

Delegated Report

Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20250661

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

Description: Replacement of tennis court column lighting with new LED column lighting.

Applicant: Mr Damian Pender

Site Visit Date: 16 July 2025

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application form
Site Location Plan
Drawing no. GTC S3 (existing light spill)
Drawing no. GTC S1 (spillage results)
Drawing no. GTC S2 (spillage iso contours)
Drawing no. GTC S4 (proposed column location plan)
Drawing no. GTC S7 (elevations)
Drawing no. GTC S6 (elevations)
Drawing no. GTC S5 (existing column location plan)
Lighting Design Details
Integral Louvres Details
Warranty Details
Philips Lighting Details

Relevant Planning History

19810257 Erection of six pole mounted floodlights nine metres high to illuminate existing tennis courts
Approved 18.05.1981

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS08 – Retail, Leisure and the Hierarchy of Centres
- CS10 – Physical and Social Infrastructure
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS13 – Green Space, Sport and Recreation
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 - Development & Design Principles

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

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 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Design for Gravesham: Design Code (2024);
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006);
- GBC Playing Pitch Strategy Final Assessment Report, June 2016; and
- GBC Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan, August 2016.

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

GBC Environmental Protection

There is no objection to the application. The proposed lighting is an improvement over what currently exists both in terms of brightness and any spread of light. Levels comply with ILP guidance and the submitted iso-lux contours show that light levels drop to 1 lux well inside the boundary of her site, so the impact on nearby residential should be negligible.

The lighting should be installed in accordance with the submitted details.

Sport England

Sport England have not been consulted as the proposal does not result in any loss of playing field however it is noted that they commented on an application for flood lighting at the adjacent rugby playing field and raised no objection as the 'proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field and does not affect the quantity or quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use.'

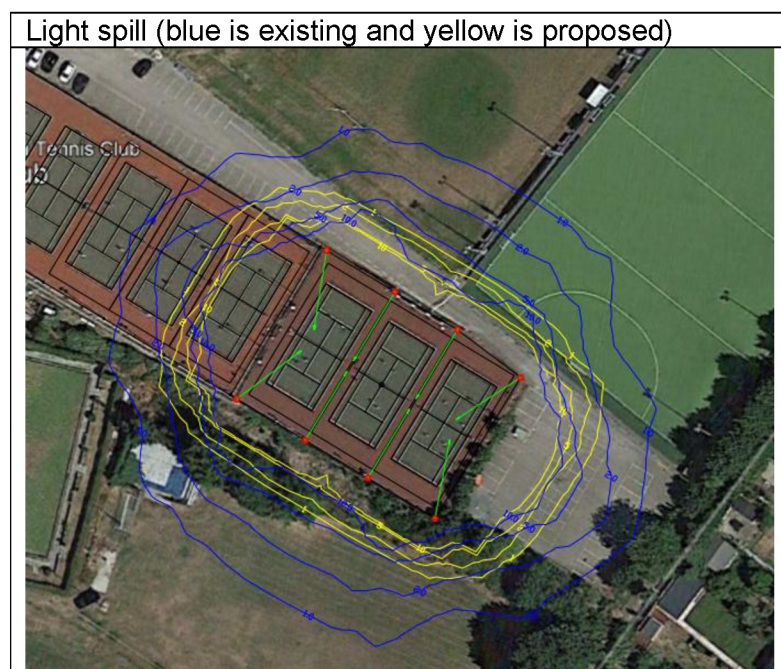
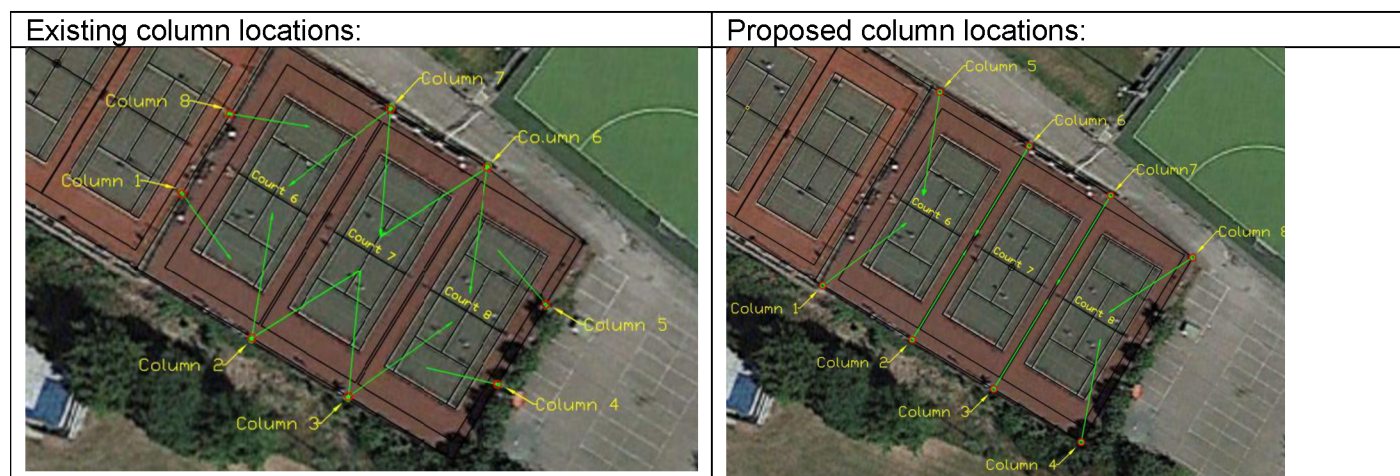
Neighbouring properties

