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Rochester and Cobham Park Golf Club
Park Pale by Rochester, Kent ME2 3UL

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Design and Access Statement

1.00 Reason for Application

Permission for the erection of a new Trolley Store and Locker room (containing 112 trolleys and 94 lockers) was granted consent on 29th June 2018 under planning reference 2018 03 25.

During the latter part of 2018 the Club obtained costings for the works and was on the verge of appointing a contractor in April 2019 (to erect the approved building) when the Covid pandemic hit the world, Lockdowns occurred and future income for the Club became unpredictable. The Club took the view that capital expenditure on all new works should cease until the financial position became clear.

Happily, the Club is now in a position to proceed with the project but the planning consent granted in 2018 has expired, hence the reason for this application.

In terms of location, overall footprint and design , the drawings now submitted illustrate a building which is absolutely identical to that previously approved and thus this application should not raise any issues which have not already been considered in detail. However ; in order to make this application hang together as a complete package the contents of the *Design and Access Statement* previously submitted are reiterated here. Paragraph 4.00 has been expanded to cover some comments raised by Kent Highways.

2.00 Site Location for Proposed Store

Careful consideration has been given to the proposed location for the Trolley Store to achieve two basic objectives. The primary objective is to achieve the best functionality possible in relation to the existing Clubhouse, whilst the secondary objective is to choose a location which will minimise the building's impact on Ecology, openness of the Green Belt and the Historic Importance of the Park. Paragraphs (a) to (e) relate to functionality whilst Paragraphs (f), (g) and (h) consider the secondary objectives.

2.01 Primary Objectives (to be read in conjunction with drawing P/2/2333)

- a) Proximity and relationship with the existing changing rooms
- b) Proximity and relationship to the Pro-Shop
- c) Ease of access to the Golf Course having collected Clubs and/or a Trolley

- d) Will it be possible for staff within the Pro-Shop and the management office to have a visual line of sight to the entrance doors of the new store.
- e) Will it be easy to extend and/or adapt the existing security surveillance system to provide 24hour monitoring of the new store

It is considered that the proposed location fulfills all of the primary objectives.

2.02 Secondary Objectives

- f) In terms of Ecology will the site selected have any impact upon habitats, protected/notable species and/or designated sites for nature conservation.
- g) In terms of "Visual Impact" will the selected site provide the best location to achieve the absolute minimum impact from all aspects of the compass and thereby result in minimum impact upon the "openness of the Green Belt".
- h) Will the site selected allow for the construction of the store so as to have either Nil or minimal impact upon the Historic Importance of the Park.

2.03 With regard to Paragraph (f) above we enclose a copy of a Report prepared by Greenlink Ecology Ltd. - (dated 17th January 2018) – which confirms that the site selected is of Low Ecological Value and suggests that mitigation measures are not considered necessary.
(Report contained within Appendix A)

2.04 With regard to Paragraph (g) above points (i) to (iv) below are relevant in terms of "Visual Impact".

- (i) The site is not visible on entering the main car park area from an Easterly direction. Existing woodland obscures all views.
- (ii) Views from the South (4th Tee Box area and its Fairway within the course) are masked by a line of existing trees. The site will be partially visible during the Winter months but entirely unseen when the trees are in full leaf.
- (iii) The site is well screened from views from the West due to rising land, existing trees and the existing Pro-Shop and Clubhouse buildings.
- (iv) The site is not visible from the North due to the presence of existing woodland.

Thus in terms of "Visual Impact" it is considered that the site selected offers the best opportunities for the construction of a

building to achieve this objective. (But see also Clause 9.00 (a) and (b))

- 2.05** With regard to Paragraph (g) and "Openness of the Green Belt" the most relevant consideration is the Government's Policy Paragraph 79 of the NPPF of which the fundamental aim is to prevent urban sprawl; in addition to the objectives of Paragraph 80 of the NPPF and Local Plan Policy CSO2 of the Adopted Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy.

The site selected is within a few metres of the existing Clubhouse which in itself is set at 500metres from the High Speed Railway Track and A2 Trunk Road, and at a distance of over 600metres from Cobham Hall.

The site is at an approximate distance (as the Crow flies) of one mile from the nearest village (Cobham) and it is considered that the basic tenets of the above Plan Policies are well met in terms of the selected site. (But see also Clause 9.00)

- 2.06** With regard to Paragraph (h) and 'Impact upon the Historic Importance of the Park' the following is considered relevant.

