

 Reigate & Banstead BOROUGH COUNCIL Banstead Horley Redhill Reigate	TO:	PLANNING COMMITTEE
	DATE:	22 nd January 2020
	REPORT OF:	HEAD OF PLACES & PLANNING
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AGENDA ITEM:	5	WARD: <i>Lower Kingswood, Tadworth and Walton</i>

APPLICATION NUMBER:	19/01513/F	VALID:	20/08/2019
APPLICANT:	Walton Heath Golf Club	AGENT:	Quod Planning
LOCATION:	WALTON HEATH GOLF CLUB, DEANS LANE, WALTON ON THE HILL		
DESCRIPTION:	Erection of a new clubhouse to serve Walton Heath Golf Course comprising a main clubhouse building, ancillary staff accommodation, an 'Artisans' clubhouse, car parking, associated hard and soft landscaping, putting green and a new access road from Dorking Road. As amended on 07/10/2019 and on 06/11/2019 and on 19/11/2019.		
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This application is referred to Committee as the application has raised considerable levels of local interest.

SUMMARY

Planning permission is sought for the erection of a new golf clubhouse to serve Walton Heath Golf Club comprising a new main clubhouse with ancillary staff accommodation, an artisan's clubhouse, a new access onto Dorking Road leading to a car park for 171 vehicles, together with hard and soft landscaping including a new practice putting area.

The site is located in the Green Belt and Core Strategy Policy CS3 and DMP Policy NHE5, in line with the NPPF (2019), state the construction of new buildings will be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless they fall within one of the listed exceptions.

Core Strategy Policy CS3 states that planning permission will not be granted for inappropriate development in the Green Belt, unless very special circumstances exist which clearly outweigh the potential harm to the Green Belt.

The applicants have put forward the argument that a new clubhouse should be considered as an appropriate facility for a golf course, irrespective of the existence or otherwise of an existing facility. They take the view that the test in Policy CS3 (Part 2) of the Reigate and Banstead Core Strategy (adopted July 2014) and paragraph 145(b) of the NPPF is whether the use itself is appropriate, not whether there are alternatives.

Given the presence of this existing facility, it is not considered that a new clubhouse within the Green Belt could properly be considered appropriate in the circumstances. The presence of an alternative site (i.e. the site of the existing clubhouse) in the urban area would be a significant material consideration in considering whether a new clubhouse in the Green Belt is appropriate.

Furthermore, and in order to be considered as not inappropriate, the new facilities should preserve the openness of the Green Belt and not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

The proposal is for a large new clubhouse building together with the formation of a new access from Dorking Road and a large car park to accommodate 171 vehicles. It is considered that the proposals would have a significantly harmful impact on the openness of the site and would result in encroachment onto open green belt land and urban sprawl. The proposals would therefore also conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

Therefore, in accordance with Policy CS3, planning permission should be refused unless it is demonstrated that very special circumstances exist, to the extent that other considerations clearly outweigh any potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm.

With regards to design issues, it is considered that the building in itself, would be attractive and it has been demonstrated that the impact of the building on the landscape would be acceptable. However, the proposal would result in the removal of a section of the mature trees within the protected woodland and lead to fragmentation and the urbanisation of an established woodland environment. The applicant proposes the provision of replacement trees, compensatory measures and additional tree cover. However, it is not considered that this would adequately compensate for the existing woodland that would be lost.

The proposals include the formation of a new access from Dorking Road. Surrey Highways are satisfied with the design of the access and that the traffic generated by the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the safety and free flow of traffic on the highway. They are also satisfied with the quantum of parking proposed which is the same as on the existing clubhouse site.

Other issues relating to the impact of the proposals on bio-diversity and sustainability are considered acceptable.

The applicants have put forward the case that the proposed development does not constitute inappropriate development and therefore very special circumstances do not have to be shown. However, they state that if the local planning authority considers

that the development is inappropriate in the Green Belt, as is concluded above, then the applicant contends that very special circumstances do exist. The Council has reviewed the circumstances put forward but consider that, given the degree of harm that would be caused by the erection of the clubhouse, and the formation of the access road and car park, it is not considered that the benefits stated are of sufficient merit to outweigh the harm that would be caused.

In light of these comments, it is not considered that very special circumstances have been demonstrated to outweigh the harm that is caused by reason of inappropriateness and the other harm identified. Accordingly, it is recommended that planning permission be refused for the following reasons.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning permission is **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

1. The proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt, resulting in harm to openness, due to the introduction of new buildings, car parking and an access and access road. No very special circumstances exist to clearly outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness and the other identified harm. As such, the proposal is contrary to Reigate and Banstead Core Strategy Policy CS3 and Reigate and Banstead Development Management Plan Policy NHE5 and the provisions of the NPPF (2019).
2. The collective loss of high and moderate trees to facilitate the clubhouse will not only have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the natural landscape but also lead to further habitat fragmentation of the woodland. The location of the parking areas will prevent replacement planting to compensate for loss of the woodland or enable the creation of a natural setting. This would result in further harm to the open rural character of the area contrary to Reigate and Banstead Development Management Plan Policies DES1 and NHE3.

Consultations:

Highway Authority: No objection subject to condition. The County Highway Authority has assessed the application on safety, capacity and policy grounds and is satisfied that the application would not have a material impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining public highway with respect of access, net additional traffic generation and parking. The County Highway Authority therefore has no highway requirements subject to conditions – see detailed commentary within the report.

Environmental Health (Contaminated Land): No concerns are raised.

Surrey CC Countryside Access – The application site is located north-east of Banstead Public Footpath no. 96. The length of the existing practice area is longer than the average drive, but they would be interested to know whether there is any intention to create a barrier to protect walkers. Also, have been advised that historically, equestrians have used the path known as the ‘gallops’. The proposal would affect this route. Whilst not currently recorded on the definitive map and statement as a public bridleway, the applicant should be aware that the proposal may be calling into question any potential acquired access rights, prompting an application for the path to be formally recorded on the DMs.

Environment Agency – No comments.

Reigate Ramblers – Object in principle to the relocation of the clubhouse onto open green belt land. Suggest that concerns about crossing the Dorking Road could be dealt with by other means, such as a controlled crossing. Furthermore, there would be no justification for any changes to footpaths in the area

Surrey CC Minerals and Waste – No comments.

Surrey Wildlife Trust – The Trust would advise that the Ecological Appraisal Report by LUC dated June 2019, which the applicant has provided in support of the above planning application, provides much useful information for the Local Authority to be able to assess the potential status of protected and important species on the proposed development site and the likely effect of the development on them.

We would however draw the attention of the Local Authority to section 3.42 Of the Report which states that if there has been a “significant time lapse” between the time of survey and the implementation of proposals, “updated ecological surveys may be required”.

As two survey seasons have passed, since the original surveys were undertaken we would advise the Local Authority to confirm with the applicant if their ecologist is of the opinion that the findings of these surveys are still relevant for this application or if further surveys are required to allow the Local Authority to consider the effect of the development on the site’s current biodiversity and any mitigation proposals which may now be required to prevent adverse effect.

If further updated surveys are required, we would be pleased to comment further when the results of this survey work are made available. If the answer to the above

is that the surveys undertaken and the ecologist's recommendations are still relevant, we have the following comments.

Should the Local Authority be minded to grant this planning application for this Green Belt site, the applicant should be required to undertake all the recommended actions in section 5 of the Report for 'Site B' For habitat, 5.6-5.19, including the biodiversity enhancements detailed in sections 5.14-5.17 and 5.19-5.22, together with appropriate conservation management as listed in 5.18. For species, 5.23-5.67, including enhancements in 5.52-5.53, 5.58, 5.63 and 5.68-5.70.

With particular reference to 'Site B' for the need for the applicant to obtain a European Protected Species (EPS) licence from Natural England following the receipt of planning permission and prior to any tree works which may affect bats commencing and undertake all the actions which will be detailed in the Method Statement (as outlined) which must support an EPS licence application.

This will help prevent adverse effect to legally protected species resulting from the proposed development works and help to off-set adverse effects to the biodiversity value of the site resulting from the proposed development.

As the proposed development site is within an area of land selected by the Local Authority as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI), namely Banstead and Walton Heath, which are protected from adverse effect arising from planning proposals under their Core Strategy Policy CS2, we would advise the Local Authority, should they be minded to grant this application, to take the opportunity to approve a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) for this site to require the applicant to demonstrate how the development will be delivered without adverse effect to the biodiversity value of the site.

The proposed development will result in the loss of some habitat including Priority Habitat (Lowland mixed deciduous woodland) (As listed in section 41 of the NERC Act 2006) and the applicant should prove that their proposed site enhancements will result in no net loss of biodiversity value and as now required by legislation and planning policy* a clear net gain in biodiversity value, which will complement and support the habitats and species for which the SNCI was selected.

The LEMP should include plans showing areas of habitat creation and enhancement with planting lists and seeding plans, details of other enhancements together with a conservation management regime, funded over a period of years, which should include a monitoring programme to enable any deficiencies to be remedied.

