

Permeable tarmac playground and trim trail area, Charing Primary School, Charing – AS/16/1148 (KCC/AS/0204/2016)

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 16th November 2016.

Application on behalf of the Governors of Charing Church of England Primary School for a permeable tarmac playground with netball markings, drainage, trim trail & alterations to existing adjacent footpaths, Charing Church of England Primary School, Charing – AS/16/1148 (KCC/AS/0204/2016)

Recommendation: The application be referred to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and subject to his decision, permission be granted subject to conditions.

Local Member: Mr C. Simkins

Classification: Unrestricted

Site

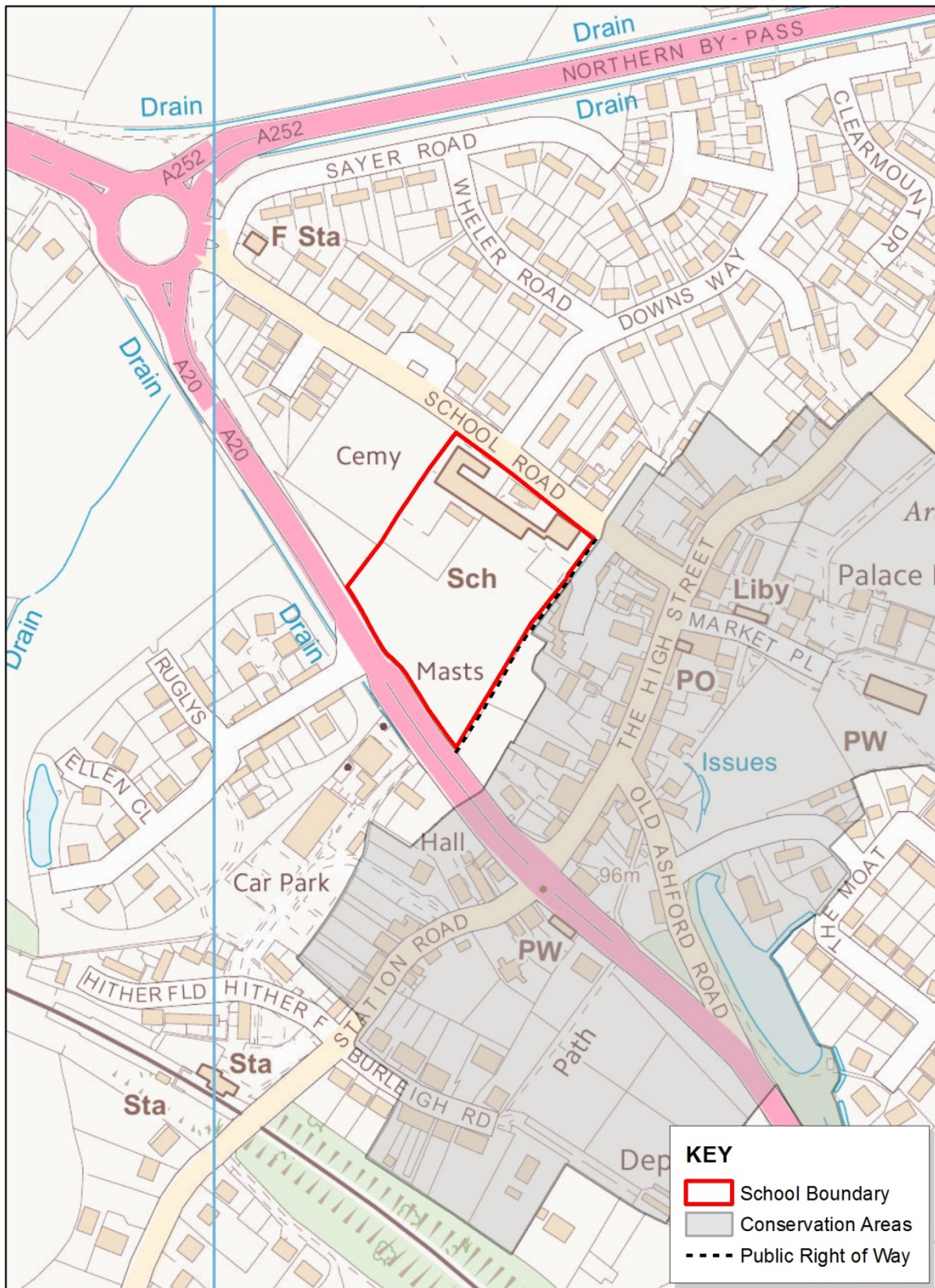
1. Charing Church of England Primary School is situated in the village of Charing, approximately 6 miles (9.6 kilometres) from the town of Ashford. The school site is bounded by School Road to the north east, Maidstone Road to the south west, Charing Church Cemetery to the north west and Monks Walk residential development to the south east. A public right of way runs along the south eastern boundary of the site beyond which lies Charing Conservation Area. The school buildings are situated to the north east of the site running along School Road. The school playing field lies to the south of the site, adjacent to Maidstone Road. A site location plan is attached.

