

SECTION D
DEVELOPMENT TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL

Background Documents: the deposited documents; views and representations received as referred to in the reports and included in the development proposals dossier for each case; and other documents as might be additionally indicated.

Item D1

Floodlit Beach Volleyball Facility at the Victoria Memorial Recreation Ground, Canterbury - CA/08/516

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 29 July 2008.

Application submitted by The Governors of the Canterbury Campus and Kent County Council Children, Families, Health & Education for a Beach Volleyball facility with floodlighting and an associated storage building, and floodlighting to two adjacent tennis courts at the Victoria Memorial Recreation Ground, Knight Avenue, Canterbury (Ref: CA/08/516)

Recommendation: Permission be granted subject to conditions.

Local Member(s): Martin Vye

Classification: Unrestricted

Site

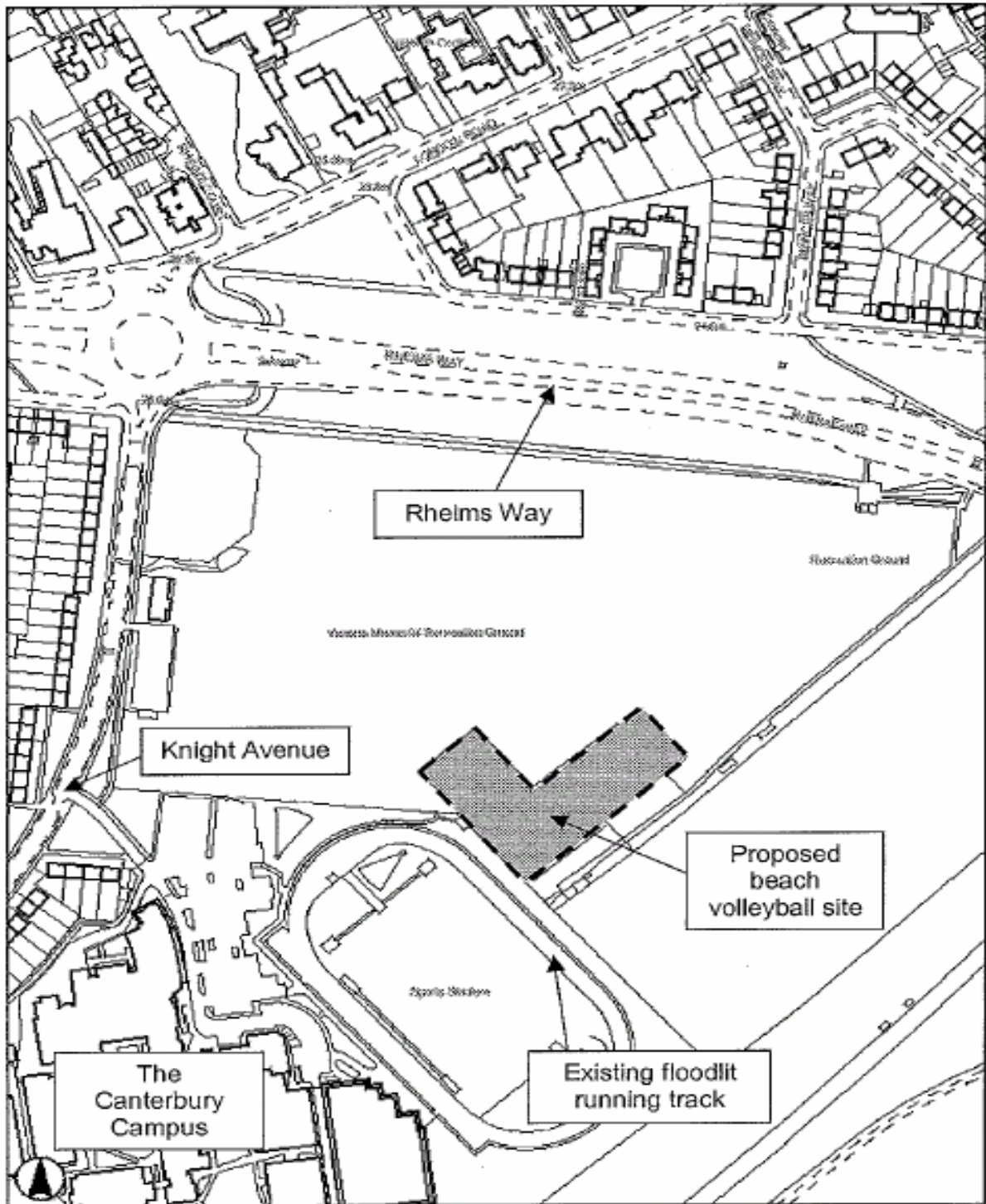
1. The Victoria Memorial Recreation Ground is located to the west of the City of Canterbury, accessed via Knight Avenue, to the south of the A2050 Rheims Way. The north and east of the recreation ground is bounded by Knight Avenue and Rheims Way, and facing residential properties. The Canterbury Campus lies to the immediate south and southeast boundary of the site, with the Campus' floodlit running track located adjacent to the southern site boundary. The River Stour valley is located to the west, as are two railway lines, separated from the site by a substantial tree screen. The site is generally a flat plateau of open grassland, used for recreational purposes by the general public. A car parking area is located adjacent to the site's access to the east of the site, as is a pavilion and play equipment for children. The application site lies to the south west corner of the Victoria Memorial Recreation Ground, part of which was once home to four grass tennis courts, the other part of which accommodates two macadam all weather tennis courts. The whole of the application site is designated as 'An Area of Protected Existing Open Space' within the adopted Canterbury District Local Plan. From the East of the site Canterbury Cathedral, a World Heritage Site, is clearly visible. A site plan is attached.

Proposal

2. This application has been submitted by the Governors of the Canterbury Campus and Kent County Council Children, Families, Health and Education and proposes the construction of a beach volleyball facility with floodlighting and an associated storage building, and floodlighting to two adjacent existing tennis courts. The site is currently owned and managed by Canterbury City Council. However, I am advised by the applicant that, following a City Council Executive decision, it has been agreed that this area of land should be leased to the Canterbury Campus, a Kent County Council Facility, for a period of 25 years.

