

Delegated Report

Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20250402

Location: Rochester And Cobham Park Golf Club, Park Pale, Shorne ME2 3UL

Description: Erection of brick and cast stone gate posts and wing walls to each side of the existing driveway entrance gates.

Applicant: Mr Cameron McKillop, Rochester & Cobham Park Golf Club Ltd

Site Visit Date: 6 May 2025

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application form
Planning Statement
3D Visual
Brick details (handmade red rubber range light medium multi facings)
Brick details (handmade red rubber bricks)
Brick details (wienerberger Staffordshire red)
Brick details (wienerberger terca Staffordshire red)
Drawing no. 560/03 (existing part site plan)
Drawing no. 560/02 (existing part site plan)
Drawing no. 560/01 (site location plan)
Drawing no. 560/WD04 (sections)
Drawing no. 560/WD05 (plaque elevations)
Drawing no. 560/PL01 (proposed gate posts part site plan)
Drawing no. 560/05 (location plan)
Drawing no. 560/04 (existing gates plan and elevations)
Drawing no. 560/WD03 (foundation plan and gate post plan details)
Drawing no. 560/WD01 (part site plan)
Drawing no. 560/WD02 (plan and elevations)
Drawing no. 560/PL02 (proposed gate posts plan and elevations)

Relevant Planning History

None relevant.

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS11 – Transport
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS13 – Green Space, Sport and Recreation
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 - Development & Design Principles

- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- T1 – Impact of Development on the Highway Network

Paragraph 34 of the NPPF (2024) sets out that policies within adopted local plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years, and should then be updated as necessary. Such reviews are also a legal requirement as set out in Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012.

The Council undertook such a review in September 2019 and found that the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy is in need of a partial review in terms of Policy CS02, due to the increased need for housing since the Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted and the need to ensure that a sufficient land supply exists to meet this need. Whilst saved policies from the Local Plan 1st Review (1994) generally conform with the NPPF (2024), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Section 4 – Decision-making
- Section 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- Section 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Section 11 – Making effective use of land
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Design for Gravesham: Design Code (2024);
- Kent Downs National Landscape Management Plan (2021); and
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

GBC Conservation Officer

No comments received.

Cobham Parish Council

No comments received.

Neighbouring properties

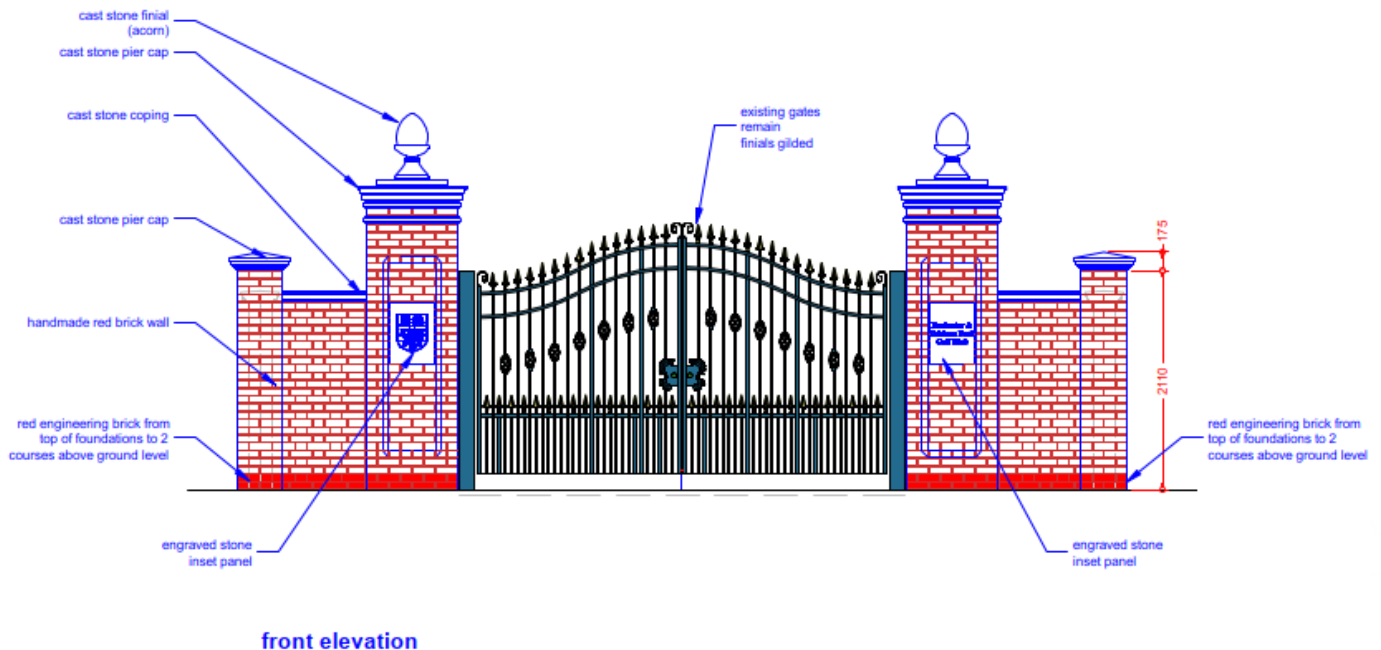
The application has been advertised by site notice and individual letters to five neighbouring properties. No letters of representation have been received. The overall consultation period expired on 29 May 2025.

