public areas of the Conservation Area will not be altered as a result of the development and Members may consider that the structures would not create harm to local character that would warrant refusal of the application.

The applicant has offered to remove the existing tennis court floodlighting should this application be approved and this is considered to make a positive impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the character of the Conservation Area that would to some extent offset the harm caused by the proposed floodlights. Members are asked to take this into consideration when assessing the impact of the proposal.

Turning to the impact of the proposal on the amenities of neighbouring residents, the proposal will have a visual impact, again as a result of the height and number of floodlighting columns, and the illumination itself when the lights are on. This will particularly be the case for the dwellings to the south on Beaverwood Road which adjoin the site. The columns will however be relatively slender structures, and any visual impact will be limited due to the presence of a row of tall conifers to the south boundary of the site. With regard to the lighting, the application includes a technical specification, which has been reviewed by the Environmental Health Officer who has raised no technical objections. Having regard to this advice it is not expected that the lights will give rise to a significant loss of amenity through light spillage/glare, and the row of tall conifers will further block any light spillage from reaching the neighbouring residential properties. For this reason and having regard to the advice of the Environmental Health Officer, it is recommended that if Members are minded to grant planning permission for the lights, their use will start at 15:00 and cease at 21.30pm on Mondays to Saturdays and 19:00 on Sundays to safeguard the amenities of neighbouring residents.

With regard to any noise and disturbance arising from the use of the pitch, the floodlighting will facilitate its use over longer hours, particularly during winter

months. This will inevitably give rise to a degree of additional noise. As above, the requirement for the operation of the lights ceases at a reasonable hour will serve to control the use of the pitch and therefore the degree of noise arising.

The proposal is likely to create a degree of light spillage that would have an impact on bats. Although there are no roost sites in the locality, the line of conifers to the boundaries of the site is likely to provide a commuting route that has the potential to be disrupted by the presence of light within the site, at dusk particularly. The application has been submitted with an Environmental Protection Method Statement that states that the lighting will be most heavily used during winter months when bats are hibernating. There will be some overlap in the spring and autumn, and it is recognised that the use of the lights during any dusk period in the summer will have an impact on bats and their feeding habits; however it is considered that the proposal would not result in a significant harm, given the measures included to prevent light spillage along with a limit on hours of illumination.

Having had regard to the above it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in that it would not result in a significantly detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the Chislehurst Conservation Area, would not harm the openness and rural character of the Green Belt and would not impact harmfully on the amenities of neighbouring residential properties. The proposal is also not considered to result in a significant harm to protected species. It is therefore recommended that Members refuse planning permission.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on file ref. 13/04122, excluding exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: PERMISSION

Subject to the following conditions:

- 1 ACA01 Commencement of development within 3 yrs
 ACA01R A01 Reason 3 years
- 2 ACC07 Materials as set out in application
 ACC07R Reason C07
- 3 ACK01 Compliance with submitted plan

Reason: In order to comply with Policy BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan and in the interests of the visual amenities of the area.

- 4 The floodlighting hereby permitted shall not be used after 21:30hrs Monday to Saturdays or after 19:00hrs on Sundays, without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of the amenities of neighbouring residential properties, and to comply with Policy BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan.

- 5 The existing tennis court floodlighting shall be permanently removed within 3 months of the date of the permission hereby granted.

Reason: In the interest of the amenities of neighbouring residential properties, and to comply with Policy BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan.