Background

2. Charing Primary School is a Voluntary Aided Church School. The school has been serving the village of Charing since 1872 and now serves a wider area including Ashford and the surrounding villages. The school currently has 91 pupils on roll, with 8 full time teaching staff and 3 part time teaching staff. The school offers a wide range of sports clubs and before and after school activities.
3. The school comprises of two blocks: a Victorian school building (with later additions) on the western half of the site, which contains the school administration, staff facilities, dining hall and kitchen; and a later 20th century block on the eastern half of the site, which contains the school hall and most of the schools classrooms. Most of the older block is not considered fit for purpose by the School, with the kitchen and dining hall addition being a HORSIA hut of poor quality.
4. The school has highlighted that there has been a long held aspiration to consolidate the original school building into the new block of the school, which would need to be extended to facilitate this. A new classroom extension was completed in 2013 and the school is continuing to work towards further improvement and future expansion of its facilities, including plans to provide new administration accommodation, kitchen facilities and a new classroom.

Permeable tarmac playground and trim trail area, Charing Primary School, Charing – AS/16/1148 (KCC/AS/0204/2016)

General Location Plan



© Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100019238

Permeable tarmac playground and trim trail area, Charing Primary School, Charing – AS/16/1148 (KCC/AS/0204/2016)

Site Location Plan

Notes:
 Do Not Scale.
 Report all discrepancies, errors and omissions.
 Verify all dimensions on site before commencing any work on site or proceeding with any design.
 All proposed work must comply with the relevant standards. Consider the manufacturer's recommendations for the use of any materials.
 For all specific work, see relevant drawings.
 The drawings and designs are copyright of Diocesan Architectural and Design Services Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

Rev	Date	Description
A	Aug 16	Location of existing running track added



6, 6-11 The Courtyard
 Paragon Park, 100
 Thornaby, Darlington
 North East, UK
 Tel: 01781 802200
 Fax: 01781 802106
 www.diocesan.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE:
 CHARING C OF E (AIDED)
 PRIMARY SCHOOL, CHARING
 SCHOOL ROAD, TN 27 0JN
 PLAYGROUND ALTERATIONS
 PROJECT 15-070

DRAWING DESCRIPTION:

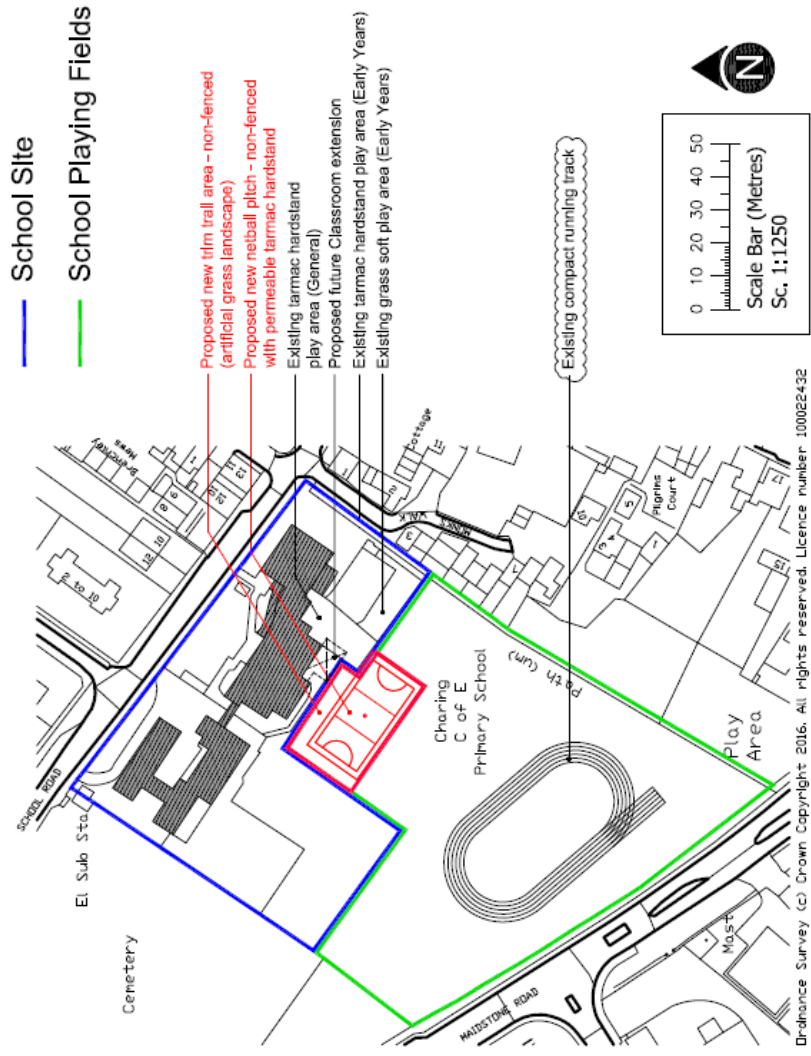
SITE LOCATION PLAN

SCALE: 1:1250 @ A3
DATE: JULY 2016
CHECKED BY:
DRAWN BY:

STATUS: PLANNING

DRAWING NUMBER: 15-070/ 00
REVISION: A

- Proposed Playground Redevelopment Area
- School Site
- School Playing Fields (KCC)



Dr-ance Survey (c) Crown Copyright 2016. All rights reserved. Licence number 100022432

SITE LOCATION PLAN
 SC. 1:1250

Permeable tarmac playground and trim trail area, Charing Primary School, Charing – AS/16/1148 (KCC/AS/0204/2016)

Proposed Tree Removal

NOTE:
Do not block.
Record all discrepancies, errors and omissions.
Verify all dimensions on site before commencing any work on site or proceed by stop work.
All work to be completed and satisfactory to Council with the relevant planning permission. Check all work and appropriate manufacturer's recommendations for their limits of work.
For all work to be done, see relevant drawings.
The drawings and details are the copyright of Diocesan Architects and shall not be used for any other purpose.

Rev	Date	Description

Detail from Survey by:
J. C. White Geomatics Limited
Shrine Farm, Shrine Farm, Snettino Road
Poole, Dorset, BH12 4BE
Tel: 01303 281212 Fax: 01303 284040



