

Delegated Report

Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20240909

Location: Gravesend Rugby Football Club, Donald Biggs Drive, Gravesend
DA12 2TL

Description: Erection of a raised viewing gallery direct from the clubhouse above
existing walkway, between existing external stairs.

Applicant: Mr Gordon McQuade

Site Visit Date: Various

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application form
Site location plan
Drawing no. GRFC-ELP1 rev B (proposed elevations)
Drawing no. GRFC-EXEL01 rev A (existing elevations)
Drawing no. GRFC-BLP1 rev B (proposed ground floor building layout)
Drawing no. GRFC-EXBL01 rev A (existing ground floor building layout)
Drawing no. GRFC-BP01 rev A (block plan)
Drawing no. OP GRFC-VIEW-001 (viewing platform)

Relevant Planning History

There is extensive planning history but none relevant to this application.

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS10 – Physical and Social Infrastructure
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 - Development & Design Principles

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- T1 – Impact of Development on Highway Network

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2023) 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 (2023), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Section 4 – Decision-making
- Section 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Design for Gravesham: Design Code (2024);
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006);

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Sport England

Sport England – Statutory consultee role and policy

We understand that you have consulted us as a statutory consultee in line with the above Order. Therefore, we have considered the application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in particular paragraph 103, and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy, which is presented within our 'Playing Fields Policy and Guidance Document': www.sportengland.org/playingfieldspolicy

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 or any part of a playing field, or
- land which has been used as a playing field land remains undeveloped, or
- land allocated for use as a playing field

unless, in the judgement of Sport England the development as a whole meets with one or more of five specific exceptions. A summary of the exceptions is provided in the annex to this response.

The Proposal

The proposal is for the erection of a raised viewing gallery direct from the clubhouse above existing walkway, between existing external stairs.

Assessment against Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and NPPF

As part of our assessment we have consulted with the games governing body, the Rugby Football Union. We have set out their comments below:

The RFU supports the application. Gravesend RFC has previously been the recipient of RFU Social Space grant funding, supporting the revenue generation, financial sustainability and member experience at the club. With RFU would see the current proposal as being aligned to these objectives and thus fully supportive.

We would strongly advise the applicants follow the RFU advise given above.

Sport England is content that this proposal meets our planning policy exception E2 and that will not have a negative impact on playing fields.

Sport England's Position

Given the above, Sport England raises no objection to the application because it is considered to accord with exception 2 of our Playing Fields Policy and paragraph 103 of the NPPF.

If this application is to be presented to a Planning Committee, we would like to be notified in advance of the publication of any committee agenda(s), report(s) and committee date(s). Please notify Sport England of the outcome of the planning application.

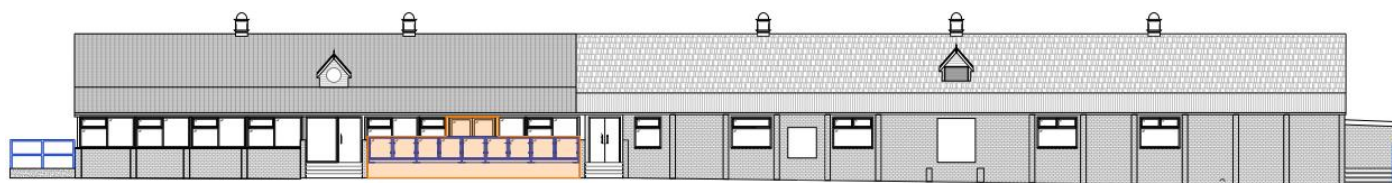
Neighbouring properties

The application has been advertised by site notice and individual letters to 23 neighbouring properties. No letters of representation have been received. The consultation period expired on 22 November 2024.

