



Delegated Report

Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20221224

Location: Cascades Leisure Centre, Thong Lane, Gravesend DA12 4LG

Description: Request for a screening opinion in accordance with The Town and Country Planning Act (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 in respect of the demolition of the existing leisure centre and public house to provide a new build leisure centre (of a similar size to the existing) with community pool, training pool, leisure water, cafe, soft play, clip n climb facility, a six court sports hall, fitness suite, spin studio, 2 no. fitness studios and 2 no. squash courts

Applicant: Litchfields

Site Visit Date: Not required for a screening opinion

Introduction

Proposal

The proposed development according to the applicant's letter dated 24 October 2022 comprises the demolition of the existing Cascades Leisure Centre and public house at Thong Lane, Gravesend and the development of a new build leisure centre (of a similar size to the existing) with community pool, training pool, leisure water, café, soft play, 'clip n climb' facility, a six court sports hall, fitness suite, spin studio, 2 no. fitness studios and 2 no. squash courts.

The site plan shows the new leisure centre to be located on the existing car park to the south of the existing leisure centre. There will be a new car park provided in the same position as the existing building and additional spaces provided where there are currently tennis courts.

The existing play area will be retained and updated. The land to the south which is currently laid to grass will be use for outdoor fitness.

(Procedure note: The site plan scale bar is incorrect however the plan scales to the scale shown so it was accepted as valid).

Location of Development

The Site is located to the east of Gravesend and is approximately 3.77 ha in size. It comprises the existing two storey (12m) Cascades Leisure Centre building (c. 7,500 sq m); a public house (c. 200 sq m); grassed areas; an area of hardstanding making up a car park of 158 parking spaces; an internal access road; and a children's play park.

The Site sits 67m above sea level on a small flat plateau that previously served Gravesend Airport and latterly as RAF Gravesend. The site is minerally rich and sits on a high purity chalk bed close to the common clay and shale found at Shorne Wood and the sand and gravels around Green Lane. Existing vehicular access and egress to the Site is from two points on Thong Lane and a one-way route through the

Site. Thong Lane connects to the A2 arterial road to the south and Gravesend to the north. The Site is approximately 2.5km inland of the southern bank of the River Thames, some 35 km from Central London (to the west); and is close to Tilbury on the northern bank of the River Thames in Essex. The Site sits on the Urban/Rural boundary as well as being located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. Further north of the Site lies the village of Chalk, which adjoins the eastern edge of Gravesend. Immediately opposite the Site (on the western side of Thong Lane) is the Riverview Park neighbourhood of Gravesend which largely comprises detached and semi-detached residential properties of up to two storeys in height. Approximately 200m north of the Site are two residential properties (semi-detached) on the eastern side of Thong Lane.

Adjacent to the Site to the north is the Gravesend Golf Centre and the Gravesend Model Marine and Engineering Society Amusement Park Ride (a model railway). Immediately to the west is the Legends Sport Centre, which houses the Riverview Football Club and the Record Tennis Centres. To the south of the site is the Southern Valley Golf Club. Beyond these sport and leisure uses immediately surrounding the site, the area comprises farmland and woodland to the north, east and south of the Site, with the next neighbouring village, Shorne, approximately one mile to the south east.

Gravesend railway station is approximately three miles from the site (10 min journey by car), with services direct and high speed (HS1) services to London St Pancras International and other London stations. Two main bus routes (480 and 481) currently pass through the site, connecting Riverview Park with Gravesend Town Centre and onwards to Northfleet, Swanscombe, Greenhithe, Stone, Bluewater Shopping Centre and Dartford Town Centre.

The National Cycle Network Route 1 passes close to the south bank of the River Thames through Gravesend Town Centre to the north of the site whilst Route 177 passes parallel with the A2 arterial road to the south of the site.

The Lower Thames Crossing is a designated Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project but an application for the proposal has not yet been accepted by the Planning Inspectorate.

