Examination – Note for Inspector

Note on Housing Site HSG 06 Land off Salmonds Lane West Caterham Playing Pitch Replacement Position

December 2019
The southern part of the site HSG06 comprises a playing field which is just over a hectare, with mature trees at the southern and eastern boundaries and scattered across the eastern section.

The more open section on the west side is used as a small football pitch, approximately 74m x 36m, which is approximately 7-a-side scale. It forms part of the grounds of the school\(^1\) which occupies the listed former NAAFI building. It is not publicly accessible and is surrounded by high fencing.

The pitch was not picked up in the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) audit. However, if it had been picked up it is notable that it would have been the smallest area to have been include in the PPS.

The degree of current usage as a pitch is unclear, but goalposts do not appear to be fixed, so it is likely that the space is multi-functional and pitch use is intermittent and depending on season/school priorities. The wider HSG06 site was submitted to the Council by the Croydon & District Education Trust, who own the site including the playing field. However, at this stage, it is not clear whether the school intend to remain on-site. Since the school building itself is excluded from the site boundary it may leave the option of the school continuing without the associated playing field.

The proposed modification at policy element II currently states the following: *II. In keeping with the heritage value of the site and the principles of the Conservation Area, any scheme should focus development primarily to the northern area of the site and a sympathetic design, scale and layout must be demonstrated in any application.*

Therefore, since the pitch area is on the southern part of the site which is not the focus of development, it may be the case that the pitch remains in place, or at the very least the area remains as undeveloped open space. This will be dependent both on the extent to which the above design principle is applied, and the future intentions of the school.

Nonetheless, as requested by the Inspector at EiP Hearing, the Council is requested to provide more clarity on necessary mitigation in the event of the pitch being lost to development.

At this stage, on a without prejudice basis, it is considered that this might best be achieved via modifications to the existing policy. Sport England advise there is no specific formula to calculate the quantum of area necessary to replace grass pitch areas with artificial surfaces – be it AGP\(^2\), 3g\(^3\), or MUGA\(^4\). Provisionally, and subject to Council approval, two modifications to the Policy are being considered. These are discussed in this paper on a ‘without prejudice’ basis.

More clarity could be added to the ‘Site Description’ section of the policy, with a sentence noting the presence of the pitch, such as *The southern part of the site comprises an area of private open space that has been used for a small football pitch and is associated with the school occupying the listed former NAAFI building*.\(^5\)

More clarity could also be added to the Policy section with a requirement such as the following: *Compensation to offset the loss of the existing pitch area should be equivalent in terms of quantity/quality, and will reflect any advice received from Sport England on appropriate requirements at the time of application*.

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1. OneSchool Global, Kenley Campus
2. Artificial Grass Pitch
3. 3\(^\text{rd}\) Generation pitch
4. Multi-Use Games Area

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