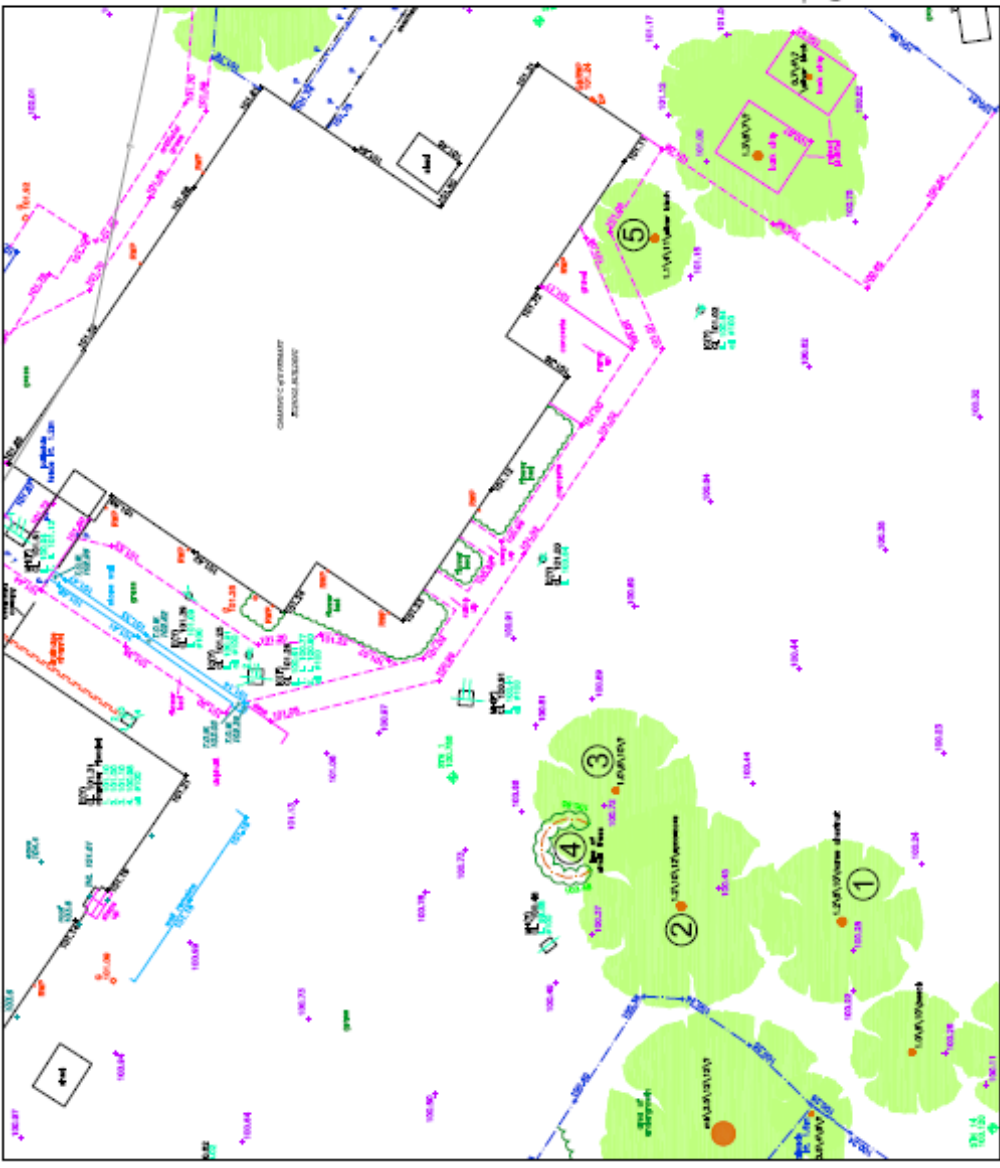
G.S. 11 The Chantry
Hemage Road, Hemage
Maidstone, Kent ME16 5JG
Tel: 01753 82228
Tel: 01753 82758
www.diocesan-architects.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE:
CHARING C OF E (AIDED)
PRIMARY SCHOOL - CHARING
SCHOOL ROAD, TN 27 0JN
PLAYGROUND ALTERATIONS
PROJECT 15-070

DRAWING DESCRIPTION:
EXISTING TREES AT PLAYGROUND
DETAIL FROM JCW TOPOGRAPHICAL
SURVEY REF 1200053

SCALE: 1:200 @ A3
DATE: AUG 2016
DRAWN BY: RG
CHECKED BY:

STATUS: PLANNING
CLIENT: Maidstone
REF: 15-070/07



- Tree identification review (2016)
(by Diocesan Architects)
- 1 Horse chestnut
Aesculus hippocastanum
 - 2 Silver maple
Acer saccharinum
 - 3 Lime tree
Tilia cordata
 - 4 line of small trees
 - 5 Silver birch
Betula pendula

● TREE (number of holes/girth/height/circumference)
EXISTING TREES AT PLAYGROUND
SC. 1:200

Permeable tarmac playground and trim trail area, Charing Primary School, Charing – AS/16/1148 (KCC/AS/0204/2016)