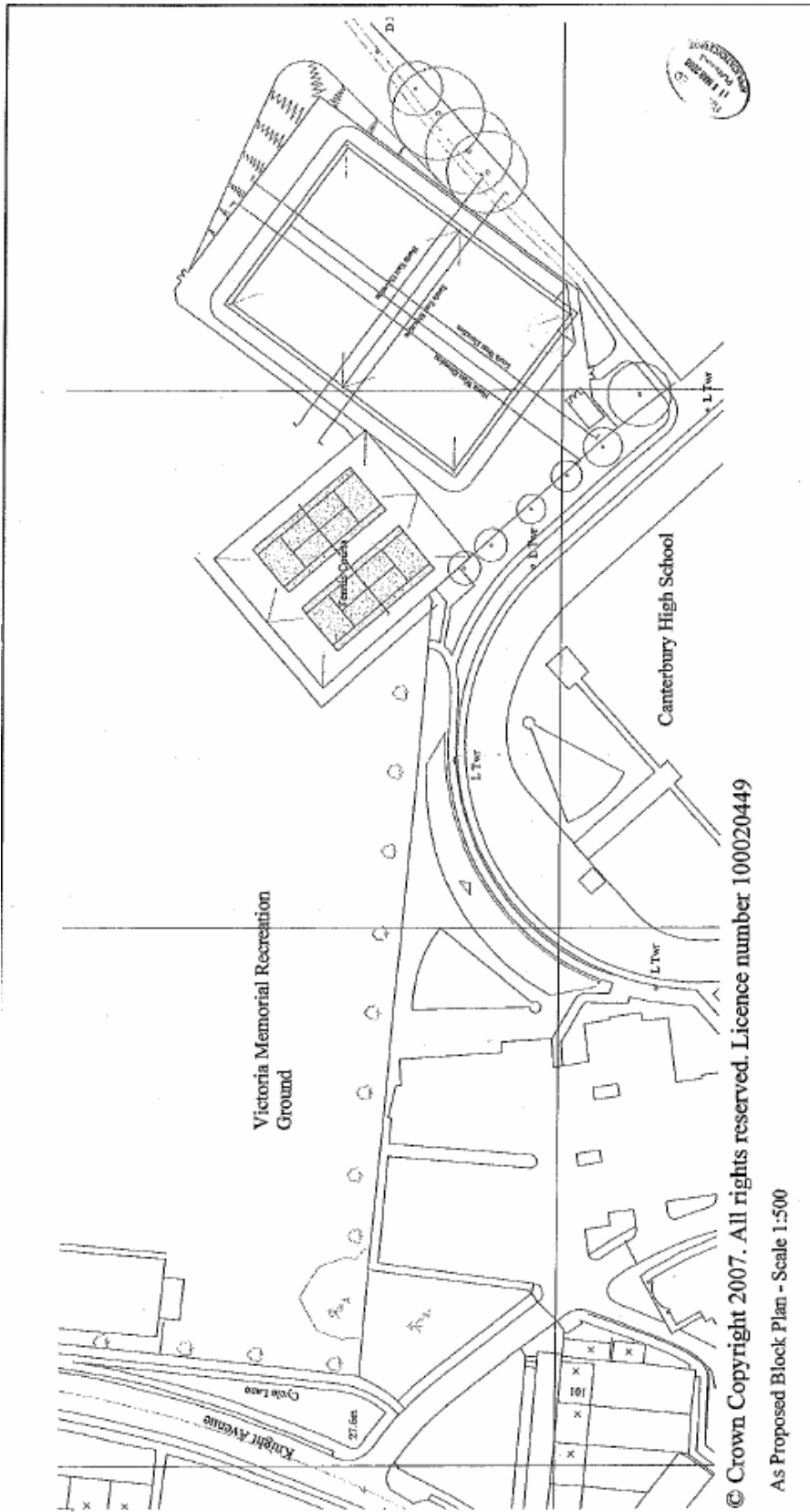
Item D1

Floodlit Beach Volleyball Facility at the Victoria Memorial Recreation Ground, Canterbury – CA/08/516



Site Location Plan – Floodlit Beach Volleyball Facility at Victoria Memorial Recreation Ground, Canterbury
Scale 1:2500

Floodlit Beach Volleyball Facility at the Victoria Memorial Recreation Ground, Canterbury – CA/08/516



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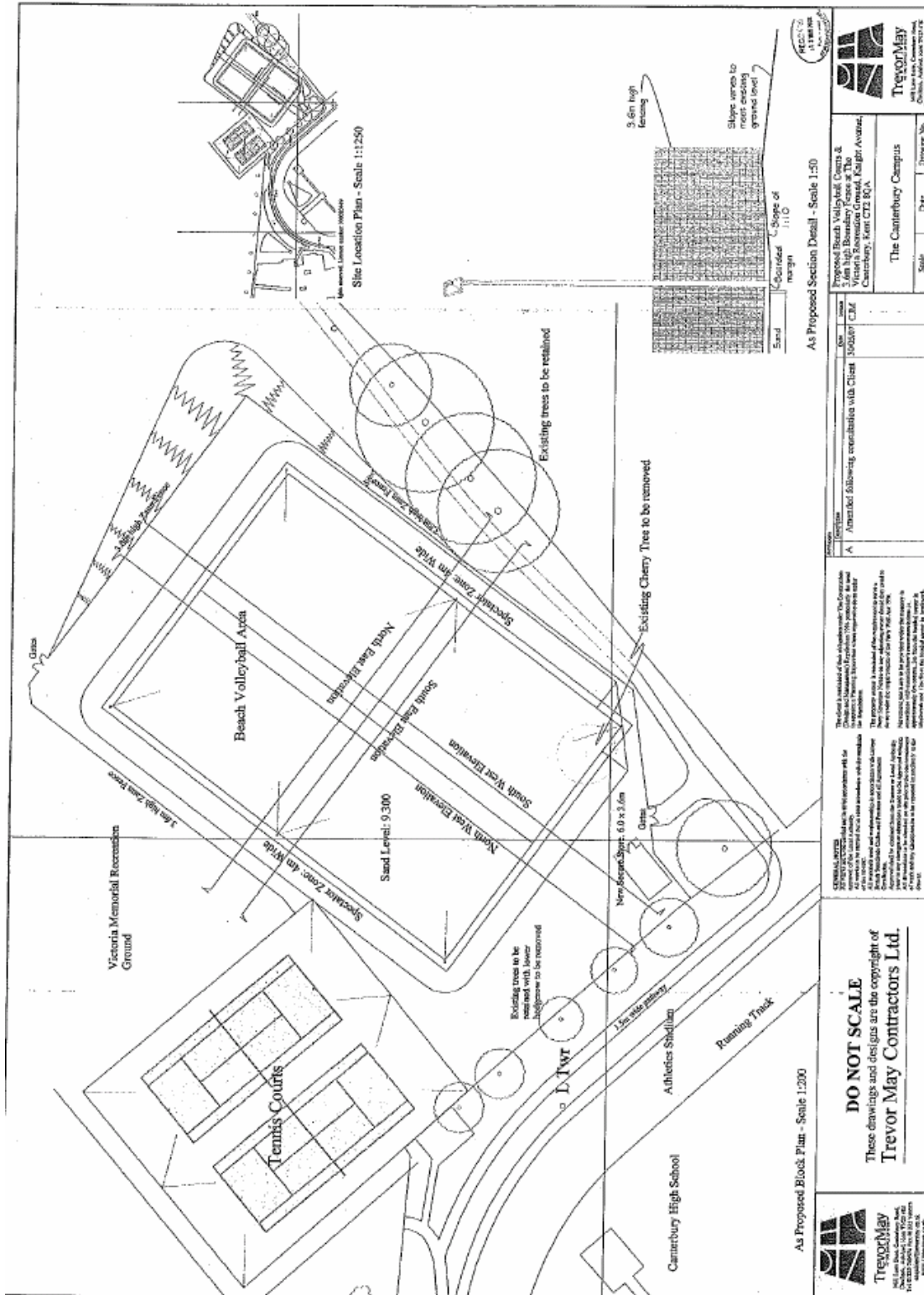
As Proposed Block Plan - Scale 1:500