The site is located within an Area of Archaeological Notification and is adjacent to, but not within, the Higham Arable Farmland Landscape Character Area. It is also within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) of the Shorne and Ashenbank Woods SSSI which is approximately 800m south of the Site and the Thames Estuary and Marshes Ramsar site, located 1,700m to the north.

The nearest listed buildings to the site are the Grade II Listed Baynards Cottage and the Grade II Listed White Horse Cottage. There are no Locally Listed buildings in proximity to the Site.

The entire site is located within Flood Zone 1 (Low Probability) on the Environment Agency (EA) Flood Map for Planning.

EIA Regulations

In accordance with Part 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (As amended) ("the Regulations"), the development the subject of this screening request falls within Schedule 2 by reason of Part 10(b) in Column 1 for 'Urban Development' and exceeds the identified threshold for screening in Column 2 being development of more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwellinghouse development.

NB: The submitted covering letter states that the development falls within Part 10(b) of Schedule 2 as an 'urban development project' where the overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares however, the applicant has subsequently advised that the site is under 5ha and this is supported by the submitted plans.

Part 13 of Column 1 relates to Change and extensions. Part 13 (a) states:

Any change to or extension of development of a description listed in Schedule 1 (other than a change or extension falling within paragraph 24 of that Schedule) where that development is already authorised, executed or in the process of being executed.

The threshold in Column 2 states:

Either—

*(i) The development as changed or extended may have significant adverse effects on the environment; or
(ii) in relation to development of a description mentioned in a paragraph in Schedule 1 indicated below, the thresholds and criteria in column 2 of the paragraph of this table indicated below applied to the change or extension are met or exceeded.*

Therefore the proposal needs to be assessed with regard to (i) of Part 13.

Submitted Documents/Plans

Covering letter

Drawing no. 0802 (site plan)

Drawing no. 3929-ASP-B1-XX-DR-A-0801 (site location plan)

Relevant Planning History

20150264	Siting of a storage container.	Permitted	06.08.2015
20130687	Application for the prior approval of the 15 metre high Elara column with antennas with shroud along with additional cabinets and ancillary development.	Approved	09.09.2013
20090517	Installation of six new windows, new window/door and new fire escape doors in south elevation and three new windows and external staircase on north elevation.	Permitted	03.09.2009
20080989	Siting of a storage container adjacent to the railway sidings.	Permitted	07.01.2009
20050237	Application for determination pursuant to Part 24 Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 as to whether prior approval is required for erection of a 15 metre high mobile phone 'flagpole' incorporating three antenna and ancillary development.	Approved	22.04.2005
20050236	Application for determination pursuant to Part 24 Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)	Refused	22.04.2005

Order 1995 as to whether prior approval is required for erection of a 15 metre high mobile phone 'flagpole' incorporating one antenna and ancillary development (OPTION 1).

20050235	Application for determination pursuant to Part 24 Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 as to whether prior approval is required for erection of a 15 metre high mobile phone 'flagpole' incorporating one antenna and ancillary development. (OPTION 1)	Refused	22.04.2005
20050234	Application for determination pursuant to Part 24 Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 as to whether prior approval is required for the erection of a 15 metre high mobile phone 'flagpole' incorporating one antenna radio equipment housing and ancillary development.	Approved	22.04.2005
20050233	Application for determination pursuant to Part 24 Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 as to whether prior approval is required for the erection of a 15 metre high mobile phone 'flagpole', incorporating one antenna, radio equipment housing and ancillary development.	Approved	22.04.2005
20050232	Application for determination pursuant to Part 24 Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 as to whether prior approval is required for the erection of a 15 metre high mobile phone 'flagpole', incorporating one antenna, radio equipment housing and ancillary development. (OPTION 1)	Refused	22.04.2005
19990757	Installation of a 15m high monopole supporting 3 no. sector antennae and 4 no. transmission dishes, erection of an equipment	Approved	06.12.1999

cabin, an electrical meter cabinet and relocation of palisade fence with access gates.