Recent Site History

- | | | |
|----|------------|--|
| 5. | AS/14/1428 | School kitchen and pathway extension
Granted planning permission. |
| | AS/12/1150 | Demolition of the existing polycarbonate canopy and construction of 3 new classrooms, 3 offices, storage, circulation and welfare facilities.
Granted planning permission. |
| | AS/11/828 | Timber framed shelter for parents use
Granted planning permission. |
| | AS/09/1226 | Renovation works to four areas on the existing school site including the demolition of a defunct mobile classroom allowing for a new decking area, removal of a two class mobile allowing for a new car park to be created, improvement of existing covered walkway and a new canopy to the reception class.
Granted planning permission. |
| | AS/07/1196 | Retention of a mobile classroom unit with cloakroom facilities and store.
Granted planning permission. |
| | AS/03/1729 | Installation of new mobile classroom.
Granted planning permission. |

Proposal

6. Planning permission is sought for the construction of a permeable tarmac playground to be used as a multi-use games area (MUGA), with a new sustainable shallow drainage soakaway, the installation of a new trim trail with an artificial grass surface and the replacement of the existing 1.25 metre (4.1feet) wide adjacent concrete footpath with a 1.8 metre (5.9 feet) wide non-permeable tarmac surface footpath. It would involve the removal of 4 trees and a small low circle of saplings.
7. The proposed site would have a combined overall area of 900m² (9687ft²). The applicants consider that the existing hard-surface playground facility is not appropriate to offer specific games and team sport activities such as netball. The proposal would not result in any additional increase in the current pupil or staff roll.
8. The existing playground sits to the south west of the Victorian school building, which is separate from the Early Years play area situated to the south east of the new block. The playing surface of the existing playground has deteriorated, making it increasingly unsuitable as a games surface. The school has stated that its location creates supervision issues during break and lunchtime periods being detached from the playing field, other play areas on the site and the school's classrooms. As a small school, the school has indicated having limited staff resources with which to manage this situation.
9. The proposed development is to be situated to the south of the new block of the school on a section of the playing field. This is intended to improve efficiency of staff deployment, allowing staff to be more engaged in providing supervised games at break and lunchtime. The new games area would provide a more appropriate space on which

Permeable tarmac playground and trim trail area, Charing Primary School, Charing – AS/16/1148 (KCC/AS/0204/2016)

games and sports can be played throughout the year, enhancing the opportunities available to the school's pupils. The School also seeks to make the existing play facilities more attractive by adding the proposed new trim trail area, thus supporting the physical education curriculum.

Planning Policy

10. The Government Guidance and Development Plan Policies most relevant to the consideration of this application are summarised below:

- (i) The **National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)** and the **National Planning Policy Guidance (March 2014)** sets out the Government's planning policy and guidance for England at the heart of which is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The guidance is a material consideration for the determination of planning applications but does not change the statutory status of the development plan which remains the starting point for decision making. However the weight given to development plan policies will depend on their consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the development plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater weight that may be given).

In determining applications the NPPF states that local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

In terms of delivering sustainable development in relation to this development proposal, the NPPF guidance and objectives covering the following matters are of particular relevance:

- Achieving the requirement for high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
- When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation;
- The promotion of healthy communities;
- That access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation are important in their contribution to health and well-being. In addition Paragraph 74 states that:

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless: an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, building or land to be surplus to requirements; or the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

- (ii) **Policy Statement – Planning for Schools Development (August 2011)** sets out the Government's commitment to support the development of State-funded schools, and their delivery through the planning system.

Permeable tarmac playground and trim trail area, Charing Primary School, Charing – AS/16/1148 (KCC/AS/0204/2016)

(iii) **Ashford Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2008:**

- Policy CS1** *Guiding Principles*
Sustainable development and high quality design are at the centre of the Council's approach to plan making and deciding planning applications.
- Policy CS9** *Design Quality*
Development proposals must be of high quality design and demonstrate a positive response to each of the following design criteria: character, distinctiveness and sense of place, permeability and ease of movement, legibility, mixed use and diversity, continuity and enclosure, quality of public spaces, flexibility, adaptability and liveability, richness in detail, and efficient use of natural resources.
- Policy CS18** *Meeting the Community's Need*
Public open space, recreation, sports, children's play, leisure, cultural, school and adult education, youth, health, public service and community facilities to be provided to meet the needs generated by new development.
- Policy CS20** *Sustainable Drainage*
All developments should include appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for the disposal of surface water, in order to avoid any increase in flood risk or adverse impact on water quality.