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 The Specialist in Sports Grounds
 Mill Lane, Canterbury Road,
 Chatham, Kent, TN32 4BD
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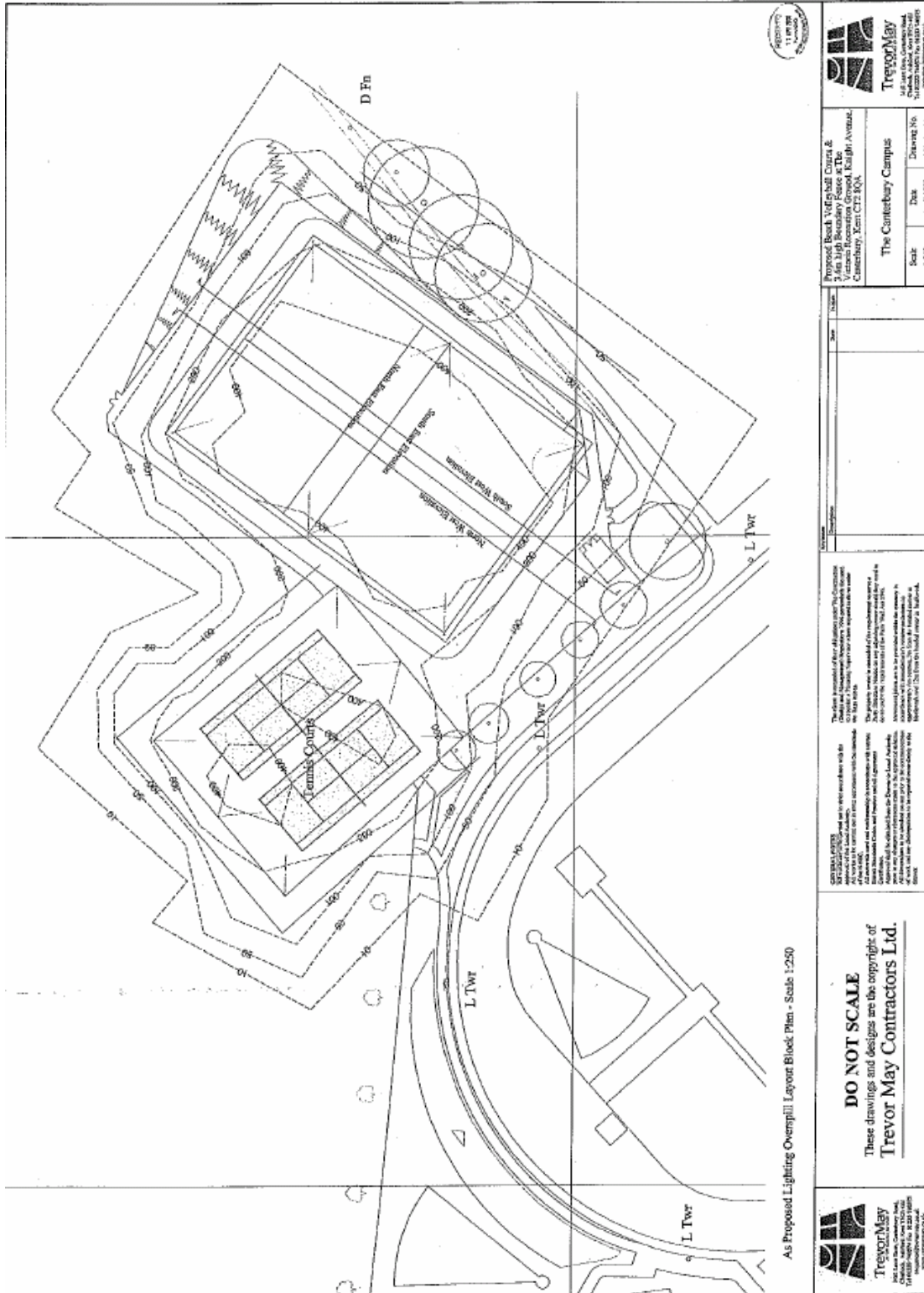
Proposed Beach Volleyball Courts & 3.6m high Boundary Fence at The Victoria Memorial Recreation Ground, Knight Avenue, Canterbury, Kent CT12 8QA	Scale	1:500	Date	Feb 2007	Drawing No.	2007/1402
The Canterbury Campus						

Floodlit Beach Volleyball Facility at the Victoria Memorial Recreation Ground, Canterbury - CA/08/516



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Floodlit Beach Volleyball Facility at the Victoria Memorial Recreation Ground, Canterbury - CA/08/516



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**Proposed Beach Volleyball Courts &
 3 x 10m Recreation Kiosk at The
 Victoria Memorial Recreation Ground, Kai Ihu Avenue,
 Canterbury, Kent CT2 8QA**

The Canterbury Campus

Scale: 1:250 Date: April 2008 Drawing No: 2007/1426

NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION

NOTES:

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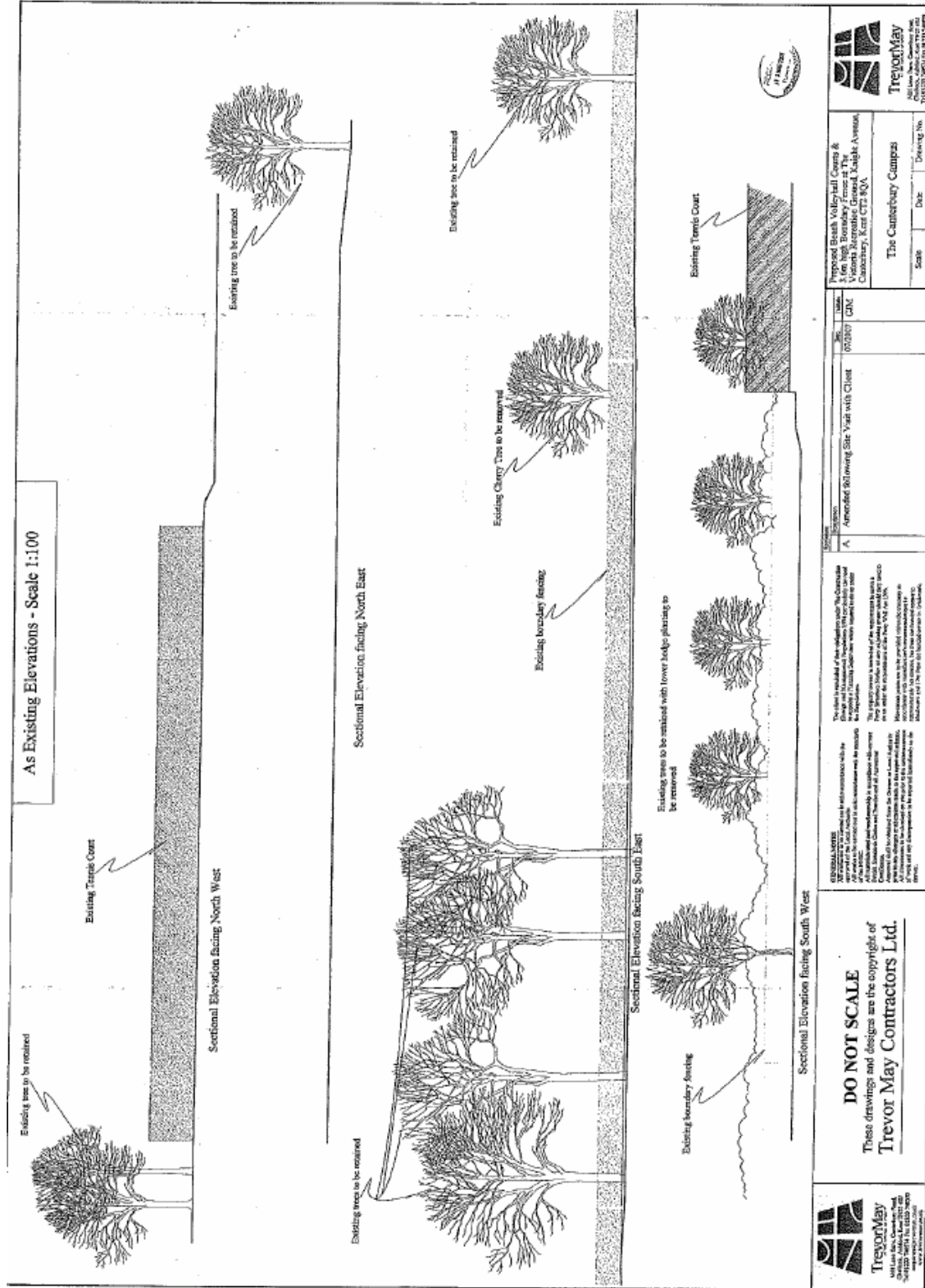
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As Proposed Lighting Overspill Layout Block Plan - Scale 1:250

Floodlit Beach Volleyball Facility at the Victoria Memorial Recreation Ground, Canterbury - CA/08/516



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PROPOSED BEACH VOLLEYBALL COURTS & FLOODLIGHTING
Victoria Memorial Recreation Ground, Leys Road, Canterbury, Kent CT2 8JQ.

The Canterbury Campus

Scale: 1:100 Date: Feb 2007 Drawing No: W07V040214

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GENERAL NOTES:

1. The client is responsible for any obligations under the Construction Act 1996 and the Local Authority.

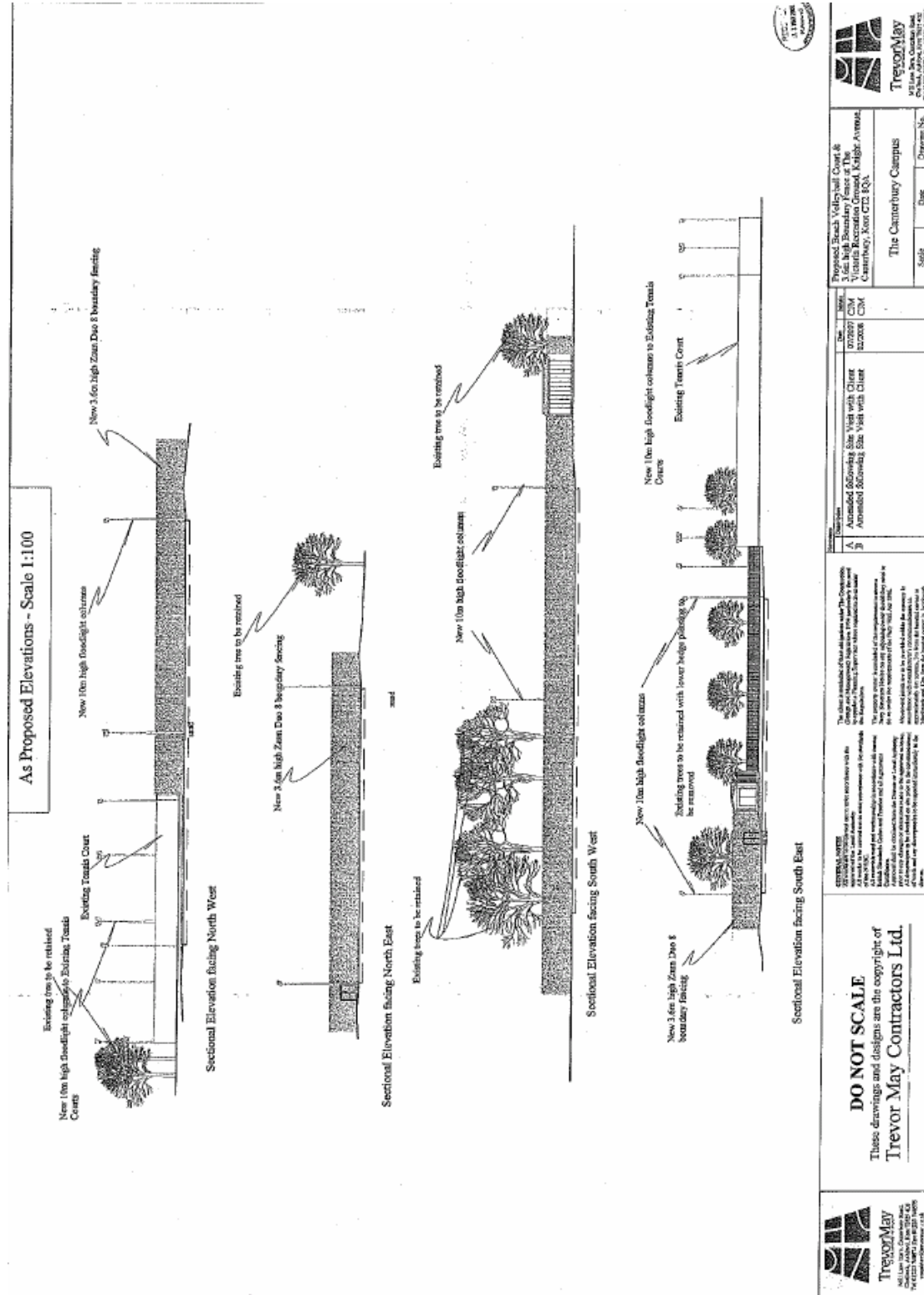
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3. The proposed four court beach volleyball centre would be located upon the site of four grass tennis courts, which due to vandalism and the high cost of upkeep, were deemed to be unusable and, consequently, the fencing was removed last year. Adjacent to them are two macadam all-weather tennis courts, which are still used. In order to maximise the use of the all-weather courts the City Council has requested that they are included in the lease agreement and that the School take them over as part of the proposed development. The applicant advises that, as soon as funds become available, it is the intention to add floodlights to the two tennis courts, enabling extended hours of use, and to resurface the two courts using the same materials as existing to restore the appearance and performance of the playing surface.
4. The facility has been designed to occupy the area in the south west corner of the Recreation Ground, taking into account the position of the existing tennis courts (to be retained and upgraded) and trees. It is the position of existing trees that has defined the orientation of the playing area, i.e. not parallel to the boundary, to keep the new facility outside the crown spread of the four trees close to the boundary of the site. Only one small tree would be removed as a result of the proposed facility. The applicant advises that the layout has also taken into account the need to meet international dimensional specifications for four volleyball courts with regulation run off space around each court. The play and run off areas for each court would occupy a space 25 metres in length, and 18 metres in width, and the block of four courts would be set in a rectangular shape two courts wide and two courts long. Consequently the total area of sand would be 52 metres in length and 36 metres in width.
5. A four metre wide margin around the perimeter of the courts would provide space for up to 1400 spectators. There is also additional space within the enclosure to the volleyball area adjacent to the proposed storage building for players waiting to participate. The new volleyball playing area and spectator space is proposed to be enclosed using 3.6 metre high fencing, for ball containment and to separate the area from the remainder of the recreation ground. The rigid weld-mesh fence would be powder coated black in an effort to reduce its visual impact, whilst ensuring the security of the site.
6. By its nature, the sand playing area needs to be on a flat single level. The applicant is proposing that a shallow grass covered bank at 1:10 would surround the sand to shelter and contain it. In addition, a 1 metre wide level timber boarded margin would be located between the grass and the sand, to provide a transition between the two, and to avoid grass cuttings contaminating the sand. Because the existing grass from the former tennis courts has a very shallow gradient down towards the east, the top of the spectator banking in the eastern corner of the fenced volleyball area would be at a level approximately 600mm above the existing grass level. A shallow grassed slope would be created outside the fence line to flow gently back down to the level of the adjacent grass to minimise visual impact.
7. The path linking the Canterbury Campus with the City Centre, that runs close to the boundary of the Recreation Ground would remain outside of the fenced area and available for use at all times, as currently. The facility would be served by gates in diagonally opposite corners, the gates in the south-west corner linking directly with the existing path that links to the school, and those in the north east corner providing access during construction and linking with the temporary construction access across the recreation ground from Rheims Way. The construction access from Rheims Way would

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utilise the temporary cross over installed as a means of access off Rheims Way into the Recreation Ground during the Tour de France cycle race staged in 2007.

8. The proposal also includes a prefabricated steel unit for secure storage, which has been selected to be robust, but also sympathetic in design and colour (dark green) to the location and its surroundings.
9. It is proposed that the volleyball facility would be used for national and international events, as well as local community and school use (more details regarding proposed use of the facility can be found below. In order that the centre achieves the standard required to hold national and international events the volleyball facility would be floodlit.
10. The floodlighting for the volleyball facility would comprise eight luminaires, each housing a 2kW multi vapour asymmetric lamp, mounted on six 10metre high galvanised steel columns. The adjacent tennis courts would be floodlit using the same lighting equipment, but there would be only four luminaires, supported on 4 columns. The applicant advises that the luminaires would be designed and installed to ensure that the light would be projected onto the playing surface only, with a sharp cut off outside the playing area, and no vertical light emitted by the luminaires.
11. The proposed volleyball facility and adjacent tennis courts would be used by existing students of the Canterbury Campus as part of their normal PE courses and for after school clubs between 3.00 and 5.30pm, managed and supervised by the School's staff. As beach volleyball is played with teams of two on each side, a maximum of 16 people would use the courts at one time. A similar number may use all four volleyball courts at once for seven-a-side rugby or beach football. It is the applicant's intention to generate interest from young people in beach volleyball, tag rugby and beach football. It is expected that this interest would be from local residents, who would access the facility on foot or by public transport. The applicant advises that such groups would use the facility after 5.30pm, at weekends, and during school holidays, up to 10pm. The community use would include use by clubs and individuals on a 'pay and play' basis, and would be supervised by 'Body and Mind', who currently operate the adjacent sports hall and fitness facilities at the Canterbury Campus.
12. The hours of use proposed by the applicant are as follows:
 - 8.00am – 5.30pm – Use by pupils of the Canterbury Campus during school term time.
 - 5.30pm – 10.00pm - Community use during school term time.
 - 8.00am – 10.00pm - Community use during weekends and school holidays.

There are existing changing and toilet facilities within the adjacent sports hall that would be available during all of the proposed hours of usage under the supervision of Body and Mind.

13. In addition to the above, the applicants are hoping to attract national and international events to the venue, which would be organised in the first instance by Volleyball England, in collaboration with the School and Body and Mind. The applicant advises that experience elsewhere suggests that such events would attract 2 to 3000 visitors in total to Canterbury over the course of an event. It is expected that such major events may occur once or perhaps twice a year and take place over a weekend during the normal hours of usage. A 4metre wide margin around the perimeter of the volleyball courts would provide space for up to 1400 spectators, and temporary seating would be hired in

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for such events. Advice and guidance in marshalling and security would be sought from Volleyball England and, because of the high profile of major events, the School would work closely with the City Council's Sports Development Team to ensure minimum disruption and the maximum benefit to the City as a whole.

