

APPLICATION NO.	P22/S2582/FUL
SITE	Shiplake College, Reading Road, Shiplake, RG9 4BW
PROPOSAL	Development of new artificial pitches, non-turf cricket nets and fencing. (As amplified by supporting information received 06 June 2023)
AMENDMENTS	Further biodiversity net gain details submitted to demonstrate compliance with Policy.
APPLICANT	Shiplake College
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
PARISH	SHIPLAKE
WARD MEMBERS	Leigh Rawlins & Mike Giles
OFFICER	Marc Pullen

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application is referred to Planning Committee as the recommendation made by your officers to grant planning permission conflicts with the view of Shiplake Parish Council. Shiplake Parish Council's objections are outlined within paragraph 3.2 of this report.
- 1.2 The application site (attached as **Appendix A**) lies north-east of Shiplake College. The playing pitches would be accessed via foot by future users. The application site does not lie within any specially designated area of land and would be sited adjacent to the existing playing fields used by Shiplake College.
- 1.3 Reduced copies of the plans accompanying the application are attached as **Appendix B**. Other documentation associated with the application can be viewed on the council's website, www.southoxon.gov.uk.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 This application seeks planning permission for the creation of new artificial playing pitches for Shiplake College, including cricket nets and fencing.



2.2 This report sets out the justification for officers' recommendation to grant planning permission having regard to the development plan and any other material planning considerations.

3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

3.1 Publicity

None.

3.2 Statutory Consultee responses

Shiplake Parish Council – Object

- A change from an ecologically sound plan for grass playing fields to an urbanizing, ecologically questionable, potentially difficult to reverse artificial surface.
- Does not offer clear net biodiversity gain and potential for significant impact on our dark skies policy by the proposed groundworks addition for future flood lighting and discussion as essential in the DAS.
- In addition, the plan for fencing, its height and materials, will create a negative visual impact on the landscape.
- The application is contrary to our NP policies of SV12 dark skies, SV13 biodiversity gain SV14 - Landscaping and Greening of the Environment and the area lies within a character area PLCA3, in a rural setting in the important gap between 2 villages.

County Archaeological Services (SODC) –

- The site is located in an area of archaeological interest however historic mapping and Lidar data illustrates that it has been subject to past ground disturbance such that it's likely to have resulted in significant previous below ground truncation. As such there are no archaeological constraints to this scheme.

Drainage (South and Vale) – No objection

- Subject to condition requiring details of surface water drainage to be agreed.

Sport England – No Objection

- The proposal is considered to accord with exception 5 of our Playing Fields Policy and paragraph 103 of the NPPF.
- Conditions requested seeking a community use agreement to be agreed and a Management and Maintenance Scheme.
- Community Use Agreement and Management/Maintenance Scheme are acceptable.

CPRE South Oxfordshire District Committee – Object

- We object to the current application with its artificial surfaces and fencing which will have a negative, urbanising impact on the countryside.
- The Design and Access Statement includes the words floodlighting is considered essential. This comment is worrying, as such lighting will damage the dark skies of the area and harm nocturnal wildlife. This is contrary to policies in the SOLP and the Shiplake NDP. It should be

made clear to the applicant that floodlighting is not appropriate in this location.

South and Vale Countryside Officer – No objection

- Amended details propose that an area of offsite land will be managed to compensate for the net loss of biodiversity as a result of the proposed development. This is in addition to onsite habitat creation.
- The area of offsite land is under the ownership of Shiplake College and forms a strip of land between the scheme granted planning permission under decision notice P18/S2434/FUL and an area of woodland to the southeast known as The Warren, under separate ownership.
- Satisfied with benefits proposed.
- As the offsite land is under the ownership of the applicant and there is a reasonable prospect that the applicant can implement the offsite habitat creation and maintenance works, a planning condition can be used to secure compliance with the development plan.
- The project ecologist has recommended that a biodiversity management and monitoring plan (BMMP) be produced for the onsite and offsite habitat creation. A condition could be used to secure such a document,

Neighbours - Objecting

- Concerns over use of flood lighting and dark skies policy and how access will be made to the site – Mill Lane is a single lane road and would be inappropriate to use to provide access to the site.
- Concerns over noise for nearby residents.
- Concerned at the potential impact to surrounding roads, in particular Mill Lane and New Road. No mention of visitor car parking or any access to the site via Mill Lane.
- Should planning permission be granted, it is imperative that a condition states that access to the site must only be from Shiplake College.
- The existing access should be closed off to avoid unacceptable parking along Mill Lane.