(iv) **Ashford Borough Local Plan (Consultation Draft June 2016) 2030:**

- Policy SP1** *Strategic Objectives*
A number of identified strategic objectives that form the basis of the Plan's policy framework as well as core principles that planning applications are expected to adhere to including, amongst other things, protection and enhancement of the Borough's historic and natural environment; the creation of the highest quality design which is sustainable, accessible, safe and promotes a positive sense of place through the design of the built form, the relationship of buildings with each other and the spaces around them, and which responds to the prevailing character of the area.
- Policy SP6** *Promoting High Quality Design*
Development proposals must be of high quality design and demonstrate a careful consideration of and a positive response to each of the following design criteria: character, distinctiveness and sense of place, ease of movement, legibility, mixed use and diversity, public safety, quality of public spaces and their future management, flexibility and liveability, richness in detail, and efficient use of natural resources.

Permeable tarmac playground and trim trail area, Charing Primary School, Charing – AS/16/1148 (KCC/AS/0204/2016)

- Policy ENV5** *Protecting Important Rural Features*
Lists a number of features in the rural areas of the Borough which development shall protect and where possible enhance, including Public Rights of Way.
- Policy ENV9** *Sustainable Drainage*
All development should include appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for the disposal of surface water, in order to avoid any increase in flood risk or adverse impact on water quality, and to mimic the drainage from the pre-developed site.
- Policy ENV14** *Conservation Areas*
Proposals for inappropriate demolition, alteration or extension of buildings in Conservation Areas or which could prejudice important views into or out of a Conservation Area will be resisted where such proposals would be detrimental to their character or setting.

Consultations

11. **Ashford Borough Council** raises no objection subject to conditions including the standard time limit, submission and approval of a landscaping scheme, maintenance of new planting, submission and approval of drainage works, and the development to be carried out in accordance with the submitted plans unless otherwise approved.

Charing Parish Council raises no objection.

Sport England objects to the application and comments as follows:

“Sport England has considered the application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (particularly Para 74) and Sport England’s Playing Fields Policy, which is presented within its Planning Policy Statement titled ‘A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England.’

Sport England’s policy is to oppose the granting of planning permission for any development affecting playing field unless it meets with one or more of the five exceptions stated in its policy.

The proposed development appears to be sited on an area of existing playing field. Locating this aspect of the proposed development on the existing playing field would prejudice the use of the playing field.

In light of the above, Sport England objects to the application because it is not considered to accord with any of the exceptions to Sport England’s Playing Fields Policy or with Paragraph 74 of the NPPF.

Should your Council be minded to grant planning permission for the development then in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009, the application should be referred to the Secretary of State, via the National Planning Casework Unit.

Permeable tarmac playground and trim trail area, Charing Primary School, Charing – AS/16/1148 (KCC/AS/0204/2016)

However, Sport England would be happy to review its position if it can be demonstrated that Sport England's Playing Fields Policy can be met. A potential way forward would be to ensure that the proposed MUGA is in line with Sport England's design guidance and is fenced and floodlit. It would then constitute a formal sports facility. Sport England would assess this proposal against E5 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy. Another way forward would be to move the proposed MUGA to the north so it is sited on the area of open space between a hard standing area and existing mature trees."

Local Member

12. The local County Member, Mr Simkins was notified of the application on 28 July 2016.

Publicity

13. The application was publicised by the posting of two site notices and the notification of 7 neighbouring properties.

Representations

14. In response to the publicity no letters of objection were received. 5 letters in support of the application have been received.

Discussion

15. In considering this proposal regard must be had to the Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph 12 above. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) states that applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore the proposal needs to be considered in the context of the Development Plan Policies, Government Guidance, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Policy Statement for Schools Development and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity.

16. This application is being reported for determination by the Planning Applications Committee following the receipt of an objection from Sport England. In my opinion the main issues to consider are the impact upon the playing field, loss of trees, potential impact on the Public Right of Way and Conservation Area, and amenity issues.

Impact upon playing field

17. The applicant has outlined a need to provide a tarmac play surface that can be used all year round to enable the provision of additional games, activities and sports such as netball. The existing hard surface playground is considered unsuitable for use due to its deterioration. The school considers that it has ample grass playing field provision, but does require an improved hard surfaced play area for weather dependant activities.