The Golf Course is adjacent to Cobham Hall which contains Repton's Seat which in itself is of high historic importance. Humphrey Repton's Seat lies close to the right of the 15th Green of the course on land outside the Club's ownership. This is where he sat and sketched his design for the Deer Park incorporating a clear long distance view of The Darnley Mausoleum (now more commonly known as the Cobham Mausoleum), designed by James Wyatt for the 4th Earl of Darnley (owners of Cobham Hall). The pyramidal top of this Neo-Classical Monument (completed in 1786) contained within Cobham Woods can be seen from Repton's Seat and the Golf Club (at their expense) continually prune trees close to the 15th Green to ensure that the line of sight from the Seat to the Mausoleum remains as originally intended by Repton. (Cobham Woods abuts the Southern boundary of the Golf Course).

In terms of the impact of buildings and associated hardstandings upon Repton's Deer Park this was considered most carefully before the present Clubhouse was erected in 1997. Indeed the silhouette for the Clubhouse (approximately representing a large Kentish Barn) was considered at length so as not to appear a too incongruous addition to the Deer Park. (Please see Clause 3.00)

The site for the Trolley Store will lie to the South East of the main Clubhouse Pro-Shop massing and as such it is not visible from Repton's Seat. Accordingly, the concept envisaged for the Deer Park by Humphrey Repton will remain unaffected by the current

proposed works, keeping it all as originally intended – other than the amendment required of resiting the Clubhouse following the Government's Policy to create a High Speed Rail Link with France.

- 2.07 In conclusion it is considered that the site selected (which will not generate a need for additional hardstandings) is the best possible location for the proposed Trolley Store.**

3.00 Scale, Proportion and Design of the Proposed Building

As noted in Clause 2.06 above the existing silhouette of the Clubhouse follows a Kentish agricultural profile. The footprint for the building is irregular in shape with considerable variation in ridge height between distinct elements of the Club. In this way the size of this large building is visually diminished, reducing its impact upon the 'openness of the Green Belt'.

This philosophy has been used in developing the plan form and roof profile for the proposed Trolley Store (drawings P/3 and P/4/2333). The Trolley Store will have the appearance of a simple agricultural barn – with a particularly non-urban appearance befitting its rural setting. The Store will have variation in both eaves level and ridge levels and will appear as a compact building unit, subservient to - yet of the same stable as the main Clubhouse.

3.01

- (a)** The built volume of the existing Clubhouse and attached Pro-Shop is 6725m³. The built volume of all of the other buildings within the Golf Course (maintenance compound buildings, half-way house and covered tuition area) amounts to 2030m³ giving a total existing built form on the course of 8755m³. The volume of the proposed Trolley Store is 450m³.
- (b)** Paragraph 89 of the NPPF advises that “the extension or alteration of a building (within the Green Belt) should be considered as inappropriate if the new building work results in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original buildings.

It is our submission that in pure mathematical terms the % volume increase of 6.7% (in relation to the adjacent Clubhouse and Pro-Shop) or 5.1% (in relation to all of the existing built form) does not present a disproportionate addition to the built element upon the Golf Course and therefore (in this regard) can be judged as appropriate development. (But see also Clause 3.02 below).

- 3.02** As noted above, (Clause 3.00) the design for the Trolley Store will reflect that of the Clubhouse and Pro-Shop whilst in itself have its own distinct character.

The main portion of the building (the areas within which Trolleys will be stored) has a height from finished ground level to top of eaves of 1.55metres. (A height which is less than the roof line of many of today's people carriers and SUVs which currently park on the site).

A mid section of the building (the area where Golf Club Lockers – double stacked – are to be provided) has a height from finished ground level to top of eaves of 2.65metres. The eaves level for the Clubhouse and Pro-Shop is 2.70metres above finished ground level.

The general ridge level for the proposed Store is 3.9metres above finished ground level compared to that of 9.5metres for the Clubhouse and 7.7metres for the Pro-shop. The Trolley Store will not represent either a dominant built form in relation to the existing structures nor will it visually represent a disproportionate addition to the existing built form, and therefore(in this regard) can be judge as appropriate development.

4.00 Transport (car parking) and sustainable development

Policies CSO1 and CS11 (notes to be read in conjunction with drawing P/5/2333)

- (a) The function of the proposed Trolley Store is to provide safe storage for Golf Trolleys plus Golf Clubs, plus a facility to recharge batteries (for use with the Golf Trolleys) all for the **exclusive use of the members of Rochester and Cobham Park Golf Club.**
It is not / nor will it be a facility for members of other Golf Clubs and thus as such the new Trolley Store does not in itself generate either additional vehicular movements to/fro the Club or a requirement for additional parking.