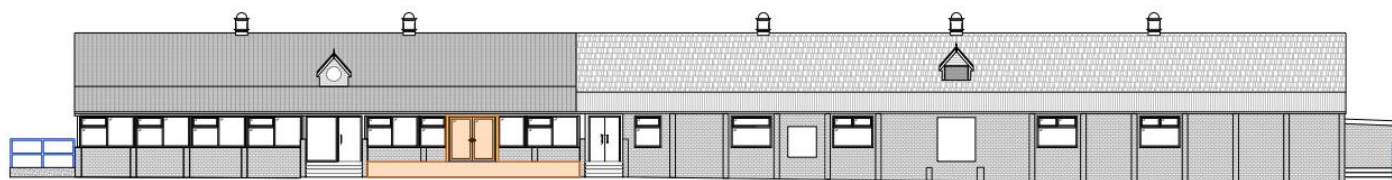
Officer's Analysis

Proposal

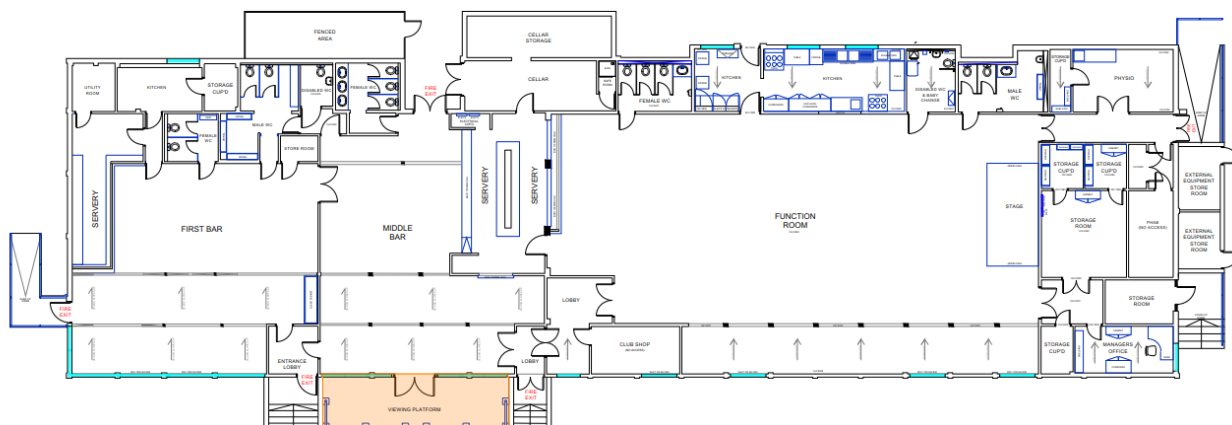
This planning application seeks permission for the erection of a raised viewing gallery direct from the clubhouse above existing walkway, between existing external stairs. The proposed viewing platform will sit between two sets of steps:



PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION



It will project no further than the existing steps:



In total it will be approx. 2m high in total which includes the glass balustrade.

Principle of Development

Paragraph 96 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 supports development that promotes healthy lifestyles especially through the provision of safe and accessible sports facilities.

Paragraph 97 seeks to ensure that established facilities are able to develop and modernise and are retained for the benefit of the community.

Policy CS10 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 supports development that protects, retains or enhances existing physical and social infrastructure that improves community well-being.

The proposed viewing gallery will allow for improved views over the playing field particularly for those with mobility issues as currently, spectators mostly use the steps to the lower terrace, the only accessible ramp is located to the side of the building.

The proposal will enhance the buildings functionality and the principle is therefore acceptable.

Sport England and the Rugby Football Union are both supportive of the proposal.



Design, Character and Appearance

The application site is a long established rugby club. The building is located to the west of the playing field and is single storey. Due to the slope of the site there are steps to the front that lead down to the terrace area which is also at a higher level than the playing field.

The proposed viewing platform will be located between two sets of steps and will project no further and therefore it will not be readily visible other than from the playing field. The design is modern and no objection is raised to it.

The proposal therefore accords with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 and para. 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.

Amenity

Neighbouring Amenity

The proposed viewing platform will be located to the front of the building where it will not be visible from the nearest properties. It will therefore have no detrimental impact on outlook, privacy, sunlight or daylight. In terms of noise, there will be no additional impact as the area it is to be built on is a viewing area already, albeit at a slightly lower level.

No neighbour representations have been received.

The proposal therefore accords with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 and para. 135f of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.

Parking and Highways

The proposed viewing gallery will not result in any additional visitors or staff and does not result in the loss of any on site parking and therefore no objection is raised on highways grounds.

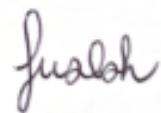
Conclusion

The proposed development will have no detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area, amenities, parking or highway safety and therefore accords with the above policies and is 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:	3 December 2024	Dated:	05 December 2024