18. The proposed development would be sited to the south of the school hall in the newer section of the school where the aspiration is to consolidate the school accommodation and activities. In terms of the siting of the proposed development and the impact upon the playing field, consideration must be given to the objection received from Sport

Permeable tarmac playground and trim trail area, Charing Primary School, Charing – AS/16/1148 (KCC/AS/0204/2016)

England which has made two alternative suggestions as to how this might be overcome and enable it to review its objection.

19. First, it is suggested that the MUGA be relocated to the north west of the proposed site to occupy an area of open space between the existing hard surface playground, buildings and group of mature trees. This open space is separated from the main part of the school playing field and arguably would not therefore jeopardise the current provision of playing field at the school. However it could not be accommodated without the loss of a greater number of trees than that of the current proposal which in my view would not be acceptable. In addition, the School has expressed a desire for the proposed playground to be sited closer to the newer school buildings for ease of supervision. The applicants have said that it would also compromise further development plans to improve the school.
20. Secondly, it has been suggested that the proposed MUGA should comply with Sport England's design guidance and that it is fenced and floodlit. It would then meet Sport England's Policy E5 and as a formal sports facility be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field. However the applicants have made it clear that the proposed development is intended to serve the school's need rather than being for community use, which they consider is already adequately provided for within the village with a variety of sport facilities, including flood lit tennis courts, a cricket ground and a number of football pitches. Moreover the applicants have stated that the installation of fencing surrounding the playground would reduce the flexibility and functionality of the playground as an open space for sports and other activities for the school's own use. They are also concerned that the addition of fencing may raise concern from neighbouring residents in terms of visual impact and the installation of floodlighting would create problems for the local community due to light pollution.
21. The applicants are of the opinion that although it would be regrettable to lose the proposed area of playing field, the availability to deliver sports and games all year round and the value provided in terms of pupil's skills development resulting from the provision of the hard surfaced games area would outweigh this loss. Furthermore they consider that the proposed siting of the playground provides the best use of the space available on the school site with easy, direct access from what is now the main section of the school.
22. Clearly the proposal does involve some encroachment onto the playing field but I do not consider it would unduly prejudice the use of the remaining area of the playing field which is more than adequate for school sport and recreation. Even though it would not meet Sport England's design guidance, the MUGA would provide improved sport and recreation facilities for the school in conjunction with the rest of the playing field and make better use of the space as a whole. In my view, therefore it would accord with paragraph 74 of the NPPF, in that the development is for alternative sports and recreation provision, the needs for which outweigh the loss of this part of the playing field.
23. However given that Sport England has objected to the application, if Members are minded to grant permission the application would have to be referred to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government via the National Planning Casework Unit.

Loss of Trees

24. The development of the MUGA in the proposed location would result in the loss of a horse chestnut, a silver maple tree, lime tree and a small low circle of saplings in between the existing hard surfaced playground and the school playing field. A silver birch tree would also be removed which currently sits adjacent to the proposed extension of the existing tarmac playground in between the development site and the school and is considered to have a potentially damaging impact on this section of the building.
25. The applicants were asked to consider relocating the MUGA to the south east in order to prevent the loss of the mature trees. However, for a number of reasons it was rejected, including the slope to the east, the need to remove a grassed mound feature used as a soft landscape play area by pupils during the summer months and that it would also require the re-siting of an existing crate soakaway system. It would also encroach further on to more of the usable area of playing field. I am also mindful that if the playground was to be sited further to the south east, it would be closer to the boundary with the residential properties on Monks Walk on the other side of the Public Right of Way. As such, there may be concern from the neighbouring residents in terms of noise and visual impact.
26. Overall, I consider that the siting of the extended playground and MUGA is optimum in terms of its relationship to the existing buildings, minimising impact on the playing field and its distance from the site boundary. A group of trees of significant amenity value would be retained adjacent to those that would be removed and the applicants have indicated a commitment to plant replacement trees elsewhere on the site. That could be covered by an appropriate condition and therefore I would not raise a planning objection to the loss of those trees identified in the application for removal.