Officer's Analysis

Proposal

This application seeks planning permission for the erection of brick and cast stone gate posts and wing walls to each side of the existing driveway entrance gates. The existing gates will remain and will be embellished with gilding. The piers will be finished in red rubber bricks with red engineering bricks at the base to act as a damp proof. The posts will be finished with cast stone dressings and there will be a plaque depicting the clubs coat of arms. The piers will be approx. 3.6m at their tallest and the proposed

development is shown below:



Site Description

The Rochester and Cobham Golf Course is located at Park Pale on the south side of the A2 trunk road, Cobham. It has an access from Brewers Road Shorne via Park Pale Lane and a bridge over the A2.

The club building is a modern building and contains a main two-storey element with plain tiled Kentish hipped roof and brick exterior and timber windows with a linked building used as a club pro shop and which contains a small clock tower. There are parking areas to the east of the building and the course lies principally to the west of the building.

The golf course is a parkland type 18-hole course currently measuring 6,597 yards from the back tees and playing to a par of 71.

The landscape of the golf course being adjacent to Cobham Hall, and which contains Repton's seat, is of high historic importance as well as being within the Kent Downs National Landscape. It is within a Green Belt area.

Rochester Golf Club, as it was originally named, was first established in 1891 as a 9-hole course at Oakleigh Farm Higham and moved to the Deer Park at Cobham Hall after the First World War in 1920.

Principle of Development

Green Belt

The application site is located within the Green Belt. The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Paragraph 154 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate but lists exceptions below:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.
- h) Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:
 - i. mineral extraction;
 - ii. engineering operations;
 - iii. local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;
 - iv. the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;
 - v. material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and
 - vi. development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

The use of the site as a golf club is considered as outdoor recreation and therefore the brick piers, walls and gates can be considered to be an exception under point 154(b) provided the 'the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it'.

The gates and fences already exist and therefore the impact on the openness of the Green Belt from the piers and walls need to be assessed. The nature of the development is such that the built form equates to less than 4sqm and the boundary fence remains the same offering visibility of the course from outside the site. The tallest part of the development is approx. 3.63m. Whilst there will be some loss of openness to the Green Belt, it is considered minimal and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it

which are listed below:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*

The proposed development therefore accords with Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 and Section 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

Design, Character and Appearance

The existing entrance is shown below:



The entrance is unassuming and not typical of an entrance to a prestigious and quality golf facility. The proposed brick piers and side walls will result in a grander and more obvious entrance which will improve the overall appearance of the golf club. The materials to be used have been listed as handmade red rubber bricks with red engineering bricks to the base to act as a damp proof course. The stone will resemble Portland Stone and the pointing will be cement/lime/sand mortar with bucket handle brick joints. The development is considered fit for purpose and will conserve and enhance the character of the local built environment and therefore accords with policy CS19 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014.

Kent Downs National Landscape

The site lies within the Kent Downs National Landscape and therefore the Kent Downs Management Plan is a material planning consideration. Policy SD2 states that:

The local character, qualities, distinctiveness and natural resources of the Kent Downs AONB will be conserved and enhanced in the design, scale, siting, landscaping and materials of new development, redevelopment and infrastructure and will be pursued through the application of appropriate design guidance and position statements.

The proposed gates and walls are considered to preserve the local character and therefore do not conflict with this policy.

Policy LLC1 states:

The protection, conservation and enhancement of special characteristics and qualities, natural beauty and landscape character of the Kent Downs AONB will be supported and pursued.

The proposals are not considered to conflict with this policy.

Ashenbank and Cobham Parkland Landscape Character

The application site is mentioned within the landscape character assessment as a golf course located within a parkland landscape. The topography is slightly undulating with a strong presence of man made landforms (including the golf course) and the Repton parkland. The condition of the landscape is good and the sensitivity is moderate. The guidelines are to conserve and reinforce and the proposed development is not considered to conflict with this.

The proposed development therefore accords with policies CS12 and CS18 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

Amenity

Neighbouring Amenity

There are no properties within close proximity to the application site and therefore there will be no detrimental impact in terms of loss of outlook, privacy, sunlight or daylight.

The proposed development therefore accords with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 135f of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

Ecology and Biodiversity

Biodiversity Opportunity Area

The site is located within a biodiversity opportunity area. The gates and fencing already exist and the proposed brick piers and walls will replace part of the existing fencing. Therefore there will be no loss to biodiversity.

The proposed development therefore accords with Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

Parking and Highways

The proposed development will not result in any changes to the parking provision or access and therefore no concerns are raised with regards to highway safety.

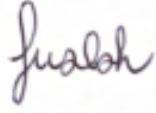
Conclusion

The proposed brick piers and walls and reuse of the existing gates will have no detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the street scene, National Landscape, local landscape character, amenity, biodiversity or highway safety and therefore accord with the above mentioned policies and are recommended for approval.

Recommendation:

Permission

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Alison Webster	Team Leader:	Mrs Faye Walsh
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	11 June 2025	Dated:	13 June 2025