14. Parking would not be available on site in conjunction with major events, but the applicant advises that the School would work closely with the City Council to ensure that appropriate parking arrangements are put in place and publicised. Experience gained from the recent and much larger scale UK stage of the Tour de France cycle race, which had its finish line alongside the Memorial Ground, would be used to manage such events. Each major event would be considered on a case by case approach and would be negotiated with the City Council with a view to arranging a Park and Ride facility. During the school day the facility would be used by the school and therefore there should be no implications for parking as a result of this. Out of school hours the centre would be managed as part of the Canterbury Campus' sports facilities, and parking would be available on the school site.
15. The proposed development comprises the placement of an area of sand at ground level, screened by shallow banking, and enclosed with black open mesh fencing. The applicant advises that the development has been sited in the lowest and furthest corner of the Memorial Ground from Rheims Way, and would be positioned between the existing tennis courts and the fenced and tree lined boundary of the site. The upper parts of the City Cathedral and its tower, which lies approximately 1.2 Km to the east, are visible from the site. However, the applicant advises the proposed facility would be seen against a backdrop of tree screening, and at night when the floodlighting would be in use, would be viewed against the adjacent floodlit athletics track. In light of this, the applicant does not consider that the development would impact upon the setting of the Cathedral.

The following documents have been submitted in support of the application: Design & Access Statement; Revised School Travel Plan; and a Lighting Specification.

Reduced copies of the submitted drawings showing the site layout and access are attached.

Planning Policy

16. The Development Plan Policies summarised below are relevant to the consideration of the application:
 - (i) **The Kent & Medway Structure Plan: Adopted 2006:**
 - Policy SS1** - The strategic development requirements of this plan should be met in a manner that provides for balanced and timely residential employment, retail and leisure development, and brings forward community facilities and infrastructure when they are needed, whilst at the same time conserving and enhancing the quality of Kent's environment.
 - Policy SP1** - Seeks to conserve and enhance Kent's environment and ensure a sustainable pattern of development.
 - Policy EN9** - Tree cover and the hedgerow network should be maintained. Additionally, they should be enhanced where this would

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improve the landscape, biodiversity, or link existing woodland habitats.

Policy QL1 – All development should be well designed and be of high quality. Developments should respond positively to the scale, layout, pattern and character of their local surroundings.

Policy QL12- Community Services, including schools and education provision, will be provided as long as there is a demonstrable need for them.

Policy QL15 – Local Development Documents will make provision for sport, informal and formal recreation facilities, taking account of the potential for dual use and/or joint provision. All major new formal recreation and sports facilities should be designed to avoid nuisance from traffic, noise and lighting.

Policy TP19 - States that development proposals should comply with vehicle parking policies and maximum standards adopted by the County Council.

Policy NR5 – The quality of Kent's environment will be conserved and enhanced. This will include the visual, ecological, geological, historic and water environments, air quality, noise and levels of tranquillity and light intrusion.

(ii) The adopted (2006) **Canterbury District Local Plan:**

Policy BE1 - The City Council will expect proposals of high quality design which respond to the objectives of sustainable development.

Policy BE3 - Design statements and/or Development Briefs shall be submitted with planning applications setting out the principles used in the scheme to relate the development within and to its context. This will apply to all planning applications, where the development is visually significant or is significant to its neighbours.

Policy NE5 - Development should be designed to retain trees, hedgerows, woodland or other landscape features that make an important contribution to the amenity of the site and the surrounding area, and which are important to wild flora and fauna.

Policy C1 - In considering the location or control of new development, or the relocation of existing activities, the Council will always take into account the principles of the adopted 2004 Canterbury District Transport Action Plan.

Policy C4 - Development proposals considered to have significant transport implications are to be supported by a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan.

Policy C9 - The City Council will apply Kent County Councils adopted Vehicle Parking Standards to development proposals.

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Policy C17 - The City Council will work with the Education Authority and school governors to ensure that the needs of primary and secondary schools are taken into account in the assessment of their development needs and proposals. Planning permission will be granted for proposals that are needed by the schools subject to design and highway safety considerations.

Policy C23 - Any relocation or expansion of an existing institution shall be determined according to a number of criteria, whilst having regard to the institution's existing facilities and transport links.

Policy C24 - Proposals which would result in the loss of protected existing open space will only be permitted if:

- There would be no material harm to the contribution the protected open space makes to the visual or recreational amenity of the area;
- Where there would be material harm, this would be balanced against demonstrable need for the development;
- There is no alternative site available to accommodate the proposed development
- The open space has been assessed by the Council as making no positive contribution to its overall strategy on open space.

Policy C40 - When granting planning permission for development which could potentially result in pollution, the City Council will impose conditions or seek agreements to ensure subsequent mitigation measures are undertaken.

Consultations

17. **Canterbury City Council:** has no objections to the proposal. It is requested that the County Council ensures that Kent Highway Services are satisfied with the proposal in terms of traffic generation, particularly during any major events.

Divisional Transport Manager: comments as follows:

“The use of the tennis courts would have generated its own parking demand, therefore, provided car parking within the school grounds is made available at all times during hours of usage, I have no objection to the Volleyball facility for general school and local community use.”

With regards to the arrangements proposed for major events, Kent Highway Services have reservations regarding the arrangements made. However, it is appreciated that arrangements/agreements cannot be formulated/agreed until an event is actually proposed. Therefore, Kent Highway Services request that they be consulted in writing directly prior to any major event taking place to approve transportation details. Kent Highway Services suggest that a major event can be defined as anything that attracts more spectators/participants than the land could already generate in its current permitted use.

The County Council's Landscape Advisor: comments as follows:

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“The lighting element of the scheme is likely to result in slight adverse effects during the day and slight to moderate adverse effects at night. These effects relate to landscape/townscape and visual amenity. The presence of the Cathedral, which is a World Heritage Site of International Importance, in views from the recreation ground is a key factor in judging the level of these effects.

With the exception of the lighting the proposals appear generally acceptable.”

The following recommendations are made:

- The fencing, light columns and equipment storage hut should be colour coated a muted dark green finish;
- The proposed fence enclosing the volleyball courts should be set back at least 2 metres from the trunks of the trees on the southern boundary;
- Temporary tree protection fencing should be installed and remain in place until the completion of the works;
- Hard surfacing should be limited to those proposed;

The County Council’s Noise Advisor: is of the opinion that the proposed volleyball and tennis courts would not cause a detriment to the nearest residential receptors in terms of noise.

The County Council’s Lighting Advisor: comments as follows:

“The sports facilities to be floodlit are some 25m from Rheims Way to the north and the nearest houses on Knight Avenue to the west. To the east are allotment gardens while the campus itself is to the south. The car parking and general outdoor circulatory areas on the campus are lit by floodlights on 8m poles, while the athletics track is lit with high powered floodlights on 10 x 12m masts, erected around the perimeter. Most masts have 3 floodlights, while a couple have just 2.