Public Right of Way

27. The school site is bordered by a Public Right of Way (PROW) which runs along the eastern boundary of the site. Beyond this Public Right of Way lays Charing Conservation Area. The development would be visible by members of the public accessing the PROW but no part of the PROW would be affected or compromised as a result of the development. There is currently a hard surfaced and soft surfaced play area used by the early years at the school situated adjacent to the PROW that would remain closer to the boundary than that of the proposed development. The playground is likely to see more use than the area of playing field it would occupy with it being available more months of the year, but it would be integrated within the playing field and without fencing or floodlights would not be particularly dominant in views from the PROW. The stretch of the PROW bordering the school site runs largely along the school playing field which is already in regular use by pupils at the school. Given that the proposed hard surfaced playground would be of a low level, approximately 25 metres (82 feet) from the boundary with the PROW and the fact that the playing field is already in regular use, I do not consider it would have a significant effect on the setting of the PROW.

Conservation Area

28. The boundary of the Conservation Area, as can be seen on the general location plan on page D2.2 of this report adjoins the PROW that runs adjacent to the application site boundary. The section of Conservation Area in closest proximity to the application site is

Permeable tarmac playground and trim trail area, Charing Primary School, Charing – AS/16/1148 (KCC/AS/0204/2016)

characterised largely by residential properties and would be in excess of 25 metres (82 feet) from the proposed development. Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states that ‘when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation’. Although some views of the school and its playing field may be afforded from vantage points within or from the edge of the Conservation Area, I do not consider overall that the proposal would have a negative effect on the character and/or appearance of the Conservation Area, including views from the Conservation Area. Similarly, views from the school site looking towards the Conservation Area may be altered with the provision of the hard surfaced playground in place of the current grassed area of playing field. However, given that the playground would be integrated within the playing field and without fencing and floodlights, overall I do not consider that there would be any significant impact on views looking towards the Conservation Area.

Amenity Issues

29. The hard surfaced playground would be visible from the residential properties on Monks Walk to the east of the school. Although no objections have been received, the development would to some extent alter the views from the overlooking properties of that of the current playing field. The proposed playground would be approximately 25 metres (82 feet) from the nearest residential property, and further away than the early years hard and soft playground space running along the school’s boundary, it is not therefore considered to have any significant impact on the amenity the neighbouring residential properties.
30. However, given that there are neighbouring residential properties, if planning permission is granted it would, in my view, be appropriate to impose a condition restricting hours of construction to protect residential amenity. I would suggest that works should be undertaken only between the hours of 0800 and 1800 Monday to Friday and between the hours of 0900 and 1300 on Saturdays, with no operations on Sundays and Bank Holidays. In addition, it is good practice on school sites for contractors to be required under the terms of their contract to manage construction traffic/deliveries to minimise conflict with traffic and pedestrians at the beginning and end of the school day and this could also be conditioned.

Conclusion

31. In summary, I consider that, subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions, the proposed development would constitute sustainable development, with an acceptable siting which would not result in any significant loss of playing field or prejudice the use of the remaining playing field. Furthermore, I do not consider that it would have any significant or adverse impact on the setting of the PROW, the character and appearance of the Conservation Area or local amenity; and is in accordance with the general aims and objectives of the relevant Development Plan Policies, as well as the National Planning Policy Framework. However, in view of Sport England’s objection, I recommend that the application be referred to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and subject to his decision, permission be granted subject to conditions.

Permeable tarmac playground and trim trail area, Charing Primary School, Charing – AS/16/1148 (KCC/AS/0204/2016)

Recommendation

32. I RECOMMEND that the application BE REFERRED to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and subject to his decision, PERMISSION BE SUBJECT TO the imposition of conditions covering (amongst other matters) the following:

- The standard 5 year time limit;
- The development to be carried out in accordance with the permitted details;
- Hours of working during construction to be restricted between 0800 and 1800 Monday to Friday and between the hours of 0900 and 1300 on Saturdays, with no operation on Sundays and bank holidays;
- Construction traffic/deliveries to minimise conflict with traffic and pedestrians at the beginning and end of the school day;
- A scheme of landscaping, including the provision of replacement trees of native species in an appropriate location, its implementation and maintenance.

Case Officer: Francis Carpenter

Tel. no: 03000 410842

Background Documents: see section heading