- (b) Currently, there is a total provision of 187 car parking spaces (2.5m x 5.0m) adjacent to the Clubhouse, with spaces nos. 1 to 3 inclusive, reserved for the use of disabled drivers. Of the 187 spaces, 12 no. are allocated for staff working within the office, pro-shop, bar and kitchen / catering areas leaving 172 spaces for able-bodied playing members. Please note that the ground staff have their own parking area within the machine maintenance yard which is located in another part of the course. Following completion of the proposed Trolley Store, the number of parking spaces for playing members will reduce from 172 to 163.

In assessing the adequacy of the car park to accommodate players vehicles ,various scenarios have been considered, ranging from standard mid week play, through weekend play to special pro-am and special Sunday Lunch events. Note: All figures given have been taken from the Pro-Shop which monitors the number of players as they Tee-off.

Generally speaking golfers fall into two distinct categories. Either early morning players or early afternoon. Thus although on any mid week day a total of 110 to 150 people might play, they are not all present at the same time. 60 to 80 in the morning with 50 to 70 in the afternoon. Players who commenced at 8.00am will generally be gone by 1.00 to 1.30 ; well before those wishing to play at 2.00 or 2.30.

But let us assume that **all** of the morning players do not leave until **all** of the afternoon players have arrived giving a total of 150 cars within a total capacity of 163.

Saturday Club competition days can attract as many as 156 entrants – although the normal number is 120 to 144. Since all players have to have an exact tee-off time there would be very little point in someone teeing-off at 2.30pm arriving at the course much earlier than 1.45pm by which time those who teed-off at 7.30am will probably have left the Club between 12.30 and 1.00pm. However, assuming every player is present all day and the entry number is 156 this would still leave 7 unoccupied spaces.

Pro-am special events occur only once a year and the course is closed to all members other than those taking part in the event. Thus the number of people attending is clearly defined. The worst case scenario for these type of events is a 'shot-gun start' where all Tee Boxes are occupied by 2 teams of 4 players teeing-off at the same time. A maximum of 144 players. With an allowance of 6 spaces for additional staff to help on the day a total of 150 spaces would be required leaving 13 spaces unoccupied.

Special Sunday lunches have been known to attract as many as 120 people but this would be a rare event. Generally they are a husband and wife/partner affair including some children. Many attendees bring friends (drink/driving) resulting in a car occupancy rate well in excess of 2. However, utilising a figure of 2 it can be seen that there would be a need for 60 parking spaces to service those partaking of lunch. Sundays tend to be quiet days for golf with the course virtually empty on Sunday afternoons. However, if we assume the normal mid week maximum of 80 morning players it is possible that the total number of parking spaces required for both players and diners could reach 140 leaving 23 spaces unoccupied.

As a final point please note that **within** the curtilage of the golf course there is a half mile access road leading from the entrance gates to the existing car park plus a flat practise area (150 metres x 40 metres) ie. 6000 sq. metres. It is estimated that 60 cars could be parked directly off of the access road with a further 300 on the practise area if ever an occasion arose where such large numbers of vehicles were required to be accommodated. Thus ; with the potential to provide a further 360 car parking spaces within the course grounds (a number greatly in excess of the 9 spaces to be lost as a result of the

proposed development) there are no plans to provide any additional areas of hardstanding.

**5.00 Green Infrastructure – Policy CS12
and Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
(Paragraphs 109 – 125 of the NPPF)**

- (a) The Trolley Store is to be erected on a section of existing hardstanding with no requirement for additional hardstanding (See Clause 4.00(b) above)
- (b) The Ecology Report within Appendix A confirms that the site for the Trolley Store is of low ecological value and suggests that mitigation measures are not considered necessary.
- (c) However, to comply with the principles of the NPPF, the Ecologist recommended that the new building should incorporate 4 No. wall mounted Schwegler IMR general purpose Avianex Bird Boxes fixed at a height greater than 2 metres from ground level.

The recommendation has been taken on board and drawing P/3/2333 indicates their location on the East and West elevations.