The view from Rheims Way is fairly well screened by mature trees of about 10 metres in height and to the east there is a hedge of about 5 metres and very large trees of around 20 metres plus.

The floodlighting proposed comprises floodlights of a similar wattage to those already lighting the athletics track but at a lower height of 10m as opposed to 12m. The floodlights are of the flat glass type, which ensures minimum light spill to the surrounding areas and the night sky. The light spill diagrams also show that this is the case with most light contained within 10-15 metres of the courts.

In view of the above I recommend the proposed lighting for the application is approved.”

English Heritage: does not wish to offer any comments on this occasion. It is recommended that the application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of the County Councils specialist conservation advice.

The County Council’s Conservation Architect: no comments received to date.

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Sport England: wishes to offer support to the planning application for the change of use from tennis courts to a beach volleyball facility. Floodlighting of the adjacent tennis courts is also welcomed. The proposals will contribute to increasing participation in sport and active recreation by pupils and the local community.

Kent County Council's Sports Development Unit: is fully in favour of this sports facility being provided. The project fits in very well with the overall strategy of providing a varied range of sporting opportunities to the community. This facility would be the first of its size in the County, enabling other beach sports to take place, such as beach football, rugby, netball and cricket. Beach Volleyball is an Olympic Sport and this facility would go a long way to assist the County Council's plans, together with the City Councils plans, to encourage foreign Olympic teams to establish themselves in Kent prior to the Olympic Games in 2012. It is understood that some members of the public are concerned at the loss of the green grass area of the Recreation Ground. It is pointed out that the facility would only take up a small parcel of land and it is not intended to be for exclusive use. This would be a community facility as well as one for the school.

Local Member

18. The local County Member, Mr Martin Vye, was notified of the application on the 15 April 2008.

A letter of objection was received from the Local County Member, Mr Martin Vye, and three City Councils Ward Members, Cllr Stephen Dye, Cllr James Flanagan and Cllr Ida Linfield. The points of objection are summarised below:

- The Recreation Ground was bought for the local residents over a hundred years ago, and should remain as public open space;
- Open space is a premium in this area of Canterbury, and the Recreation Ground is well used by local residents;
- Local residents would not have free and openly accessible use of the facility;
- This application is contrary to Policy C24 of the Canterbury District Local Plan;
- Access to the site is limited to one road. Major events, and use of the facility in the evenings/weekends would have a considerable adverse impact on the London Road Estate, with cars parking on local roads;
- Local residents would be adversely affected by noise, including that from tannoy systems, and light pollution as a result of this development;
- The facility would detract from the setting of the Cathedral and would adversely affect one of the major approach roads to the City;

Publicity and Representations

19. The application was publicised by advertisement in a local newspaper, the posting of 2 site notices, and the individual notification of 63 nearby properties. 56 letters of representation, 42 objecting to the application, and 14 in support of the proposal, have been received to date.

The planning points of concern and objection are summarised below:

- Concern is expressed over access and parking issues, especially associated with the proposed major events;
- The estate has only one road on and off of it, which is in a bad state of repair. More traffic will make it even worse;
- The Canterbury Campus already has insufficient car parking;

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- How would major events be managed? What security would be in place? Would temporary facilities such as catering and toilets be provided?;
- The High School previously applied for planning permission for a covered tennis facility in this location, which was refused. The grounds of refusal still apply to this scheme;
- The Recreation Ground was given to the people of Canterbury by a benefactor, it should not just be given away. It was given to the City Council in trust to maintain for purpose and the land should remain public;
- Why were residents not formally consulted as landowners on the planning application?;
- The Recreation Ground is open space, available freely for use by the general public at all hours of the day and is used daily by some residents. It is one of the few remaining open green spaces in this part of Canterbury, and certainly one of the few large enough to hold full football or cricket matches;
- Local residents do not want to lose the Recreation Ground, not even a small part of it;
- Who would be responsible for the cost of maintaining the courts and keeping them clear of leaves etc?;
- Should this development be approved it would set the precedent for further development of the Recreation Ground;
- The development of the volleyball courts would take up more space than the old tennis courts;
- Why can the facility not be built on the Canterbury Campus itself or at the University of Kent? Why can this facility not be provided at the coast?;
- The facility should be free for the general public, not a commercial venture. If the facility is built, local residents should be allowed to use it openly and free of charge;
- It is important that children and young people can have easy and free access to open space for their physical and mental health;
- With many apartments being built within a few miles of the recreation Ground, all with no gardens, the importance of the site will increase;
- Floodlighting will further pollute the area and is totally inappropriate in a residential area;
- The development could have a negative impact on the adjoining allotments;
- Such a development would totally ruin the main approach into Canterbury (a World Heritage Site) for visitors;
- The development would have knock on implications such as increased litter, vandalism, noise (from players, spectators, traffic and tannoys) and crime;
- Concern is expressed over the loss of a Cherry Tree. It would be a great loss to the natural beauty of the recreation ground;

The points of support are summarised below:

- There are a lack of facilities in the area for those who are eager to participate in beach sports;
- With this proposal Canterbury has a chance to establish a facility that would promote local sports and attract local and national events and competitions;
- Having the beach volleyball courts would be a great way to introduce local youngsters to Volleyball;
- Support can only be given to any effort made to encourage activity, sport and recreation;
- This facility would support Government initiatives, as detailed in the Choosing Health white paper 2004, to promote healthy living;
- This facility would not impact significantly on the open recreation space. The proposed courts would take up the small area of the recreation ground previously occupied by four grass tennis courts, which has fallen into disrepair and become

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unusable. The remainder to the Recreation Ground would still be available to local residents to use as they see fit;

- The facility would be first class and provide benefits for the children, youth and residents of Canterbury;
- Should that facility be used as part of an international circuit it would bring benefits to the local economy as the visitors would stay, shop and eat in the City;
- The site has already been identified as a training venue for the 2012 Olympics;
- The facility would not be profit seeking;
- The Canterbury School's Partnership enables over 150 students with varying degrees of disability to use the fully accessible facilities at Canterbury High School for free. This development is a huge opportunity for thousands of students access Kent to become more active;
- Canterbury City Football Club would be keen to make use of the venue for community beach volleyball sessions. The Football Club has implemented an active community development programme, which supports Canterbury City Council's commitment to increase sport and physical activity participation amongst key target groups. The Chairman of the Football Club is strongly of the opinion that the proposed facility would be a useful tool in helping both the Club and the wider sporting sector achieve this important objective.