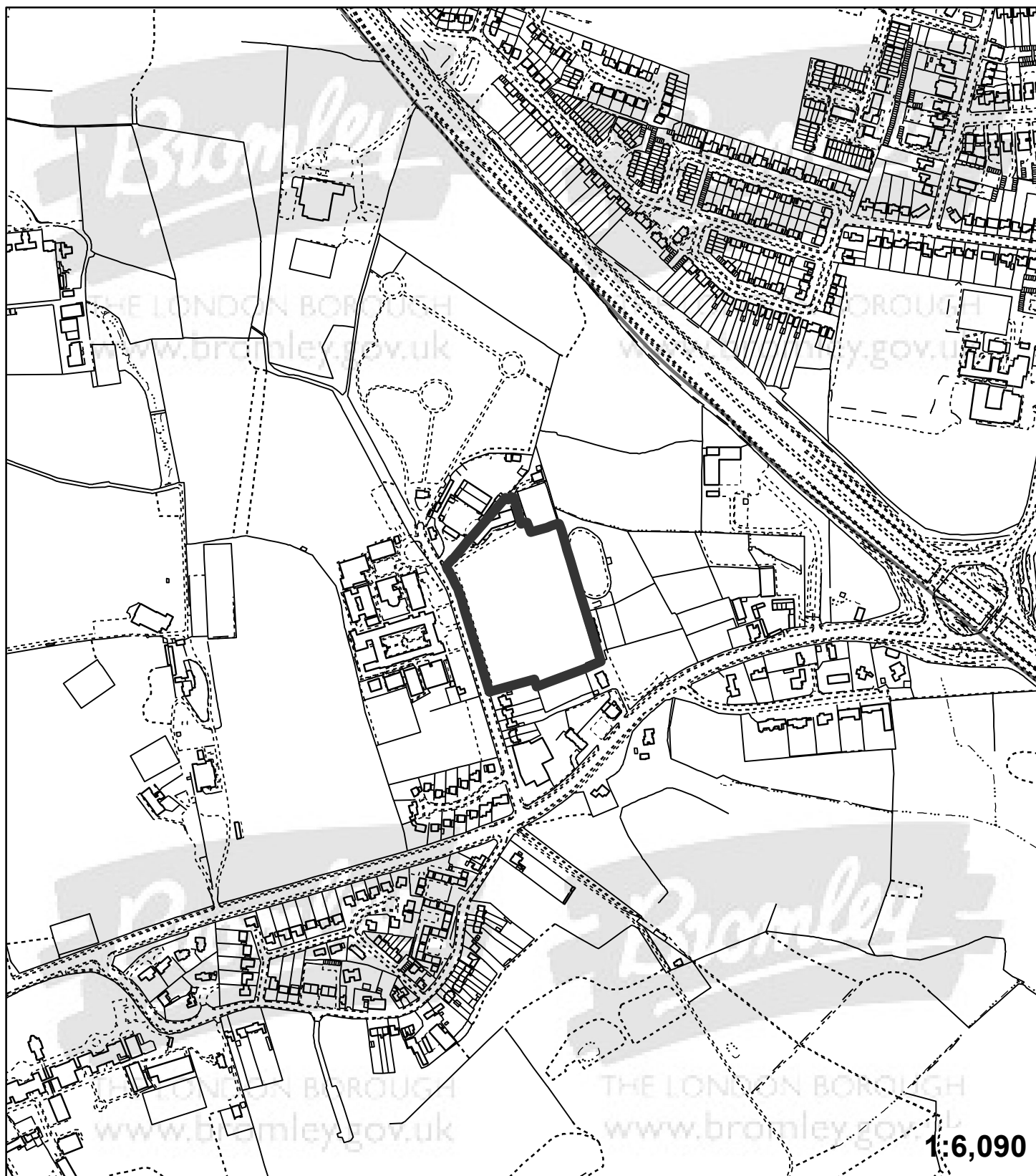
6 The floodlighting hereby permitted shall be Abacus AL5760 Challenger 1 floodlights. No other floodlighting type shall be installed without the prior approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of the amenities of neighbouring residential properties, and to comply with Policy BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan.

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Address: Beaverwood Lodge Sports And Leisure Club Beaverwood Road Chislehurst BR7 6HF

Proposal: Installation of 4x15m tall flood light masts housing 16 floodlights



"This plan is provided to identify the location of the site and should not be used to identify the extent of the application site"

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