

**Section '3' - Applications recommended for PERMISSION, APPROVAL or CONSENT**

**Application No :** 16/00064/FULL1

**Ward:**  
Farnborough And Crofton

**Address :** Recreation Ground Grasmere Avenue  
Orpington

**OS Grid Ref:** E: 543663 N: 165192

**Applicant :** Mr Mark Lambourne

**Objections :** NO

**Description of Development:**

Proposed two lane cricket nets in association with Locksbottom Cricket Club.

Key designations:

Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area  
London City Airport Safeguarding  
River Centre Line  
Sites of Interest for Nat. Conservation  
Smoke Control SCA 11  
Urban Open Space

**Proposal**

The site itself is situated on an area of Urban Open Space located to the north-east of Willow Walk, on land known as Farnborough Recreational Ground. The siting of the proposed development is to the north of the existing cricket pavilion, within close proximity to the playground and car parking area.

The proposal relates to the erection of a two lane, fully enclosed, cricket net measuring 30m in length and 9.3m in width. The nets will stand 3.6m in height and will be constructed of a mesh type material. Security gates are proposed to the end of the nets. The nets are proposed to enhance the training facilities available to Locksbottom Cricket Club to allow for an all year round training facility. The cricket nets will be accessed over the existing playing fields and no hard-standing is proposed.

**Consultations**

Nearby properties were consulted of the application however no local responses were forthcoming.

Highways - No objection

Thames Water - No Objection

## Drainage - No Objection

Environmental Health (Pollution) - The noise impact from the cricket nets is not considered to be significant given the distance from the neighbouring properties

Sport England - The proposal prejudices the use, or leads to the loss of use, of land being used as a playing field or has been used as a playing field in the last five years, as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 595). Sport England's policy is to oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or prejudice the use of, all/part of a playing field, unless one or more of the five exceptions stated in its policy apply.

As part of the assessment of this application, Sport England has sought the views of the National Governing Body for Cricket: the England Cricket Board (ECB). ECB comment that:

- This club has grown its membership particularly its junior section and the installation of new practice facilities is part of this continued development
- The design is compliant with ECB specification TS6 - Technical Requirements and Performance Specification for non-Turf Cricket Pitches and Guidance Notes for Provision and Installation of Non-Turf Cricket Pitches and Net-Cage Facilities. As this is an open site, we are pleased to see the club has allowed for security fencing.
- The ECB supports the application as it fits into the Grow and Sustain strategy for this area of Met Kent.

Having assessed the application, Sport England is satisfied that the proposed development meets the following Sport England Policy exception:

E2 - The proposed development is ancillary to the principal use of the site as a playing field or playing fields, and does not affect the quantity or quality of pitches or adversely affect their use.

This being the case, Sport England does not wish to raise an objection to this application. Sport England would also draw the Local Planning Authority's attention to ECB's support for this application.

## Planning Considerations

Policy G8  
Policy BE1  
Policy NE7  
Policy T3

With regard to this proposed development, The London Plan (2015) is also a material consideration, with reference to:

Policy 3.19 Sports Facilities  
Policy 5.3 Sustainable design and construction

Policy 5.13 Sustainable drainage

Policy 6.13 Parking

Policy 7.4 Local character

Policy 7.16 Green Belt

Policy 7.5 Public Realm

With regard to the National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 74 is also of particular note.

## **Planning History**

There is no relevant planning history with regard to this site.

## **Conclusions**

The site is located within an area of Urban Open Space, wherein there is a presumption against inappropriate development. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Urban Open Space and should not be approved unless in conformity with Policy G8 of the Unitary Development Plan.

Policy G8 of the Unitary Development Plan states that proposals for built development in areas as defined on the Proposals Map as Urban Open Space, will be permitted only under the following circumstances:

(i) the development is related to the existing use (in this context, neither residential nor indoor sports development will normally be regarded as being related to the existing use); or

(ii) the development is small scale and supports the outdoor recreational uses or children's play facilities on the site; or

(iii) any replacement buildings do not exceed the site coverage of the existing development on the site.

Where built development is involved; the Council will weigh any benefits being offered to the community, such as new recreational or employment opportunities, against a proposed loss of open space. In all cases, the scale, siting and size of the proposal should not unduly impair the open nature of the site.

The nature of the development is to enhance the outdoor recreational activities of the Urban Open Space with regard to Locksbottom Cricket Club that utilise the area on training and match days. Due to an increasing number of junior players joining the club, the Applicant wishes to replace an existing area of hardstanding which is currently used to practise bowling and batting.

The development relates to the existing use of the land as a cricket ground and is located within close proximity to the cricket pavilion, east of the recreational ground. The development is considered of a relatively small scale when compared to the size and scale of the site and will comprise of two joined cricket nets, 30m in length, 9.3m in width and 3.6m in height. In principle, the nature of the

development is considered compliant with policy G8 of the Unitary Development Plan which Members may find to be acceptable in that it supports the outdoor recreational use of the site, however this would be subject to the size, scale and design of the development.

Notwithstanding the principle of the development, the size and scale of the cricket nets would be prominent in terms of length and height when viewed from the east however they are to be located within a position close to the existing car parking area and cricket pavilion and will be viewed in tandem with the existing built development to the west of the recreation ground which mitigates this impact. The height of the structure has been reduced from that as submitted during pre-application negotiations, with the proposal now lying flush with the ground level - projecting to a maximum of 3.6m in height.

Some re-grading of the land is proposed in order for the cricket lanes to be level, however as the site as existing is relatively flat, the re-grading will see a reduction in ground levels by no more than 559mm at the furthest southern point, 331mm to the east and 260mm to the west. The banks which will be located around the perimeter of the cricket nets will be made on a 30 degree angle to a maximum height of 659mm. It is considered that due to the minor nature of the re-grading work and the size and scale of the recreation ground, the impact upon the metropolitan open land will be negligible and the openness of the site will be retained.

The security gates have been designed in order to protect the open nature of the site and retain views through to the open land due to their semi-opaque nature. Details of the management of the security gates will be reported verbally at committee. The nets are constructed of a mesh around a steel frame with an astro turf type material used as the flooring. If permission was to be forthcoming, the colouring of the mesh can be conditioned in order to mitigate the prominence of the structure within its open setting i.e. painted green. The nets as proposed are considered a prominent structure within the surrounding recreational ground however the nature of the materials allow for a degree of visibility to be maintained when viewing the recreation ground from the east of the site.

The proposed cricket lanes will be located at a considerable distance from neighbouring residential properties and there will be no adverse impacts in this regard. Environmental Health raise no objection to the noise from the cricket nets due to the distance from residential properties.

No highways objections have been forthcoming.

Having had regard to the above it was considered that the development in the manner proposed is acceptable in that it would provide an essential sporting facility which would not result in a significant loss of openness to the Urban Open Space nor impact detrimentally on the character of the area, residential amenity nor wider highways.

**RECOMMENDATION: PERMISSION**

**Subject to the following conditions:**

- 1 The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of 3 years, beginning with the date of this decision notice.**

**Reason: Section 91, Town and Country Planning Act 1990.**

- 2 Details of all external materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any work is commenced. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.**

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

- 3 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the plans approved under this planning permission unless previously agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

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

- 4 No floodlights or hardstanding (ie pathways) shall be installed or used in association with the development to which this permission relates without the prior approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

**Reason: In the interest of the amenities of nearby properties and the visual amenities of the area and to accord with Policies BE1 and G8 of the Unitary Development Plan.**