6.00 Climate Change Policy CS18

- (a) The Trolley Store will not be provided with a water supply and it will not contain any sanitary appliance or any other appliance generating waste water. The impact of the proposed development on the existing waste water drainage system will be NIL. Additionally since a water supply is not to be provided compliance with the Code for Sustainable Homes (105 litres per person per day) is not applicable.
- (b) Currently, surface (rain) water falling on the site (car park hardstanding) gradually runs off the tarmac into acco drainage channels connected to a series of soakaways.
The proposal is to provide 8 No. galvanised storage tanks with a total capacity of 5.0m³. The rainwater run-off from the proposed store which equates to 4.4m³ for a full days rain of 25mm. The tanks will be fitted with overflow pipes to allow water to discharge to the existing acco drainage channels thus ensuring that the surface water run-off for the development will have no greater impact than the site's existing use.
- (c) The tanks will also be fitted with taps to allow for water to be drawn off to water plants around the Clubhouse.

7.00 Sustainable economic growth and support for prosperous rural economy (Paragraphs 19, 20 and 28 of the NPPF)

Once the capital expenditure and financing costs for the proposed Trolley Store have been amortised, the charges levied upon the members storing their Clubs and Trolleys in the new Store will provide a continuous income stream for the Club which will greatly assist in securing its long term viability.

As such, (in the spirit of Planning Applications giving support to the erection of well-designed new buildings which assist in aiding a strong rural economy and meeting the development needs of business) this application should be positively supported.

8.00 Inappropriate Development – Paragraph 87 of the NPPF

- (a) Whilst Paragraph 87 of the NPPF states that "inappropriate development" is by definition, harmful to the Green Belt, Paragraph 89 of the NPPF provides a list of development exceptions for works which may be carried out within the Green Belt.

One such exception relates to the provision of appropriate facilities for Outdoor Sport.

- (b) Rochester and Cobham Park Golf Club has been established since 1891 and there is a pressing need for additional Trolley Storage space. It is our opinion that the proposal (by virtue of being an ancillary function to an already established Outdoor Sporting facility) is not inappropriate development in accordance with the Green Belt policy and in itself will not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

9.00 Impact on the Landscape

In assessing the possible impact of the proposed structure upon the general landscape area assessments have been made in respect of potential harm to vegetation/trees directly abutting the site as well as long distant views towards the site.

- (a) **Vegetation/trees abutting the site**

To the South of the site there is a small line of trees – set at approximately 7.5metres distance from the site's edge on ground which is generally 2.0metres higher than the site level. (See drawings P/1 and P/3/2333). To the east of the site there are a number of woodland trees with scrub beneath. None of the tree canopies overhang the site and since the site has been laid as tarmac since 1997 it is considered that the root protection zone would not extend beneath the tarmac surface.

In conclusion, the proposal will not bring harm to the established plants/trees adjacent to the site which will be able to continue to flourish following completion of the works.

(b) Long distance views towards the site

Much of this has been covered in previous clauses (2.04 – surrounding trees and 2.06 – impact upon the historic Deer Park).

However, an area for consideration is the view obtained by those walking outside the Golf Course boundary but within Cobham Woods close to the 4th Tee-Box and fairway.

As stated in Clause 2.04 (ii) the site will be visible through the tree skeletons (atop of land to the South of the proposed Store) during the Winter months, (See West elevation drawing on P/3/2333) but not when the trees are in full leaf.

The view currently obtained in the Winter is one of the roofs of various shapes, sizes and colour of cars and vans, i.e. a view of a car park.

Once the works have been completed the view will be of a low, agricultural style building, covered with a fine slate roof, such as might be encountered during any ramble through the Kent countryside. The building will also obscure views to much of the car park to the North of the Trolley Store/East of the Clubhouse.

In my opinion, the completion of the Trolley Store will enhance the view for walkers within Cobham Woods whilst at the same time causing no harm to the existing woodland.

10.00 Archaeology

The land around the proposed Store is not to be reduced in level or raised. The sub-soil beneath the car park will remain as regraded during the construction works for the replacement Clubhouse in 1997.

The regrade had an average depth below the original ground level of 1.6metres. (2.4metres at the Southern edge of the car park reducing to 0.8 of a metre at the Northern end of the proposed Trolley Store. (An extract from drawing P/3/2333 within Appendix B illustrates the effect of the regrade works).

Since all of the proposed works will take place on the car park, with no works below the regrade level and since (it is understood) that when the replacement Clubhouse was under construction in 1997 artefacts were only found close to the original Clubhouse and the High Speed Rail Track and not in the vicinity of the new Clubhouse

then the requirement for an Archaeological Watching Brief whilst the Trolley Store is erected is unnecessary.