Surrey Hills AONB – The site lies within the Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) and is not visible from the Surrey Hills AONB some distance to the south. Nor would the development harm views towards the AONB. This part of the AGLV has not been recommended as an AONB candidate area in the Landscape Character Assessment carried out in connection with Natural England's forthcoming boundary review of the Surrey Hills AONB. Notwithstanding this I consider that the attractive landscape is worthy of protection in its own right.

I support the proposed landscape mitigation measures set out in the LVIA. These include new native woodlands, understory planting, new heathland, scrub and wildlife meadows. Also, the previously proposed engineered landscape forms around the building have been removed in favour of the ground being naturally graded. From the east the clubhouse would be seen against a treed backdrop. But the indicative view on page 102 of the D&A Statement entitled "Closer view from south of - Golf Course" suggests that the clubhouse would look rather stark. To soften this visual impact and create more visual interest it is suggested a single specimen oak tree be planted in front a sufficient distance from the building to grow in decades time into an interesting landscape feature. Important more distant landscape views from the clubhouse could still be gained under the tree canopy and if it were located towards the southern corner of the building.

I conclude that if the clubhouse has to be on this side of the main road and in an undeveloped area, every reasonable effort has been taken to minimize the landscape impact of the proposed development with a discreet contemporary design meeting the functional requirements of the club.

Surrey CC Historic Landscape Officer (Archaeology) – Although the application area is over the 0.4ha area that is recommended for archaeological assessment, and possibly evaluation under Policy Pc8 of the Reigate and Banstead Local Plan, the actual development proposals are largely confined to the new clubhouse that will impact upon a much smaller area and so in this case, I have no archaeological concerns.

Crispin Blunt MP – Mr Blunt has associated himself with the comments of Tadworth and Walton Residents Association and welcomes their commentary. He asks that planning permission be refused as it would pose a substantial breach of national Green Belt policy in the nation's most important Green belt, and in one of the most sensitive areas of the Green belt on Walton Heath.

London Green Belt Council (LGBC) – The London Green Belt Council objects to this application because of impact on the Green Belt. They draw attention to the advice in the NPPF which states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances, that local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt 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.

They state that the proposal is inappropriate development because it does not preserve openness or meet all the purposes set out in paragraph 134. It also does not conform with policies in the Local Plan and Development Management Plan.

The LGBC has submitted a long and detailed letter of objection which makes the following summarised points:

- The development as a whole will be significant structure and other facilities, such as the car park and access which will clearly interrupt the openness of the countryside.

- Spatially, the development will have a significant adverse impact on this part of the Green Belt.
- The proposal is for a permanent structure with no proposals to return the land to its original state.
- There will be a considerable increase in activity.
- The cases referred to by the applicant do not show how the development preserves openness.
- The clubhouse site and the associated access road and car park are outside the Walton on the Hill envelope and would be seen to be adding to urban sprawl because of the nature of the development.
- The development clearly forms a tongue of development into the open countryside and so fails to safeguard it.
- In addition to the adverse impact on the Green Belt there will be other forms of harm, particularly the adverse impact on the landscape/ AGLV, biodiversity, heritage, and the unsustainable location.
- The very special circumstances stated do not overcome the harm identified.
- For the reasons stated in this submission we urge the Reigate and Banstead Council to refuse this application.

Tadworth and Walton Residents Association objects strongly to this application, for several reasons. Their primary objection is that the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt, because of impact on “openness” and the “purposes” of the Green Belt. They also consider that there is “other harm” in terms of impact on the AGLV, ecology, sustainability and heritage. It is therefore necessary for the Club to show that there are “very special circumstances” which outweigh this harm and, in their opinion,, it has failed to do this. They state that there are clearly other options which can overcome the deficiencies of the existing clubhouse and the crossing of the Dorking Road. There are also other concerns relating more specifically to the site layout including the parking and the impact on the practice ground.

The Tadworth and Walton Residents Association has submitted a long and detailed letter of objection which makes the following summarised points

- The proposal is inappropriate development because the proposal does not preserve openness or meet all the purposes set out in paragraph 134. It also does not conform with policy OSR 3.3 and 4 of the DMP. OSR3 4.
- It is clear that the new access onto the Dorking Road, the new road and parking along the road, will be visible from the Dorking Rd and also the public footpath at the end of the practice area. As the building will extend beyond the wooded area onto Beechams Field it will be a very dominant feature in the landscape until the new planting matures. The clubhouse will also be very visible across the golf course.
- It has to be remembered that the public have rights to walk all over the common and are not restricted to the rights of way. It will be a substantial building, about 55m long and about 8m high. Although mainly single storey, there is a high headroom at ground floor level.
- The footprint of the development is considerable. It will be very damaging to the openness of the area. The southern side of the Dorking Road between the A217 and the M25 and beyond is currently open, with very little development. Most of

it is common land, apart from Beechams Field, the maintenance building and a couple of small historic groups of housing. There has been little new development since the designation of the Green Belt apart from the Club's maintenance building. Spatially, the development will have a significant adverse impact on this part of the Green Belt.

- The PPG refers to duration of a development and its remediability as one of the factors affecting openness. In this case, the proposal is for a permanent structure with no proposals to return the land to its original state.
- There will be a significant increase in activity, particularly from the increased traffic generation by club members using the 171 car parking spaces which, based on the existing car park usage, will sometimes be at capacity.
- The Dorking Road is a physical boundary between open countryside to the South, designated as AGLV and AONB, and the built-up area to the North. The clubhouse site and the associated access road and car park are outside the Walton on the Hill envelope and would add to urban sprawl because of the nature of the development.
- The development clearly forms a tongue of development into the open countryside and so fails to safeguard it.
- The proposal will have an adverse impact on the landscape which is designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value.
- The proposed buildings with associated car parking and access road will harm the natural beauty of the area.
- The development will be visually obtrusive as well as reducing the tranquillity of the area and destroying some local habitats. It certainly will not assist in the conservation and enhancement of the landscape as required in the Council's adopted plans.
- The impact on the AGLV amounts to "any other harm".
- despite the applicant's case that there will be net gain, we consider that the development will be harmful to the natural environment.
- Appreciate that efforts have been taken to avoid the remaining trees but there will still be significant losses. As the ecologist points out, the woodland, mature trees, scrub and the establishment of heath land habitats contribute to the biodiversity and the overall value of the SNCI.
- The ecology consultant also points out that there will be harm in the short and medium term but in the long term there will be a net gain. However, much of the proposed enhancement could be done now at little cost and without the new clubhouse. Introducing a heath land environment on the north side of the Dorking Road, although to be welcomed, may not be appropriate for the change to community use. We note that the woodland which was to compensate for the land taken for the reservoir and the wildflower flower meadow for the common land exchange have yet to develop, with areas of woodland still fenced off even though common land is meant to be open.
- The existing clubhouse is of considerable local if not national importance because of the early history of the golf club and should be considered for local listing.
- Policy CS4 states that development should be designed to respect, conserve and enhance the historic environment and this is amplified in NHE9 1. And 5. The application does none of these. The heritage of the common, which has

- been protected for many generations, is important and should be protected. A new club house will damage the historic landscape.
- in our opinion the poor layout and condition of the existing clubhouse cannot be taken as amounting to the ‘very special circumstances’ required to overcome the harm to the Green Belt.
 - Policy INF2 of the DMP, on community facilities, is relevant, stating in a) that new community facilities will be encouraged where there is an identified local need which cannot be met from the use of the existing stock of community facilities. (There is also the issue that this is a private not community facility).
 - In our opinion, very little planning weight can be attached to the argument that the sustainability of the Club depends on the new clubhouse.
 - The Club argues that a relocated clubhouse is necessary to attract major championships and retain its rankings. However, a successful British Masters tournament was held recently despite the location of the clubhouse. Walton Heath is one of the few club’s to have attracted a championship of this importance.
 - The existing Artisans’ clubhouse could be refurbished and is in a far more sustainable location.
 - Traffic accident levels are too low for the local highway authority to take action, there are options for the Club to investigate involving either surface or tunnel arrangements to improve safety. This has not been done. In our opinion, the highway crossing issue cannot be used as an argument to justify ‘very special circumstances’.
 - In our opinion, the case, made by the Club for the benefits arising from relocation, are insubstantial and together do not outweigh the overall harm.
 - The scheme proposals 11.0 shows that the revised practice area is considerably reduced in width with the clubhouse not only occupying the woodland but extending into the open area of Beechams Field. The practice tees are moved closer to the Dorking Road which could also be dangerous.
 - Also that the new access road and parking reduces the length of the practice area and objections to the application from golfers indicates this could also be dangerous, particularly as driving distances are increasing and there is a public footpath close to the boundary.
 - Concerned that if the Club is successful in attracting new members and visiting golf societies, there will be pressures to extend the car park.
 - Concerned that there could be future pressures to expand the clubhouse as requirements change over time.