19960364	Erection of 4 no. pole mounted floodlights, 12m high to illuminate the existing outdoor netball courts.	Permitted	26.07.1996
19960026	Application for the approval of the landscaping scheme to the rear of the portacabin as required by condition (ii) of planning permission ref. no. GR/90/697.	Approved	24.01.1996
19950417	Application for the approval of the paint colour as required by condition (v) of planning permission reference no. GR/94/682.	Approved	14.07.1995
19940682	Use of part of the land for the storage of a secure storage shipping container and outline application for the erection of replacement clubhouse.	Permitted	04.04.1995
19940067	Determination as to whether prior approval is required for the siting of 2 public telephone kiosks.	Approved	18.03.1994
19900697	Stationing of portacabin for use as a meeting room for Gravesend Model Marine & Engineering Society.	Permitted	16.11.1990
19900253	Erection of a detached single storey building to form golf shop, 30no. driving bays, catering/ creche facilities, wc accom., office & store, erect. of 3, 6.4m high pole mounted floodlights, erect. of boundary fencing varying in height from 2.4m-6m & laying out of associated car parking.	Permitted	22.06.1990
19890978	Erection of 4 no. pole mounted floodlights 12m high to illuminate the existing tennis hard court area.	Permitted	02.01.1990
19861041	Retention of tennis pavilion laying out of 28 no car parking spaces and erection of earth bund and associated landscaping	Permitted	18.03.1987
19860844	Application under Regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1976 for	Permitted	15.12.1986

	construction of a leisure pool with ancillary accommodation formation of a new vehicular access onto thong lane laying out of 174 car parking spaces 2 coach parking spaces and parking provision for motor cycles and disabled drivers		
19860329	for reserved matters	Approved	24.07.1986
19860829	Change of use of the ground floor of detached two storey building from grounds man;s store to bar with toilet accommodation, erection of single store side extension to form cafe, preparation room, store and yard; erection of a front entrance porch; repositioning of external staircase and laying out of a car parking for the existing first floor level self-contained flat.	Permitted	20.11.1986
19850435	Application under Regulation 5 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1976 for construction of 4 tennis courts enclosed by 2 no 8 5m high inflatable covers erection of a tennis pavilion 6 no floodlights and 2 7m high fencing layout of access road and car parking for 24 cars and erection of an earth bund and associated landscaping	Permitted	06.08.1983
19790900	Erection of a shed for Gravesend Model Marine and Engineering Society	Permitted	25.10.1979
19770918	Erection of squash courts with training room	Permitted	04.01.1978
19740219	Temporary playgroup hut. KCC DECISION NOTICE MISSING.	No objection	09.08.1974
19540471	Composite development of land	Permitted	05.06.1957

Schedule 3 Screening Criteria

The proposed development has been considered against the selection criteria as set out in Schedule 3 of the Regulations as attached in appendix 1.

Conclusion

Having assessed the available evidence it is the LPA view that the proposal is not EIA development and

accordingly, that an Environmental Statement is not required to accompany a planning application.

In accordance with Part 6 of the Regulations, the Screening Opinion has been placed on Part 1 of the Register and will be available for a period of at least two years.

Under the circumstances the proposed development does need to be the subject of a planning application but does not need to be accompanied by an environmental statement as defined in the above Regulations.

This Screening Opinion does not prejudice any further screening assessment which the Local Planning Authority may require or be asked to provide relating to this site or adjoining sites in the context of any other urban development project or other similar proposals.

Conclusion

The proposed development has been assessed against the criteria in Schedules 2 and 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended). It is considered that an Environmental Statement is not required as the proposed development is unlikely to result in significant impacts on the environment.

Recommendation:

(For detailed conditions / reasons for refusal and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Alison Webster	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	30 November 2022	Dated:	30th November 2022