11.00 Summary and Conclusion

In summary it is our firm opinion that although the erection of most structures within the Green Belt is seen as inappropriate development this application should be positively supported for the following reasons

- (a)** There is no fundamental policy objection to the proposal as it relates to the provision of facilities for outdoor sports. (Paragraph 89 of the NPPF).
- (b)** The provision of the Trolley Store will assist with financial viability for the Club. (Paragraphs 19, 20 and 28 of the NPPF).
- (c)** The proposal is not disproportionate in size in relation to the existing structures. (Paragraph 89 of the NPPF).
- (d)** The proposal will not give rise to any Highway or Parking issues.
- (e)** The proposed building is well designed, appropriate for its intended use and relates well to the established development.
- (f)** The proposed building does not impact upon the Ecology of the Natural Environment. The provision of some Bird Boxes will actually assist with the Ecology of the area.
- (g)** The proposal will not have an adverse impact upon the Historical Environment of the Golf Course.
- (h)** External views from Cobham Woods into the Golf Course will be enhanced
- (i)** The proposal will have NIL negative impact upon climate change under the Water Framework Directive Objectives.
The collection of rainwater from the roof of the proposed Store can be seen as a minor improvement in Water Efficiency.
- (j)** The Trolley Store and Locker Room is a much needed element for the members of the Golf Club.

APPENDIX A

Ecology Report by Greenlink Ecology Ltd.



17th January 2018

Mr John Aughterlony
Rochester and Cobham Park Golf Club
Park Pale
Rochester
Kent, ME2 3UL

Dear John

Re: Proposed New Golf Trolley Storage Shed at Rochester and Cobham Park Golf Club

This letter is being provided as a record of the preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) conducted for the above site, on 16th January 2018. The PEA was undertaken by an appropriately experienced and qualified consultant ecologist and was completed without significant constraint.

The aim of the PEA was to determine whether the proposed works, which are the subject of a pre-planning application (ref: PRE-20170601) to Gravesham Borough Council, would have an impact on habitats, protected/notable species and/or designated sites for nature conservation, to inform the need for mitigation measures.

The results of the PEA indicate that the proposed works area is entirely comprised of hard standing, which is an artificial habitat type of inherently low ecological value. Although there are immature trees to the south and east of the proposed works area, these will be entirely unaffected by the proposals. Therefore, since there is no perceived risk of impacts to habitats, mitigation measures are not considered necessary.

During the survey, no evidence of protected/notable species was recorded and there was no significant potential identified for such species to be present. Therefore, since there is no perceived risk of impacts to protected/notable species, mitigation measures are not considered necessary.

Using the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (<http://www.magic.gov.uk>), it has been established that Cobham Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located circa 50 metres to the south of the proposed works area. However, the proposals are small-scale and restricted to the existing hard standing car park and therefore, since there is no perceived risk of impacts to designated sites, mitigation measures are not considered necessary.

To comply with the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), it is recommended that the new building incorporates 4 no. wall-mounted Schwegler 1MR general purpose avianex bird boxes, on the eastern and western aspects, installed above 2 metres from ground level.

Yours sincerely



Marcus Fry BSc MSc MCIEEM¹
Director

¹ Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (Full)

Appendix 1: Site photographs

Photograph 1: View of the proposed works area from the western boundary, looking east



Photograph 2: View of the proposed works area from the northern boundary, looking south



APPENDIX B

Drawing P/3/2333 (part only)

LINE OF EXISTING WOODLAND TREES TO EAST OF PROPOSED STORE.

EXISTING TREES TO SOUTH OF PROPOSED STORE

* DEPTH OF SOIL REMOVED FROM SITE DURING CONSTRUCTION WORKS IN 1997 (PINK)

ORIGINAL GROUND LEVEL

4TH FAIRWAY

RAIN-WATER HARVESTING. PURI MADE / CLOSE LIDDED GALVANISE

LEAD SADDLE WITH FINIAL

WEST ELEVATION

BLACK STAINED TIMBER ENTRANCE DOORS

BLACK STAINED TIMBER FIRE EXIT DOOR.

NOTE:- 4 No. WALL-MOUNTED SCHWESLER IMPR GENERAL PURPOSE AVIANEX BIRD BOXES TO BE PROVIDED. 2 No TO EAST / WEST ELEVATIONS.

EAST

BLACK SLATE ROOF FINISH

BLACK STAINED BOARDING ABOVE BRICKWORK PLINTH TO MATCH EXISTING CLIMAX