Neighbours - Supporting

- Proposal is a great addition to the school facilities and will probably be shared with local clubs and schools.
- The design is considerate of locals and is generally hidden from the roads so it should not impact local people. Compared to the other developments on Reading Road this feels a more sensitive considered proposal.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Application Number	Description of development	Decision and date
P21/S4558/FUL	Change of use of agricultural field to playing field.	Approved (21/12/2021)

5.0 **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

5.1 N/A.

6.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

6.1 **National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance**

6.2 **Development Plan Policies**

South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 (SOLP) Policies:

CF3 - New Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities

DES1 - Delivering High Quality Development

DES2 - Enhancing Local Character

DES8 - Promoting Sustainable Design

ENV1 - Landscape and Countryside

ENV2 - Biodiversity - Designated sites, Priority Habitats and Species

ENV3 - Biodiversity

ENV9 - Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments

EP4 - Flood Risk

INF4 - Water Resources

STRAT1 - The Overall Strategy

TRANS5 - Consideration of Development Proposals

Joint Local Plan 2041 - The Council is preparing a Joint Local Plan covering South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, which when adopted will replace the existing local plan. Currently at the Regulation 18 stage, the Joint Local Plan Preferred Options January 2024 has limited weight when making planning decisions. The starting point for decision taking will remain the policies in the current adopted plan.

6.3 **Shiplake Neighbourhood Plan 2022**

SV7 - Settlement Character

SV11 - Important Views

SV12 - Dark Skies and Lighting

SV13 - Biodiversity and Wildlife

SV14 - Landscaping and Greening of the Environment

SV19 - New Development and Highway Safety

6.4 **Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents**

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Design Guide 2022

7.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

7.1 **The relevant planning considerations are the following:**

- **Principle of development**
- **Impact on character and appearance of area**
- **Impact on ecology**
- **Impact on neighbour amenity**
- **Access, parking and highway safety**
- **Other material considerations**

7.2 **Principle of development**

The council's Development Plan falls silent on the provision of private sports facilities. However, Policy CF3 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan (SOLP)

does relate to the provision of new open space, sport and recreational facilities. This policy advises that where possible new sports and recreational facilities should be co-located with other community uses and be well related to settlements they serve, being sited within or adjacent to settlements. New facilities should also be accessible. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages the delivery of healthy and safe lifestyles.

- 7.3 The proposed playing pitches would primarily serve the needs of Shiplake College, but it would be opened up for wider community use outside of school times/dates – in which case the users would be required to park at the College campus. The use of the pitches would be largely dictated by the availability of daylight during the winter and summer months as no external lighting is proposed.
- 7.4 It is officer's opinion that the proposed development would be sited within close proximity to Shiplake College, close to existing playing fields and would result in an outward extension of the College's existing playing fields. The site is not contained within the settlement, but owing to the rural setting of Shiplake College it is not anticipated that this requirement of Policy CF3 can be adhered to in this instance. The proposed playing field would be accessible by foot through the existing playing pitches to the south. Access via the road would not be required and it is not intended that traffic movements (cars, coaches etc) would be needed to facilitate access to the proposed playing pitches.
- 7.5 It is officer's opinion that the proposed development would broadly meet the aims of Policy CF3, whilst supporting the College and promoting healthy lifestyles.
- 7.6 Sport England raises no objection to the application. They have identified some concerns over the size of run-off and rubber crumb run-off, but they note this can be addressed by the College through management of the pitches. Sport England note that there is a need for additional hockey pitches which has been identified by the Council's emerging playing pitch strategy (PPS) 2041. In the South area, where this site is located, there is a need for additional capacity for Henley HC. There is also a projected future need for rugby in this area as well.