The Residents Association objects to the application in terms of harm to the Green Belt, on grounds of openness and purpose, and “any other harm” (cf The Redhill Aerodrome inquiry) based on the impact on the landscape, heritage, ecology and sustainability. The proposal conflicts with many of the NPPF, Core Strategy and DMP policies.

In the opinion of the Residents Association, the benefits listed by the applicants do not, either individually or cumulatively, amount to the very special circumstances needed to outweigh the harm. A further concern is that although each application has to be determined on its merits, it could create a precedent for future expansion.

They therefore request that the application is refused. If the application should be approved, they request a section 106 agreement or conditions be imposed to require the Club to fully implement and maintain the community benefits, to be monitored by the Council, plus a requirement that should the Club fail all buildings and hard surfaces be removed and the land be restored to its existing condition.

Tadworth and Walton Residents Association have submitted a second detailed letter in response to the additional information submitted in support of the proposals by the applicants. They reiterate many of their previous concerns and fundamentally disagree with the reasoning put forward by the club and their planning advisers with regards to the appropriateness of otherwise of the proposed development within the Green Belt, with regards to the preservation of openness, on the spatial impact of the proposals, the degree of activity and with regards to the very special circumstances put forward. They also consider the reduced size of the practice area to be a potential hazard.

Lower Kingswood Residents Association – Object to the proposals. Consider the proposed development to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt which would impact adversely on openness. There would be other harm caused to ecology, sustainability, heritage and the area of great landscape value. They consider that the club has not demonstrated very special circumstances which will outweigh the harm.

Representations:

Letters were sent to neighbouring properties on 3rd September 2019, a site notice was posted 11th September 2019 and advertised in local press on 12th September 2019.

77 objections have been received raising the following issues:

Issue	Response
Harm to Green Belt/countryside	See paragraphs 6.3 – 6.23
Hazard to highway safety	See paragraphs 6.32 – 6.36
Increase in traffic and congestion	See paragraphs 6.32 – 6.36
No need for the development	See paragraphs 6.44 – 6.54
Out of character with surrounding area	See paragraphs 6.24 – 6.31
Harm to wildlife habitat	See paragraphs 6.41 – 6.43
Inadequate car parking	See paragraphs 6.32 – 6.36
Inconvenience during construction	See paragraphs 6.55
Poor design	See paragraphs 6.24 – 6.31
Noise and disturbance	See paragraph 6.55
Overdevelopment	See paragraphs 6.24 – 6.31

Out of character with surrounding area	See paragraphs 6.24 – 6.31
Loss of / harm to trees	See paragraphs 6.37 – 3.36
Increase I traffic congestion	See paragraphs 6.32 – 6.36
Drainage / sewage capacity	See paragraph 6.44
Crime fears	See paragraph 6.56
Harm to Conservation Area	The site is not in a conservation area
Covenant conflict	This is not a planning matter
Loss of buildings	Not relevant to this application

A total of 154 comments in support of the proposals have been received. The main issues raised are summarised as follows:

- Benefit to housing need
- Community/regeneration benefit
- Economic growth / jobs
- Visual amenity benefits
- Health fears (road crossing)

1.0 Site and Character Appraisal

- 1.1 The application site for the proposed new clubhouse is located on the eastern side of Dorking Road. It is situated between the main golf course and the recently completed practice facility and to the south of the current greenkeepers complex. The site is presently undeveloped and comprises an area of open land amongst woodland, which forms part of a woodland preservation order (TPO RE507A). The site is currently access by an informal access track from Dorking Road via the greenkeepers complex.
- 1.2 The site is wholly within the Metropolitan Green Belt, is designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value and is within an area identified as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance. The main golf course itself retains an open character despite its recreational use and the surrounding area characterised by heathland and woodland. The edge of the built-up area of Walton on the Hill is presently clearly defined by the dense belt of woodland which flanks Dorking Road.

2.0 Added Value

- 2.1 Improvements secured at the pre-application stage: The applicant entered into pre-application discussions with the Council on two occasions. On the first occasion (PAM/17/00345), the applicants were advised that the Council considered that a new clubhouse on the application site would be considered as an inappropriate form of development within the Green Belt, and therefore very special circumstances would need to be demonstrated to outweigh the

harm that would be caused. On this issue, the Council advised that a convincing 'very special circumstances' case had not yet been demonstrated.

- 2.2 The applicants were also advised that the traditional design approach chosen was not appropriate for this location and that the Club should be encouraged to explore a more contemporary design approach. Careful consideration would also need to be given to the landscaping of the site, replacement tree planting and screening. Advice was also given in relation to ecological matters, given the location of the site within an SNCI, and on highways matters.
- 2.3 On the second occasion (PAM/18/00498), a revised design and further evidence in support of the same was submitted for the proposed clubhouse. Following a meeting, the applicants were advised that the Council maintained the view that the proposals constituted inappropriate development within the Green belt and that very special circumstances did not exist which would outweigh the harm caused.
- 2.4 The applicants were advised that the revised design of the proposal, which was of a contemporary design, was a marked improvement on the previous submission in terms of the overall design approach and ethos which responded to previous concerns. It was also noted that the siting of the building had been reviewed with a view to minimising the prominence of the building and maximising retention of tree cover.
- 2.5 Improvements have been sought during consideration of the application to the new access from Dorking Road, and further information in relation to concerns raised from the planning application consultation exercise.

3.0 Relevant Planning and Enforcement History

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------|--|-----------------------|
| 3.1 | 12/00181/F | Change of use from non-agricultural land to golf practice facility together with the associated works including erection of secure storage hut, provision of all-weather turf and erection of ball stray netting (outdoor sport and recreation). | Granted
25/05/2012 |
| 3.2 | 09/01593/TPO | Within a woodland remove 20 Birch trees, 30 Sycamores and 120 saplings to enable restoration of Pintmere Pond. | Granted
14/12/2009 |
| 3.3 | 01/01452/F | Proposed single storey pavilion to replace previous pavilion destroyed by fire. | Granted
30/10/2001 |

4.0 Proposal and Design Approach

- 4.1 Full planning permission is sought for the erection of a detached part one and part two storey building to be used as a golf clubhouse, a detached single storey building for the Artisan's golf clubhouse, the formation of a new access from Dorking Road with a new access road leading to a car park containing 171 spaces, together with hard and soft landscaping and a new practice putting green.
- 4.2 The proposed clubhouse would be principally single storey in height with a smaller first floor level of 347 sqm in area. The clubhouse would contain changing rooms, lockers, social/bar and dining facilities, and a pro-shop at the ground floor level with meeting rooms located at the upper ground floor. Residential accommodation for the house manager and staff would be located at first floor level. This accommodation would be intended solely for staff use who need to be on site for operational, supervisory and security reasons. The total area of the new clubhouse and Artisans clubhouse would be 2,900 sqm in area, which is stated as being of a similar size to the existing clubhouse in Walton on the Heath. The Artisans clubhouse will comprise a single storey building, located to the north of the site where the new access road will turn down into the proposed clubhouse. This is proposed to be similar in size to the existing Artisans Clubhouse.
- 4.3 A new access would be formed off Dorking Road leading to an extensive car parking area which would be situated between the proposed clubhouse and adjacent woodland and also along the access road. It would be accompanied by substantial hard and soft landscaping.
- 4.4 A design and access statement should illustrate the process that has led to the development proposal, and justify the proposal in a structured way, by demonstrating the steps taken to appraise the context of the proposed development. It expects applicants to follow a four-stage design process comprising:
Assessment;
Involvement;
Evaluation; and
Design.
- 4.5 Evidence of the applicant's design approach is set out below:

Assessment	<p>The character of the surrounding area is assessed as open land. The site lies within a Site of Nature Conservation Importance, designated for its large mosaic of oak-birch woodland, acid grassland, remnant heathland, scrub and several ponds. It also lies within the Green Belt which seeks to prevent urban sprawl and within an Area of Great Landscape Value which seeks to protect the distinctive landscape character of the area.</p> <p>Site features meriting retention are listed as woodland.</p>
Involvement	Community views were sought by the applicants at a community meeting and exhibition held at the golf club in

	October 2018.
Evaluation	No other development options for a new clubhouse have been considered by the club.
Design	The applicant's reasons for choosing the proposal from the available options were guided by advice from the Council and other consultees. A number of locations on the eastern side of Dorking Road were investigated with the final position chosen due to visual protection from a line of trees.