The application has been advertised by site notice and seven letters to neighbouring properties. No letters of representation received.

Officer's Analysis

Proposal

This planning application seeks permission for the replacement of tennis court column lighting with new LED column lighting.



Principle

The site is not located within a designated area in the local plan and therefore the principle of development is acceptable providing it meets the objectives of the policies below.

Sport

In June 2016, the Council published its 'Playing Pitch Strategy Final Assessment Report', which was prepared by Knight Kavanagh & Page (KKP). The report presents a supply and demand assessment of playing pitch facilities to assess the adequacy of playing pitch provision in Gravesham.

With regard to tennis the report states:

- There are 47 courts across 13 sites in Gravesham, 34 are available for community use.
- Of the courts available for community use, 27 are assessed as good, five as standard and two as

poor. Indoor courts at Legends are also viewed as good quality.

- Courts at Woodlands Park are the only ones available for community use assessed as poor for quality.
- All three clubs in Gravesham signal plans to increase membership in both senior and junior sections; which clubs state can be accommodated on existing courts.

The report makes the following recommendations:

- Retain existing court provision and ensure sustainability of sites through improving quality and maximising use through delivery of LTA initiatives and encouraging providers to make use of technology solutions.
- Continue to support clubs to ensure current and future demand is being met.

The same recommendation is also made in the Council's 'Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan' (August 2016).

The current proposal there seeks to improve the floodlighting for the tennis courts which will enhance the facilities.

The general principle of the development is therefore considered to be acceptable and in accordance with Policy CS13 and the recommendations of the Council's playing pitch reports.

Design, Character and Appearance

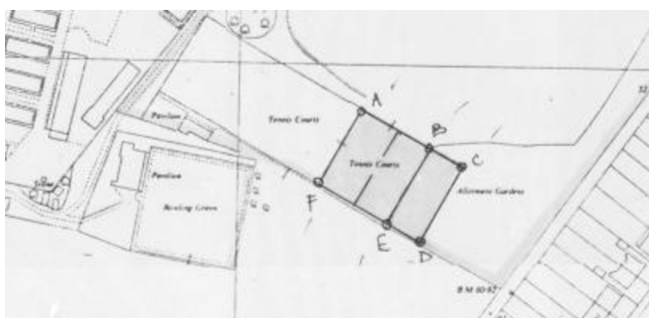
The application site relates to the three rear most tennis courts at the Gravesham Tennis Club. The new columns will be galvanised steel and the same height as the existing. They will be situated at the corners of the courts and there will be no additional lighting. In terms of appearance, the floodlights are utilitarian and in keeping with other floodlights in the vicinity. They are therefore not out of character with the surrounding area and their design accords with policy CS19 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

Amenity

The new light will consume less energy, generate less heat, less light spillage and will meet the Lawn Tennis Association minimum LUX standards with better and more consistent on court light.

The main issues that will arise from such a proposal in relation to amenity is light spill and noise. The plans above in the proposal section show the existing and proposed light spill. Neither the existing lights or the proposed lights spill onto residential properties however the proposed lights have a much smaller area of light spill which is an improvement on the current situation.

The planning history shows permission for no. 6 floodlights at 9m high for the tennis courts as shown below (GR/81/257):



This restricted the use of the lights, which are 1m taller than the proposed, to only between the hours of 3pm and 10pm everyday. The applicant is happy for this condition to be imposed on any forthcoming approval.

Given the lights will have lesser of an impact than the existing lights the proposed development will have no detrimental impact on neighbouring amenity and therefore accords with policy CS19 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 135f of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 in this regard.

Parking and Highways

The proposed floodlights will have no detrimental impact on parking or highway safety and therefore no objection is raised.

Conclusion

The proposed replacement floodlights will have no detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area, neighbouring amenities, parking or highway safety and therefore accord with the abovementioned policies and are recommended for approval.

Recommendation:

Permit

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Alison Webster	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	6 August 2025	Dated:	6th August 2025