Given the strategic need for the hockey pitch as well as the rugby training pitch and access to secure cricket nets it is appropriate and in accordance with the emerging PPS, that a community use agreement condition is required. This has been completed by Shiplake College and Sport England are in support of it.

Sport England also advise the need for a maintenance and management condition to ensure that the artificial grasses are managed and meet the relevant requirements for training and play as well as sinking fund for the carpet replacement and its recycling. This has been submitted and agreed by Sport England.

Whilst they have identified some concerns over the pitches, Sport England consider that the provision of these pitches would be of sufficient benefit to the

development of sport which would outweigh the “detriment caused by the loss, or prejudice to the use, of the area of playing field.”

7.7 Impact on character and appearance

The Council’s policies and guidance on design state that all new development must be designed to reflect the positive features that make up the character of the local area and should both physically and visually enhance and complement the surroundings. Principle concerns raised by Shiplake Parish Council relate to the use of the land for playing pitches, the physical changes to the site as a result and the use of external lighting.

7.8 The site benefits from an extant planning permission to use the site as playing fields, albeit without the use of artificial surfacing. In this respect, officers do not consider the impact on the character of the area to be materially harmful when considering the extant planning permission. Officers attribute great weight to the extant planning permission in so far as it has established a change to the use of the site, including the use of fencing, goal posts and the associated activities (e.g. students playing and match play). When held in context with the extant planning permission, the current proposal would not significantly and materially change the function and use of the land.

7.9 Officers do acknowledge however that the current proposal does involve more of a change to the appearance of the site with the installation of artificial surfacing. The extent of this visual impact however would be limited to glimpsed views from Mill Lane and Reading Road which would mostly be of the surrounding fencing. Officers acknowledge that there will be some harm caused as a result of this. It would be evident that the use of the land has changed from its current agricultural use into recreational land as a result – however, given the proximity of the site to Shiplake College it is officer’s view that the new recreational use would read well alongside the College and its other recreational land/pitches as an extension to the existing College campus. It is officer’s view that the wider countryside character would not be adversely impacted, and that the proposal would not result in any harmful extension out into the open countryside.

7.10 No external lighting is proposed, and a condition is recommended to explicitly ensure this. As such, officers do not consider the impact of external lighting to be relevant to this proposal.

7.11 Impact on ecology

Policy ENV2 (SOLP) seeks to protect important ecological receptors (designated sites, protected species, priority habitats etc.). Where adverse impacts on important ecological receptors are likely, development must meet the criteria outlined under the policy to be acceptable. Policy ENV3 (SOLP) seeks to secure net gains for biodiversity and requires that applications are supported by a biodiversity metric assessment. Net loss of biodiversity will not be supported. Policies ENV2 and ENV3 (SOLP) are wholly consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

- 7.12 Officers are satisfied that the habitats on site are not a constraint to the proposed development and support ecological enhancements proposed on site. The proposed development would comply with Policy ENV2. The biodiversity impact and metric submitted in support of this application propose biodiversity delivery on land nearby to meet the requirements of Policy ENV3. Officers are satisfied that appropriate measures are proposed to meet the requirements of Policy ENV2 and ENV3, which can be secured via condition.
- 7.13 **Impact on neighbour amenity**
Policy DES6 (SOLP) seeks to ensure that development proposals do not result in significant adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses. Factors to consider include but are not limited to noise or vibration and external lighting.
- 7.14 Officers acknowledge the comments made by neighbour residents concerning the issues of light and noise as a result of the use of these playing pitches. External lighting is not permitted, and officers do not consider the issue of noise to be significantly material when there is an extant planning permission on site for playing fields which could be used and would result in similar levels of noise.
- 7.15 **Access, parking and highway safety**
Policy TRANS5 (SOLP) advises that all types of development will, where appropriate provide for a safe and convenient access for all users to the highway network, provide safe and convenient routes for cyclists and pedestrians and provide parking of vehicles in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council parking standards and provide for loading, unloading, circulation and turning spaces on site.
- 7.16 The proposed playing pitches would be used by those who park at Shiplake College and walk across the existing playing fields. No access via Mill Lane is proposed. Officers are satisfied that the proposed development would not cause any issues of highway safety or parking or access concerns.
- 7.17 **Other material planning considerations**
Drainage – The council’s drainage engineer is satisfied that the proposed development can be supported, subject to a condition which requires a surface water drainage scheme to be agreed by the local planning authority prior to first use of the development.
- 7.18 Energy Reduction – The proposed development does not need to adhere to Policies DES8-10.
- 7.19 Archaeology – There are no archaeological constraints to this scheme.
- 7.20 **Other matters**
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - This development would not result in any new residential use and therefore is not liable to pay CIL.
 - Pre-commencement conditions - In accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Pre-commencement Conditions) Regulations 2018, Section 100ZA (6) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990(a) the