4.6 Further details of the development are as follows:

Site area	Golf course extends to 97 ha. Site for new clubhouse, access and car parking area extends to approximately 1ha.
Existing use	Open land forming part of the existing golf course
Existing parking spaces	None
Proposed parking spaces	171 in total

5.0 Policy Context

5.1 Designation

Metropolitan Green Belt
Woodland Tree Preservation Order (RE507A -W1)
Site of Nature Conservation Interest
Area of Great Landscape Value

5.2 Reigate and Banstead Core Strategy

CS1(Sustainable Development)
CS2 (Valued Landscapes and Natural Environment),
CS3 (Green Belt)
CS4 (Valued Townscapes and Historic Environment)
CS5 (Valued People/Economic Development),
CS10 (Sustainable Development),
CS11 (Sustainable Construction),
CS12 (Infrastructure Delivery),
CS17 (Travel Options and accessibility)

5.3 Reigate & Banstead Development Management Plan 2019

DES1 (Design of New Development)
OSR3 (Outdoor Sport and Recreation)
TAP1 (Access, parking and servicing)

- NHE1 (Landscape Protection)
- NHE2 (Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and areas of geological importance)
- NHE3 (Protecting trees, woodland areas and natural habitats)
- NHE5 Development within the Green Belt)
- INF2 (Community Facilities)

5.4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Local Distinctiveness Design Guide
Vehicle and Cycle Parking
Guidance 2018

Other

Human Rights Act 1998
Community Infrastructure Levy
Regulations 2010

6.0 **Assessment**

6.1 The site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. National and Local Policy requires that in order to preserve the openness of the Green Belt, planning permission should not be granted for development that is inappropriate unless justified by very special circumstances.

6.2 The main issues to consider are:

- The principle of new buildings in the Green Belt
- Design appraisal
- Highways
- Trees
- Energy and Sustainability
- Impact on bio-diversity
- Very Special Circumstances

The principle of new buildings in the Green Belt

6.3 The site is located in the Green Belt and Core Strategy Policy CS3 and DMP Policy NHE5, in line with the NPPF (2019), state the construction of new buildings will be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless they fall within one of the listed exceptions.

6.4 Para.143 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Para.145 sets out a number of exceptions to this, including as section B: the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) 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.

- 6.5 Core Strategy Policy CS3 states that planning permission will not be granted for inappropriate development in the Green Belt, unless very special circumstances exist which clearly outweigh the potential harm to the Green Belt.
- 6.6 The applicants have put forward the argument that a new clubhouse should be considered as an appropriate facility for a golf course, irrespective of the existence or otherwise of an existing facility. They take the view that the test in Policy CS3 (Part 2) of the Reigate and Banstead Core Strategy (adopted July 2014) and paragraph 145(b) of the NPPF is whether the use itself is appropriate, not whether there are alternatives. In support of this position, a number of other cases are quoted.
- 6.7 However, in all of those cases, the proposals related to a facility which was not already available for example, in the Hertford Golf Course appeal, the Inspector is quoted as stating that the erection of a golf clubhouse, pro-shop facilities and upgraded golf practice facilities can be considered not inappropriate in the Green Belt. However, this was for the creation of a new club and golf course including the change of use of agricultural land. In the case of Cherkley Court, the proposal was for the change of use and extension of an existing building and the formation of a new golf course. The Mole Valley appeal established that a clubhouse 'was considered to be acceptable because it provided essential facilities ancillary to the golf course. In this application, that clubhouse already exists, and therefore, it is implied that a new replacement clubhouse in the Green Belt, as an alternative facility to the existing clubhouse in the village would not necessarily be considered essential in the same way. The Edgewarebury case is also similar in that the development proposed is the creation of an 18-hole golf course with ancillary clubhouse, associated car parking and landscaping. In this case, the Inspector states that a "clubhouse would be regarded as intrinsic and as such its purpose would be core to the experience of participating in this outdoor sport". Given that a clubhouse already exists for Walton Heath golf club, it is not considered that this case, and the others quoted, provide any support for the proposal in this case.
- 6.8 Given the presence of this existing facility, it is not considered that a new clubhouse within the Green Belt could properly be considered appropriate in the circumstances. The presence of an alternative site (i.e. the site of the existing clubhouse) in the urban area would be a significant material consideration in considering whether a new clubhouse in the Green Belt is appropriate.
- 6.9 The second part of the test in NPPF para. 145 (b) states that the proposals can only be considered as appropriate, notwithstanding the comments above, as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

- 6.10 The National Planning Practice Guidance published advice on the assessment of openness in the Green Belt in July 2019. It states that *“assessing the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt, where it is relevant to do so, requires a judgment based on the circumstances of the case. By way of example, the courts have identified a number of matters which may need to be taken into account in making this assessment. These include, but are not limited to:*
- *openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume;*
 - *the duration of the development, and its remediability – taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness; and*
 - *the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation.”*
- 6.11 Each of these issues is discussed in turn below.

Visual Impact

- 6.12 The proposed clubhouse would be a large building, of two storeys in part and would be erected in a location which is currently free from built form. The site proposed for the clubhouse is open grassland located between the existing practice ground and the golf course itself. There is a line of trees along the western side of the clubhouse site, some of which would be removed to facilitate the new building.
- 6.13 At its highest point the building would be approximately 6.5m in height to the flat roof above the two storey element. The flat roof over the single storey element would be some 4.9m in height. The building would be broadly L-shaped and would be approximately 59m in length along the south-western elevation and approximately 59m along the south-eastern elevation. It would have a gross floor area of 2,628 sqm over two floors with the upper storey containing 347sqm. The proposed new clubhouse would be some 300sqm larger than the existing clubhouse in the village. In addition, a small separate Artisans clubhouse is proposed to be located to the north of the site, which will comprise a single storey building of 150sqm floor area, slightly larger than the existing Artisans Club house on the existing site in the village.
- 6.14 The proposals also include a new access from Dorking Road to the east which would lead to a total of 171 car parking spaces. The car parking would be located to the north and west of the clubhouse and to the north of the existing practice ground.
- 6.15 It is considered that the proposed new access from Dorking Road and the new road and car parking area would have a significant impact on the visual amenity of the site and surrounding area. The road and car parking would occupy a significant area of land which is currently open and visible from Dorking Road and nearby footpaths.

- 6.16 The proposed clubhouse itself, although set back from the highway, and in part behind a tree belt, would nevertheless be visible from the road, the new access and car parking and from the surrounding golf course. The building would be a large and significant structure in a currently open landscape which will have a significant impact on the open aspect of the suite. It is acknowledged that the design and proposed materials will help the building meld into its background but, nevertheless it would remain highly visible from surrounding land.

Spatial Impact

- 6.17 The overall increase in built form, consisting of the access, access road, car park, and the two clubhouse buildings would occupy a significant area of open land and would be damaging to the openness of the Green Belt. The area is currently open, and free of built form apart from the maintenance building within the woodland to the north, and a small pavilion on the adjoining open playing field to the north-west.

Duration of Development

- 6.18 The PPG refers to the duration of the development, and its remediability – taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness. In this case, the proposed clubhouse buildings, the car park, and access road are permanent structures which will remain on the site, with no plans to return the land to its open state in the foreseeable future.

Degree of activity likely to be generated

- 6.19 The activity generated by the new clubhouses is foreseen by the applicants to be similar to the degree of activity that is currently generated by the existing clubhouse facility within the village. The existing clubhouse is a longstanding feature of the village and the existing road network accommodates the traffic generated by the club in the built-up area. In contrast, this same level of activity would be transferred to the currently open green belt to the east of Dorking Road, leading to significant harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Purposes of including land within the Green Belt

- 6.20 There are 5 purposes listed in paragraph 134 of the NPPF. Of the 5 listed, it is considered that two are relevant, namely a) and c). Purpose (a) states that land is included within the Green Belt to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas. The village of Walton on the Hill is not, in itself, a large built-up area, but it forms part of a larger suburban area including Tadworth, Kingswood, Nork, Tattenham Corner and Banstead to the north and east. Dorking Road forms a strong and defined physical boundary between open countryside to the South, designated as AGLV and AONB, and the built-up area to the North. The clubhouse site and the associated access road and car park are outside the Walton on the Hill envelope and would add to urban sprawl beyond the currently built up area, and despite the possibility of landscaping and screening would

nevertheless represent an incursion of built form and sprawl from the access road, car park and buildings into currently open Green Belt land.

- 6.21 Purpose (c) states that land is included within the Green Belt to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The development clearly forms an incursion of development onto open land and in itself, represents encroachment of built form onto countryside. The extent of the access road, car park and clubhouses is substantial and represents a significant encroachment, conflicting with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.
- 6.22 The proposals would not, therefore, qualify as an exception under the terms of NPPF paragraph 145 (b) and would comprise inappropriate development within the green belt. Therefore, in accordance with Policy CS3, planning permission should be refused unless it is demonstrated that very special circumstances exist, to the extent that other considerations clearly outweigh any potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm.
- 6.23 The application will therefore be assessed against the other planning considerations before an assessment of whether 'very special circumstances' which outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness exist.

Design appraisal

- 6.24 DMP Policy DES1 relates to the design of new development and states that new development will be expected to be of a high quality design that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of its surroundings. The policy lists a number of criteria that would need to be met if a proposal is to be found acceptable. For example, development should promote and reinforce local distinctiveness and respect the character of the surrounding area, including positive physical characteristics of local neighbourhoods and the visual appearance of the immediate street scene and make use of high quality materials, landscaping and building detailing. Development should also incorporate appropriate landscaping to mitigate the impact, and complement the design, of new development, as well as protect and enhance natural features.
- 6.25 In itself, the proposed clubhouse buildings would be well designed, attractive contemporary buildings which would fulfil the needs of the golf club. The primarily single storey design with a limited two storey element on the main clubhouse, would be set down in its landscaped setting and would incorporate a limited palette of sensitive materials which respond to its setting in the landscape. The proposed Artisans clubhouse would be set in an area of woodland and would be well-screened but with glimpsed views from the proposed car park and surrounding golf course.
- 6.26 In support of the proposals, the applicants have submitted a Landscape and Visual Assessment which provides a visual appraisal of the proposed development and seeks to show the extent of any effects that will arise from the development.

- 6.27 The Appraisal goes on to state that the change in existing landscape character will be limited to the application site only with the opportunity to enhance the local landscape character with new ecologically rich areas which respond to the existing landscape character of the local area. It is stated that these will also assist in integrating the proposals within the receiving landscape. The visual assessment has established that there are middle distant views from Public Foot Path 1 which runs southwards from Dorking Road close to the edge of the existing practice area and that filtered views are possible from Bridleway 2 and long distance and filtered views are possible from Bridleways 3 and 4. The appraisal goes on to state that the quality of views from the Public Footpath would have a slight adverse from the proposals. All other views from Public Rights of Way would not be affected.
- 6.28 It is concluded that the magnitude of change and the limited effects of the proposed development are compatible with the character and visual amenities of the local area. The new club house, access road and areas of parking would not be highly visible from points of public access and would not be detrimental to the character of the receiving landscape.
- 6.29 The impact of the proposals on the landscape has been considered in detail by the Surrey Hills AONB planning adviser. It is noted that the site lies within the Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) and is not visible from the Surrey Hills AONB some distance to the south. It is also considered that the development would not harm views towards the AONB. This part of the AGLV has not been recommended as an AONB candidate area in the Landscape Character Assessment carried out in connection with Natural England's forthcoming boundary review of the Surrey Hills AONB. Notwithstanding this the AONB adviser considers that the attractive landscape is worthy of protection in its own right.
- 6.30 The AONB adviser goes on to state that he supports the proposed landscape mitigation measures set out in the LVIA which includes new native woodlands, understory planting, new heathland, scrub and wildlife meadows. Also, the previously proposed engineered landscape forms around the building have been removed in favour of the ground being naturally graded. From the east the clubhouse would be seen against a treed backdrop. But the indicative view on page 102 of the D&A Statement entitled "Closer view from south of - Golf Course" suggests that the clubhouse would look rather stark. To soften this visual impact and create more visual interest, it is suggested by the AONB adviser that a single specimen oak tree be planted in front a sufficient distance from the building to grow in decades time into an interesting landscape feature. Important more distant landscape views from the clubhouse could still be gained under the tree canopy and if it were located towards the southern corner of the building. He concludes that if the clubhouse has to be on this side of the main road and in an undeveloped area, every reasonable effort has been taken to minimize the landscape impact of the proposed development with a discreet contemporary design meeting the functional requirements of the club.

- 6.31 In the light of these comments, it is not considered that the proposed development would conflict with the provisions of DMP Policy DES 1.

Highways Matters

- 6.32 The proposed development includes the provision of a new access from Dorking Road, leading to a car parking area to the north and north-east of the proposed clubhouse. The proposals have been reviewed by Surrey Highways and following the submission of revised plans which have addressed their concerns relating to the geometry of the access and visibility from the new access onto Dorking Road, no objections area raised.
- 6.33 The application includes the provision of a new car park which would contain 171 spaces. This is stated as being similar to the number of spaces available at the existing clubhouse. The Council's adopted Parking Standards state that on golf courses, 3 car parking spaces per hole should be provided. Walton Heath Golf Club has two 18 hole golf courses. To accord with the standards, this would require a total of 108 spaces, plus an additional 5% for disabled users.
- 6.34 Surrey Highways have reviewed the proposals and has no in principle objections to the proposed relocation of the golf clubhouse. They state that the new facilities are the same as existing facilities and do not considered that there would be an increase in visitor attraction. IN addition, they state that the proposed development would remove the need for members of the golf club to cross the highway as all facilities would be on the south-eastern side of the Dorking Road.
- 6.35 The proposed parking provision of 171 spaces is a comparable re-provision of the existing parking that is available at the existing clubhouse. Whilst this exceeds car parking levels set out within the Parking Standards, it would not create any additional traffic pressure given it is a replacement of the existing clubhouse. It is not considered therefore that there would be any conflict with DMP Policy TAP1.
- 6.36 Comments have ben received from the Surrey CC Public Rights of Way officer who query whether there is any intention to create a barrier to protect walkers from the public footpath at the western end of the practice ground. In response, the applicants state that the design of the practice ground has been informed by advice from established and well respected technical consultants who have significant experience in the design, layout, operation and ongoing safety management of golf courses and practice areas. The practice area will be screened by existing and new landscaping and trees. They state that during major tournaments, the public footpath at the end of the practice area will be closed as it is traditionally at such times. Therefore, the size and location of the practice area is considered sensible and appropriate for the new clubhouse and represents a low risk for pedestrians and vehicles.

Trees

- 6.37 The Council's Tree Officer has reviewed the proposals and raises concerns with regards to the removal of mature trees from the site. The location of the clubhouse will result in the removal of a section of the mature trees within the protected woodland (RE507A -W1) and lead to fragmentation and the urbanisation of an established woodland environment. Removing mature trees prematurely will also deny valuable features such as standing deadwood, decaying leaf litter which are an alternative food source for invertebrates. Whilst the site masterplan shows replacement trees the species are unlikely to be forest type species because the clubhouse car parking will influence the species to prevent problems such as leaf litter/ fruit/ aphid/ disruption to hardstanding. Moreover, the replacement planting will take years to mature and contribute to the canopy cover. The loss of medium and high-quality trees is contrary to policy NHE3 Reigate and Banstead Development Management Plan 2019 which identifies the importance of protecting trees, woodland areas and natural habitats.
- 6.38 In response to these comments, the applicants state that given the nature of the site and its landscape character, it is proposed to provide forest type tree species. Replacement planting can also provide for both substantial, feature trees in combination with understorey landscape species which are specifically designed to provide a variety of canopy levels at the time of planting. The pace at which reforestation can take place is also able to be influenced by landscape design, and it is typical for these designs to be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. In relation to Policy NHE3 of the Reigate and Banstead Development Management Plan (which was recently adopted in September 2019 after the application was submitted), parts 4 and 5 allow the removal of relevant trees and woodlands in certain circumstances. The applicant proposes the provision of replacement trees, compensatory measures and additional tree cover to ensure that there is an overall net gain in terms of landscape provision.
- 6.39 The Council's tree officer has further commented that the Tree Preservation Order has been served to protect high value arboricultural features that contribute to the character of the local area. The collective loss of high and moderate trees to facilitate the clubhouse will not only have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the natural landscape but also lead to further habitat fragmentation of the woodland. Where trees are removed from a woodland setting it would not be unreasonable to expect replacement planting that will compensate for loss of the woodland by creating a natural setting. The location of the parking areas will prevent this from happening and lead to the urbanisation of the greenbelt. Therefore, I cannot support this application and recommend it should be refused.

Energy and Sustainability

- 6.40 An Energy Statement is submitted in support of the application. The Statement has provided an assessment of a number of potential technologies which would may be viable to provide a 10% reduction in carbon emissions from the proposed development. It is concluded that a variety of options will be taken to

obtain the required 10% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions, including combined heat and power (CHP), photovoltaics, water and air source heat pumps for heating and cooling and natural and hybrid ventilation systems. It is considered that in this regard, the proposals accord with Core Strategy Policy CS11 and with DMP Policy CCF1.

Impact on biodiversity

- 6.41 The application is supported by an Ecological Appraisal. The Appraisal notes that the site is composed of poor semi-improved grassland, areas of seminatural mixed woodland, bare ground, ephemeral vegetation and disturbed land. The Appraisal considers that the areas of woodland are of ecological importance, whilst the majority of the other areas presented a low ecological value. The initial Appraisal has been extended to assess the proposed development and seeks to ensure this would not materially harm the nature conservation value of the area. Furthermore, the proposals include the provision of additional landscaping which mitigates impacts and contributes to enhancing the biodiversity within and surrounding the site.
- 6.42 Surrey Wildlife Trust have been consulted on the proposals and advise the Local Authority that should they be minded to grant permission on this application, to take the opportunity to approve a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) for this site to require the applicant to demonstrate how the development will be delivered without adverse effect to the biodiversity value of the site.
- 6.43 They note that the proposed development will result in the loss of some habitat including Priority Habitat (Lowland mixed deciduous woodland) (As listed in section 41 of the NERC Act 2006) and the applicant should prove that their proposed site enhancements will result in no net loss of biodiversity value and as now required by legislation and planning policy, a clear net gain in biodiversity value, which will complement and support the habitats and species for which the SNCI was selected. They state that the LEMP should include plans showing areas of habitat creation and enhancement with planting lists and seeding plans, details of other enhancements together with a conservation management regime, funded over a period of years, which should include a monitoring programme to enable any deficiencies to be remedied. In the event that planning permission was to be recommended in this application, it is considered that a condition could be imposed to cover this issue.