Council is required to confirm agreement to all pre-commencement conditions. These will all have been agreed by the applicant/agent in writing in accordance with the requirements of this legislation

8.0 Other Relevant Legislation

- Human Rights Act 1998 - The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 have been taken into account in the processing of the application and the preparation of this report.
- Equality Act 2010 - In determining this planning application, the Council has regard to its equalities obligations including its obligations under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998 - In considering this application, due regard has been given to the likely effect of the proposal on the need to reduce crime and disorder in accordance with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In reaching a recommendation, officers consider that the proposal will/will not undermine crime prevention or the promotion of community safety.

9.0 PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

9.1 Officers identify some harm caused as a result of the physical alterations required to facilitate the proposed development. However, officers do not consider the impact on the immediate character and appearance of the area to be significant – given the proximity to the College and existing playing fields/pitches. Neither do officers identify any adverse harm on the wider character and appearance of the area. The development would benefit the College in providing further sporting facilities and the development would ensure biodiversity net gains locally and some enhancements on site. Officers consider the benefits are significant.

9.2 Abbreviated versions of the recommended conditions are listed below and shown in full in the Appendix.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION

**Planning Permission should be granted subject to the conditions below:
Full wording of conditions overleaf.**

- 1 : Commencement 3 years - Full Planning Permission**
- 2 : Approved plans**
- 3 : Materials as on plan**
- 4 : No external lighting**
- 5 : Surface water drainage works (details required)**
- 6 : Biodiversity Management and Monitoring Plan**
- 7 : Ecology (Mitigation)**
- 8 : Landscaping Scheme (trees and shrubs only)**
- 9 : Sport Field - Management and Maintenance Scheme**
- 10 : Removal of P.D rights**

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Appendix

Recommended Conditions (full text):

	Description	Details
1	Commencement 3 years - Full Planning Permission	<p>The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.</p> <p>Reason: By virtue of Sections 91 to 95 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.</p>
2	Approved plans	<p>That the development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the details shown on the following approved plans, 2230-08, 2230-07, 2230-05, 2230-04, 2230-02, 2230-06, 2230-03, 2230-01, BOD-0422SL and SCS 1.30B, except as controlled or modified by conditions of this permission.</p> <p>Reason: To secure the proper planning of the area in accordance with Development Plan policies.</p>
3	Materials as on plan	<p>The exterior of the development hereby permitted shall only be constructed in the materials specified on the plans/supporting documents hereby approved or in materials which shall previously have been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.</p> <p>Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the development in accordance with Policies DES1 and DES2 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.</p>
4	No external lighting	<p>No external lighting shall be installed to serve the development hereby approved.</p> <p>Reason: To protect the appearance of the area, the environment and wildlife, and local residents from light pollution in accordance with Policies ENV1, ENV2, ENV3 and ENV12 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.</p>
5	Surface water drainage works (details required)	<p>Prior to the occupation of development, with the exception of any demolition, a full surface water drainage scheme in accordance with the surface water drainage hierarchy as set out in</p>