Very Special Circumstances

- 6.44 The National Planning Policy Framework advises that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. In this case, the applicants consider that the development proposed does not constitute inappropriate development and therefore very special circumstances do not have to be shown. However, they state that if the local planning authority considers that the development is inappropriate in the Green Belt, as is concluded above, then the applicant contends that very special

circumstances do exist. The following reasons are put forward in support of the proposed development.

- 6.45 The applicants contend that together Application 1 (for the new clubhouse) and Application 2 (for residential development on the site of the existing clubhouse in Walton on the Hill) will enable the clubhouse to be located directly adjacent to the golf courses that it serves and, in doing so, overcome a major constraint on its current operation. Uniquely for a Club of its reputation and standing, the existing clubhouse is located away from the courses it serves. They state that this causes significant practical and operational difficulties. Golfers must walk some distance to start and end their games of golf or to practice and the management of supervision of the club is separate from the course. These problems are exacerbated by the severance caused by the Dorking Road, which, as the Club's statement explains, causes perceived and actual safety issues.
- 6.46 The applicants state that providing a new clubhouse is an important part of its strategy for sustaining its long-term future. They state that as noted in the Club's statement, over the last 10-15 years there has been a significant down turn in the popularity of golf resulting in the closure of some courses and increased competition at the remaining ones. They state that to remain competitive and relevant to a younger generation, the Club needs to make a step change in the quality and usability of its clubhouse and courses. This means that it needs to remove its principal disadvantage compared to its competitors (the clubhouse being distant from the course) and also provide modern well configured accommodation with improved facilities for visiting golfers, so it can compete with other golf clubs, some of whom have already improved their offer.
- 6.47 They state that it is not possible for the Club to redevelop on this existing site whilst remaining in viable operation. The Design and Access Statement explains that the existing building is poorly configured and because of its age and condition is entirely unsuitable for conversion to modern standards. Whilst it may be physically possible to rebuild the clubhouse in the adjacent car parking area, this would mean that the clubhouse remains in the wrong location further away from the courses that it serves and closer to neighbouring residential properties. It would also mean that the Club would need costly temporary accommodation and would be without car parking provision during the rebuild and subject to unacceptable levels of disruption.
- 6.48 They state that the redevelopment of the existing clubhouse site also has an important role as enabling development for the clubhouse. As explained in the Club's Statement, the sale of the existing clubhouse is required in order to fund the construction of a replacement clubhouse next to the existing courses, taking into account the Clubs existing financial position and ability to secure funding through other means.
- 6.49 They also state that the relocation of the Clubhouse enables various local community benefits to be delivered. Not only will the relocation of the Club away from the village remove traffic and disturbance and therefore improve its tranquillity, it also means that, amongst other community benefits, the reconfiguration of the course will allow the existing first hole of the Old Course to

be made available for greater use by the community with more heather regeneration planned. In doing so, they state that this will help to preserve the openness of the Green Belt and enhance its recreational function.

- 6.50 In considering whether the very special circumstances stated are sufficient to outweigh the harm that is caused by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm, the Council has to assess the degree of harm that is caused by the proposals. It is considered that the harm caused to the openness of the Green Belt by the proposed clubhouse, car park and access road would be significant by virtue of the size and scale of the main clubhouse building, and by the size and extent of the areas of hardstanding required for the access road and a car park of 171 spaces. Any very special circumstances stated would therefore need to be of sufficient weight to outweigh the harm that is caused by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm
- 6.51 Taking each of the reasons stated in turn, it would clearly be desirable for the club to relocate the clubhouse to a position immediately adjacent to the majority of the golf course and enable members to take advantage of a closer relationship with the facilities. However, the benefit would generally accrue only to the members of the club and to the visitors and it is not considered that this would be of sufficient benefit to qualify as a very special circumstance. Without the new clubhouse, the operation of the golf club would continue on a day to day basis. The club are not saying that the overall long term existence is under threat unless the clubhouse is relocated, merely that it their preferred option for the future in order to be able to compete with similar facilities in the area.
- 6.52 The club state that there are practical difficulties with the severance of the clubhouse from the bulk of the course, and that golfers need to walk some distance in order to start their rounds. They also state that the need to cross Dorking Road is a safety issue for golfers. However, no evidence has been provided to demonstrate that there have been any injuries to golfers crossing Dorking Road, or that the distance to the first tee inhibits their enjoyment of the course.
- 6.53 It is stated that it would not be possible to effectively redevelop the existing clubhouse site with a new clubhouse for various reasons, including the need to sell the existing clubhouse to partly enable the new facility and to remain as a viable operation. Given that the erection of a new clubhouse within the Green Belt is considered as an inappropriate form of development, it is not considered that the need for enabling development or the difficulties in developing on the current site represent very special circumstances to allow a development which, in the Council's view, causes significant harm.
- 6.54 The applicants state that the relocation of the clubhouse will enable various local community benefits to be delivered. In addition to the removal of traffic from the environs of the village, the applicants state that part of the first hole would be made available for community use. Given the degree of harm that would be caused by the erection of the clubhouse, and the formation of the access road and car park, it is not considered that the benefits stated are of sufficient merit to outweigh the harm that would be caused.

Other matters

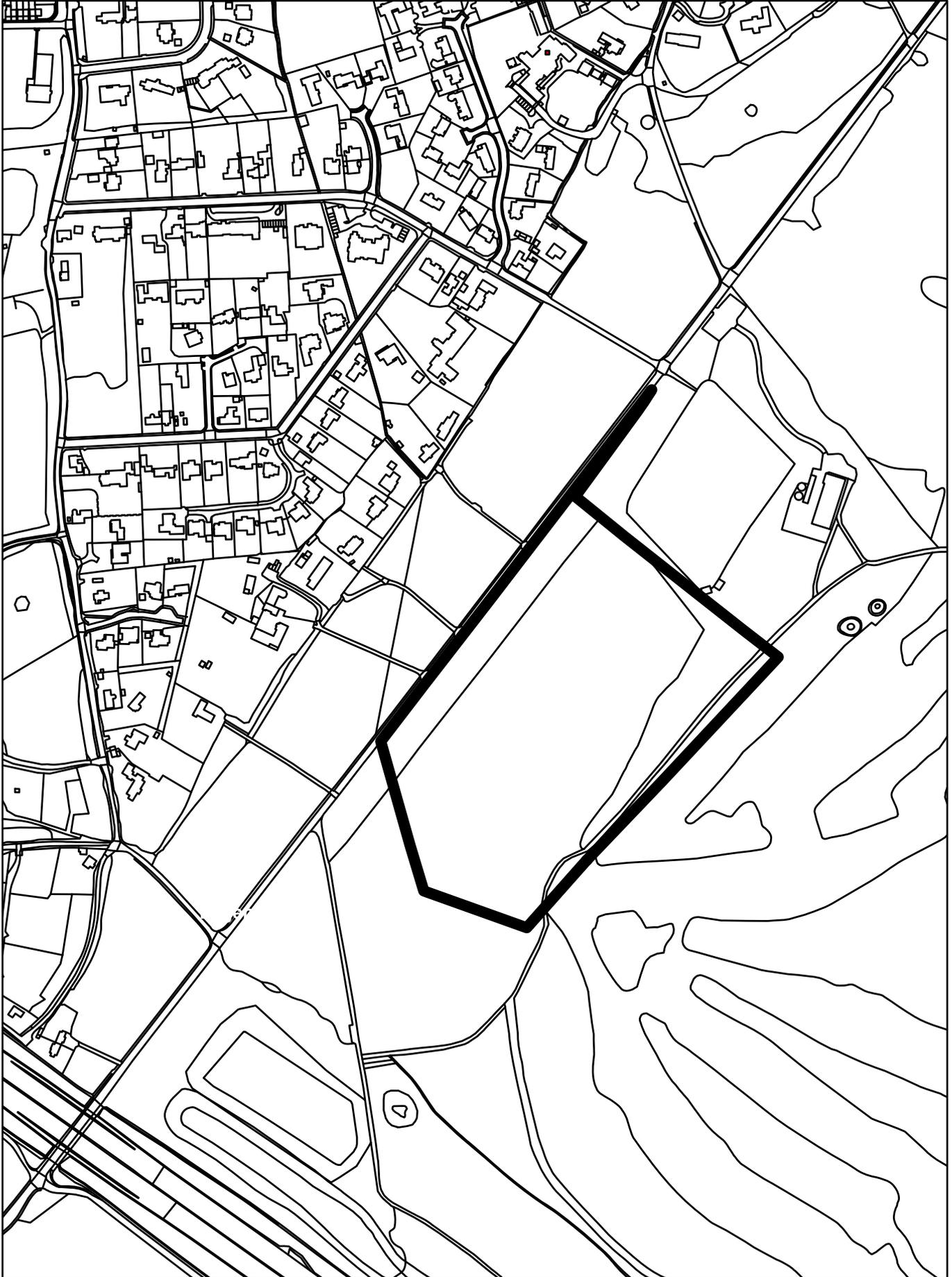
- 6.55 Representations have been received regarding noise and disturbance and inconvenience during the construction period. The proposed development is not considered to result in an unsatisfactory level of disturbance. Whilst there may be a degree of inconvenience and disturbance during the construction phase, the proposal would not warrant refusal on this basis and statutory nuisance legislation exists to control any significant levels of disturbance. The fear of crime has also been stated as an objection.
- 6.56 The site is not in an area at risk of flooding and falls within Flood Zone 1 according to the Environment Agency flood mapping. No information has been submitted with regards to drainage on the site. However, in the event that planning permission was to be granted, it is considered that suitably worded conditions could be imposed to ensure that a SuDS Scheme is properly implemented and maintained throughout the lifetime of the development.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 In light of these comments, it is not considered that very special circumstances have been demonstrated to outweigh the harm that is caused by reason of inappropriateness and the other harm identified. Accordingly, it is recommended that planning permission be refused for the reasons stated.