		<p>Part H of the Building Regulations, including details of the size, position and construction of drainage works, shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The drainage scheme shall be designed to accommodate a 1 in 100 year storm + 40% CC and shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <p>BRE 365 percolation testing must inform the proposed surface water drainage strategy.</p> <p>Only Type 3 sub base will be acceptable for draining areas.</p> <p>Consider catchpit inspection chambers upstream of any final soakaway.</p> <p>Reason: To prevent pollution and flooding in accordance with Policies ENV12 and EP4 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.</p>
6	Biodiversity Management and Monitoring Plan	<p>Prior to the commencement of the development a biodiversity management and monitoring plan (BMMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The content of the BMMP shall accord with the supporting Biodiversity Impact Assessment (Ecology By Design, October 2023), supporting biodiversity metric and include the following:</p> <p>a) Description and evaluation of habitats to be created and enhanced, including detailed landscaping plans, planting plans and cross sectional plans as necessary.</p> <p>b) Method statement for the establishment of target habitats and immediate aftercare actions, with implementation timetable.</p> <p>c) Proposals for ecological enhancements for habitats and species as stated in section 5 of the supporting Ecological Impact Assessment (Ecology By Design, August 2022).</p> <p>d) Aims and objectives of ongoing management, linked to habitat condition criteria of the associated metric.</p> <p>e) Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives.</p>

		<p>f) Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five-year period).</p> <p>g) Details of the body or organization responsible for implementation of the plan.</p> <p>h) Ongoing monitoring and remedial measures.</p> <p>i) Statement of compliance with the associated biodiversity metric, with specific regard to target habitat condition criteria.</p> <p>The BMMP shall include details of the legal and funding mechanism by which the long-term implementation of the plan (minimum 30 years) will be secured by the developer with the management bodies responsible for its delivery. The plan shall also set out (where the results from monitoring show that conservation aims and objectives of the BMMP are not being met) how contingencies and/or remedial action will be identified, agreed and implemented so that the development still delivers the fully functioning biodiversity objectives of the originally approved scheme.</p> <p>The approved BMMP will be implemented in accordance with the approved details and management prescriptions implemented across the site for the plan period.</p> <p>Reason: To secure biodiversity enhancements onsite, in accordance with Policies ENV2 and ENV3 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 and paragraphs 174 and 180 of the NPPF.</p>
7	Ecology (Mitigation)	<p>The development hereby approved shall be implemented in accordance with all of the ecological avoidance and mitigation measures stated in section 5 of the supporting Ecological Impact Assessment (Ecology By Design, August 2022).</p> <p>Reason: To minimise the impacts of development on biodiversity, in accordance with Policy ENV2 of the SOLP and paragraphs 174 and 180 of the NPPF.</p>
8	Landscaping Scheme (trees and shrubs only)	<p>Prior to the construction of any development above slab level a scheme for the landscaping of the site, including the planting of live trees</p>

		<p>and shrubs, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include schedules of new trees and shrubs to be planted (noting species, plant sizes and numbers/densities), the identification of the existing trees and shrubs on the site to be retained (noting species, location and spread), any earth moving operations and finished levels/contours, and an implementation programme. The scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation or use of the development hereby approved and thereafter be maintained in accordance with the approved scheme. In the event of any of the trees or shrubs so planted dying or being seriously damaged or destroyed within 5 years of the completion of the development, a new tree or shrub or equivalent number of trees or shrubs, as the case may be, of a species first approved by the Local Planning Authority, shall be planted and properly maintained in a position or positions first approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.</p> <p>Reason: To help to assimilate the development into its surroundings in accordance with Policies ENV1, DES1 and DES2 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.</p>
9	Sport Field - Management and Maintenance Scheme	<p>The proposed development hereby approved must be implemented and maintained in accordance with the detailed outlined within Management and Maintenance Plan (Boddington Planning, 04 April 2024). The measures set out in the approved scheme shall be complied with in full, with effect from commencement of use of the development hereby approved.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that a new facilities are capable of being managed and maintained to deliver facilities which is fit for purpose, sustainable and to ensure sufficient benefit of the development to sport and to accord with Development Plan Policy CF3 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.</p>
10	Withdrawal of P.D. rights	<p>Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country (General Permitted Development Order) 2015 (or any Order revoking or re-enacting that Order), no development as specified in Schedule 2, Part 7, Class M shall</p>

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		<p>be undertaken without obtaining planning permission from the Local Planning Authority.</p> <p>Reason: The specific circumstances of this site warrant the Local Planning Authority having control over any further development as specified in the condition to safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of the adjoining properties and the character of the area in accordance with Policies DES1, DES2 and DES6 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.</p>
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