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and whilst planning permission been refused regard has been had to the presumption to approve sustainable development where possible, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

19/01513/F - Walton Heath Golf Club, Deans Lane,
Walton On The Hill



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NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION
1	12/11/2016	Issue for Planning
2	12/11/2016	Issue for Planning
3	12/11/2016	Issue for Planning
4	12/11/2016	Issue for Planning
5	12/11/2016	Issue for Planning
6	12/11/2016	Issue for Planning
7	12/11/2016	Issue for Planning
8	12/11/2016	Issue for Planning
9	12/11/2016	Issue for Planning
10	12/11/2016	Issue for Planning



Site Legend:

- Site Boundary
- Existing Trees
- New Trees



PLANNING

Woking Heath Golf Clubhouse KT20 7TP

Proposed Site Plan - Colour

1716_P00010

1:500 @ A0 MD PD

07/12/2016 Planning

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Site Plan - Presentation
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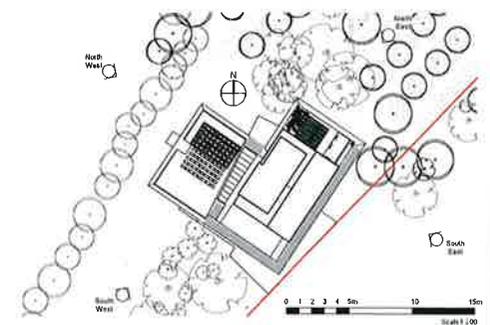
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NE Elevation viewed from Car Park with Site Context
1 : 200



SE Elevation viewed from Golf Course with Site Context
1 : 200



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Revision	Date	Description
1	04/12/2015	General amendments
2	11/01/2019	Window arrangement updated
3	06/07/2019	General amendments

Project
Walton Heath Golf Clubhouse, KT20 7TP

Title
Proposed Elevations - Sheet 2

Number	Revision
L718_P(0)001	3
Scale: As Indicated	
Date: 07/12/2018	
Drawn: ME	
Checked: <input type="checkbox"/>	

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Artisans Elevation 1 (NW) with Context

1 : 200



Artisans Elevation 2 (NE) with Context

1 : 200



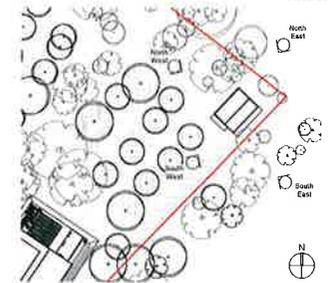
Artisans Elevation 3 (SE) with Context

1 : 200



Artisans Elevation 4 (SW) with Context

1 : 200



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Revised	Date	Description
1	12/13/18	General amendments

Project
Walton Heath Golf Clubhouse, KT20 7TP

Title
Artisans Elevations with Context

Number	Revision
L716_P101305	1
Scale @ A1:	As Indicated
Date:	12/13/18
Drawn:	ME
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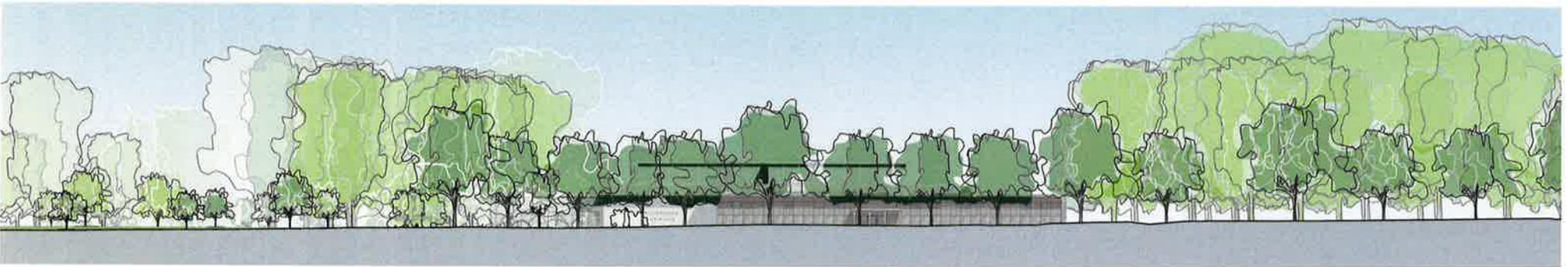
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Model Name and Location
L716 - Artists Planning.dwg

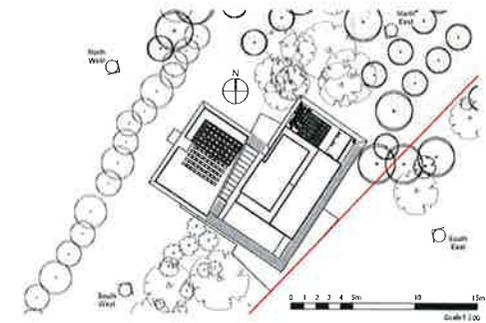
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SW Elevation viewed from Putting Green with Site Context
1 : 200



NW Elevation viewed from Practice Area with Site Context
1 : 200



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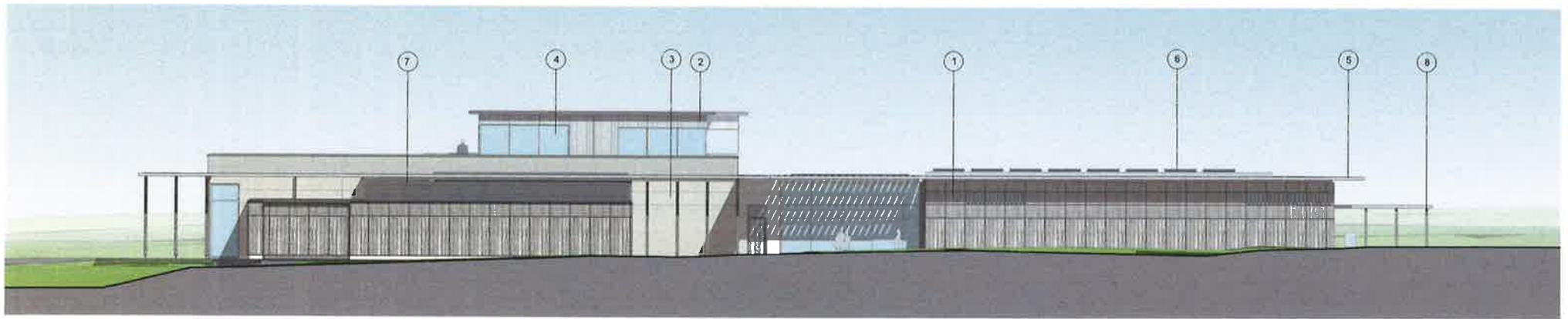
Revision	Date	Description
1	16/12/2018	General arrangements
2	15/01/2019	Window arrangements updated
3	16/07/2019	Client amendments

Project
Walton Heath Golf Clubhouse, KT20 7TP

Title
Proposed Elevations - Sheet 1

Number	L718_P/01300	Revision	3
Scale (if A1)	As indicated		
Date	07/12/2018		
Client	ME		
City/State	<input type="checkbox"/>		

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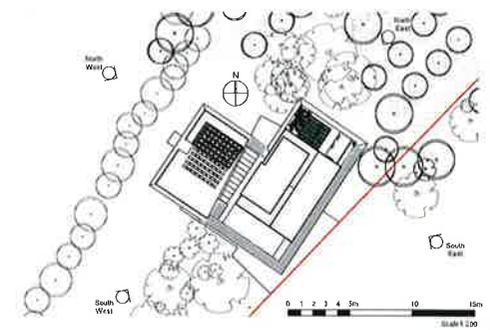
NE Elevation viewed from Car Park
1 : 100



SE Elevation viewed from Golf Course
1 : 100

LIST OF MATERIALS:

1. Timber panelling
2. Pre-weathered metal sheets
3. Reconstructed stone
4. P.P.C. metal frame with double glazed windows
5. P.P.C. perforated metal panels
6. Photovoltaic panels
7. Metal louvres
8. Timber columns
9. Pre-weathered Metal balustrade
10. Recessed M&E roof equipment
11. Double Glazed Curtain Wall



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Revision	Date	Description
1	21/01/2018	Windows arrangement updated
3	05/07/2019	General amendments

Walton Heath Golf Clubhouse, KT20 7TP

Title
Proposed Elevations - Sheet 4

Number	L718_P(0)303	Revision	2
Scale	As indicated		
Date	12/12/18		
Drawn	ME		
Checked			

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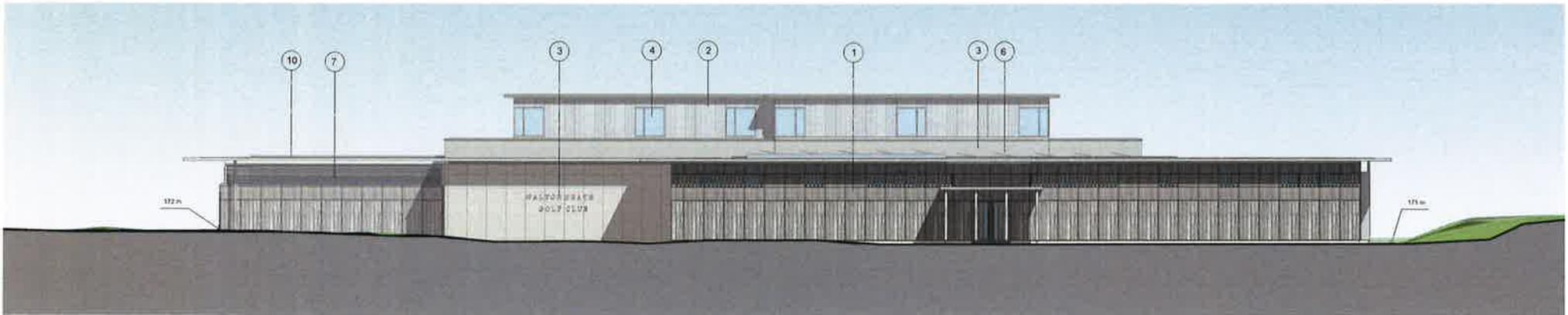
Model made and location
CEP - Strategic Planning Ltd

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SW Elevation viewed from Putting Green

1 : 100

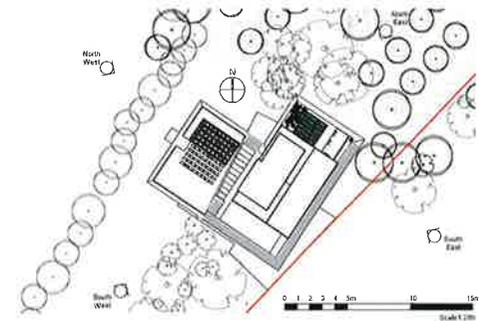


NW Elevation viewed from Practice Area

1 : 100

LIST OF MATERIALS:

1. Timber panelling
2. Pre-weathered metal sheets
3. Reconstructed stone
4. P.P.C. metal frame with double glazed windows
5. P.P.C. perforated metal panels
6. Photovoltaic panels
7. Metal louvres
8. Timber columns
9. Pre-weathered Metal balustrade
10. Recessed M&E roof equipment
11. Double Glazed Curtain Wall



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Revision	Date	By	Checked
1	21/11/2019	WJ	WJ
2	12/07/2019	WJ	WJ

Project
Walton Heath Golf Clubhouse, KT20 7TP

Proposed Elevations - Sheet 3

Number	Revision
L718_P(0)302	2
Scale	As indicated
Date	12/12/18
Drawn	ME
Checked	

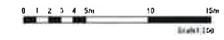
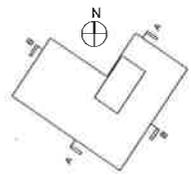
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Section A-A Viewed from Putting Green
1 : 200



Section B-B Viewed from Car Park
1 : 200



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Number	Date	Description
1	14/12/2016	General principles
2	15/07/2018	Revised principles

Project: **Walton Heath Golf Clubhouse, KT20 7TP**

Title: **Proposed Sections A-A & B-B**

Number	L718_P(0)200	Revision	2
Scale	1:200		
Date	07/12/2018		
Drawn	ME		
Checked			

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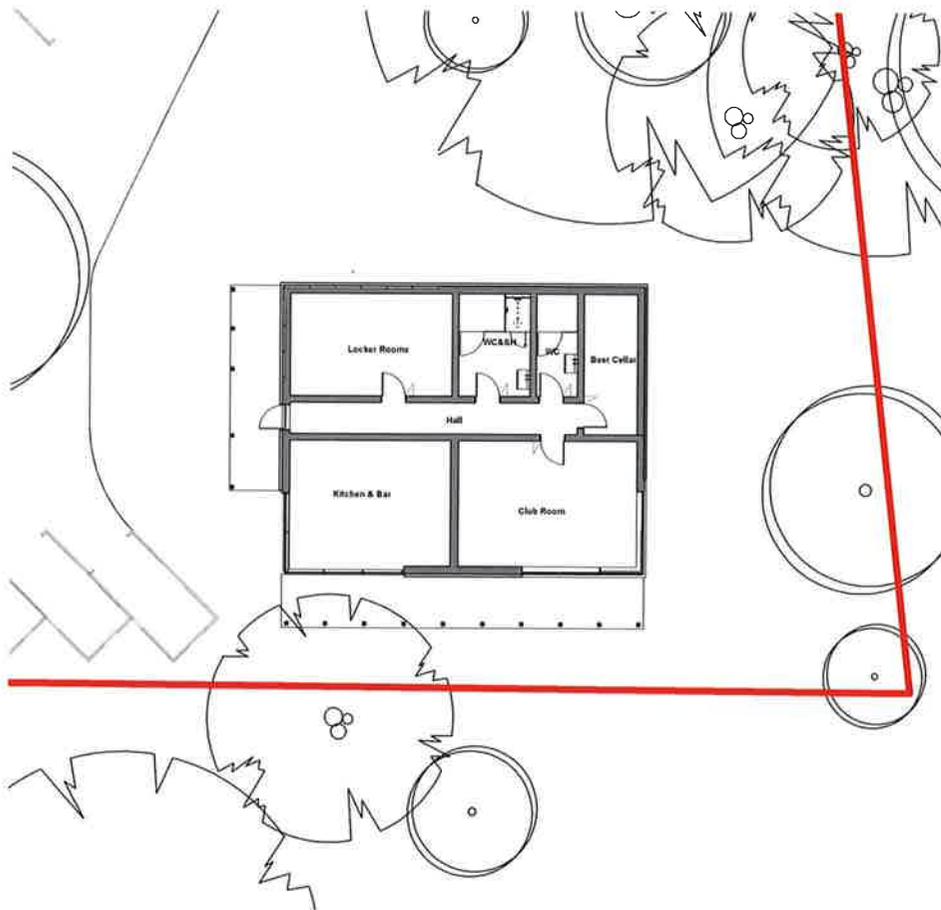
Architecture and Planning

125-127, Watlington Road, London, SE20 8JF

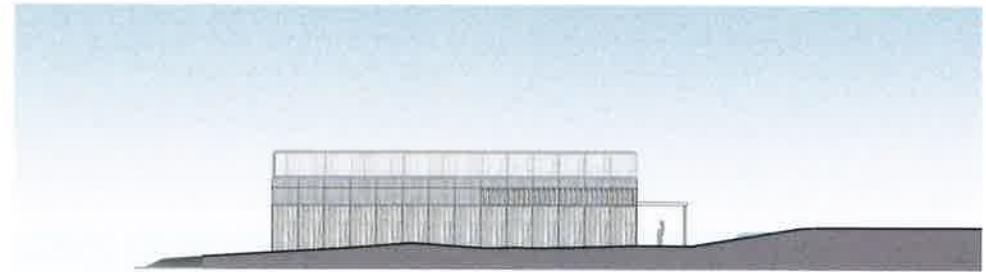
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Model name and location
 CFP - Green Planning.dwg

PLANNING



Ground Floor - Artisans 1-100
1 : 100



Artisans Elevation 1 (NW)
1 : 100



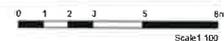
Artisans Elevation 3 (SE)
1 : 100



Artisans Elevation 4 (SW)
1 : 100



Artisans Elevation 2 (NE)
1 : 100



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Model name and location: C:\P - Sheets\Planning.dwg

Revision	Date	Description
1	12/11/18	General presentation

PLANNING

Project	Walton Heath Golf Clubhouse, KT20 7TP
Title	Artisans Plan and Elevations

Number	L718_P(0)306	Revision	1
Scale @ A1:	1 : 100		
Date	12/11/18		
Drawn	IME		
Checked			

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