In addition to the above, a letter of objection was received from the Open Spaces Society. The main points of objection are summarised below:

- The recreation ground is public open space, which has been used freely for generations;
- The applicant wishes to make part of the field private which is unacceptable;
- This major development would, by its character, size and floodlighting, change the character of the recreation field forever and would be detrimental to the general public;

Discussion

20. In considering this proposal regard must be had to the Development Plan policies outlined in paragraph (16) above. Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act states that applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore, this proposal needs to be considered in the context of the Development Plan Policies, Government Guidance and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity. Issues of particular relevance include the loss of open space, impact upon residential and local amenity in terms of noise and light pollution, and access and parking concerns.

Loss of open space

21. The majority of the objections received relate to the loss of open space. The Victoria Memorial Recreation Ground is designated as Open Space within the Canterbury District Local Plan (Policy C24). The Recreation Ground is an area of open amenity grassland, used for general recreation and sporting activities. The application site itself lies to the south west corner of the Recreation Ground, and the proposed beach volleyball facility would be sited upon an area once home to four grass tennis courts. These courts were once fenced, although freely available for community use. However, when the management of these courts was transferred to the Canterbury Campus use by the general public was restricted, and the courts fell into a state of disrepair. The fencing was subsequently removed, and now the site is open grassland. However, the

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precedent for fenced courts in this area of the site has been set. In addition, the application includes the resurfacing and floodlighting of two fenced macadam tennis courts, which are adjacent to the proposed facility. A storage building is also proposed.

22. The land that is the subject of this application is owned by Canterbury City Council and the applicant advises that the City Council have agreed in principle to provide a lease to the Canterbury Campus so that the site can be used for recreational purposes by the Canterbury Campus. In May 2008 the applicant advised that a lease had not been signed, but confirmed that the City Council had agreed to the principle of the proposal to reuse the area once home to the grass tennis courts for a beach volleyball facility. The agreement in principle was subject to planning permission being granted by the County Council, and subject to compliance with Open Space consultation procedures, a matter dealt with by the City Council. The applicant advises that the City Council proposed the lease arrangement, and required the application to include the area of existing hard tennis courts. Since the planning and Open Space formalities are yet to be concluded, the applicant considers it premature to assume the lease is given. It is for this reason that formal Notice under article 6 was served upon Canterbury City Council as landowners.
23. The City Council is responsible for the disposal of open space, and this matter will be dealt with by the City Council as a separate procedure. It is for the City Council, as landowner, to consider the merits of granting a lease to the Canterbury Campus, and this is not a matter for the County Planning Authority. However, the planning merits of the scheme with regards to open space must be considered and addressed.
24. As stated within the representations received, a planning application for a tennis dome upon this site was previously refused planning permission by the City Council. However, that facility, which is now located within the confines of the Canterbury Campus, was a large indoor facility, which involved the erection of a significant built structure. This current application, however, would involve the erection of fencing, floodlighting and a small storage building, but would otherwise maintain the openness of the site. The proposed beach volleyball facility would take up the same area as the previously fenced old grass tennis courts, although the enclosed area has been rotated slightly in order that it does not impact upon trees located to the boundary of the site. Like the former tennis courts, the beach volleyball area is a recreational use with an open playing surface at ground level. The fencing, which the applicant proposes to finish in black, would have a minimal visual impact, set against a backdrop of tree screening.
25. Policy C24 of the Canterbury City Local Plan states that proposals which would result in a loss of protected open space would only be permitted if certain criteria were met. First, I do not consider that the proposal would harm the contribution that the remainder of the Recreation Ground makes to the visual or recreational amenity of the area. Although the facility would be managed, and a fee charged for its use, the area would still be available for recreational purposes. The visual impact of the development, in terms of its wider landscape implications and impact on local amenity, will be discussed later in this report, but the openness of the site would be maintained. The development would be viewed against the backdrop of the floodlit running track within the Canterbury Campus site, and tree screening, with existing fenced tennis courts located to the immediate west of the proposed beach volleyball courts. In light of this I do not consider that the development would significantly harm the visual amenity of the area.
26. The applicant has demonstrated a case of need for the development, which has been reiterated by a number of letters of support for the proposal, including a letter from Canterbury Football Club. In addition, Kent County Council's Sports Development Unit is

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fully in favour of this sports facility being provided stating that ‘the project fits in very well with the overall strategy of providing a varied range of sporting opportunities to the community.’ The facility would be the first of its size in the County, enabling other beach sports to take place, such as beach football, rugby, netball and cricket. Beach Volleyball is an Olympic Sport and I am advised that this facility would assist the County Council’s plans, together with the City Council’s plans, to encourage foreign Olympic teams to establish themselves in Kent prior to the Olympic Games in 2012. The applicant has confirmed that alternative sites have been considered, and that none are available within the Campus itself. In addition, the applicant advises that it is the City Council that has requested that the Canterbury Campus take on responsibility for the management and maintenance of the two courts if the beach volleyball scheme does proceed. The City Council have not raised objection to the scheme, suggesting that they do not have any concerns over the ‘loss’ of this area of open space or consider that its loss would impact upon the City Council’s overall strategy for open space. I do not, therefore, consider that the proposed development would be contrary to Policy C24 of the Canterbury District Local Plan.

Highway implications

27. Local residents have expressed concern over the highway implications of this application, with regards to daily community use and the intended national/international events. With regard to use by the School during school hours, there would not be any change in impact upon the highway network. However, community use of the facility in the evenings and at weekends has the potential to attract additional vehicles to the area, and therefore have a detrimental impact upon the local highway network. However, the facility would attract only a limited number of people when in general use, and the existing car parking within the campus is sufficient to accommodate any car parking required for the facilities day to day use. Kent Highway Services have no concerns over the general use of the facility, subject to car parking within the school grounds being made available during the facilities hours of use. Therefore, I consider that subject to the imposition of a condition ensuring that car parking on site be made available during hours of use, the proposed facility would not have a detrimental impact on the local highway network with regards to its day to day use.
28. With regards to the major national/international events that the applicant wishes to attract to the facility once, perhaps twice a year, parking would not be available on site. Instead, the applicant advises that the School would work closely with the City Council to ensure that appropriate parking arrangements are put in place and publicised. Experience gained from the recent and much larger scale UK stage of the Tour de France cycle race, which had its finish line alongside the Memorial Ground, would be used to manage such events. Each major event would be considered on a case by case approach and would be negotiated with the City Council with a view to arranging a Park and Ride facility. Because any such major event would need its own particular consideration, and take account of the scale and programme for the event, the applicant advises that it is impossible to provide detailed plans in advance. Nevertheless, the applicant fully recognises that proper arrangements for transport of participants and spectators need to have been put in place before such an event can proceed.
29. Major events would disrupt the local highway network, and undoubtedly would have an impact upon access and car parking. However, until such an event is planned, which cannot happen until the facility is delivered, the number and magnitude of such an event cannot be predicted. Therefore, each event would need to be considered and assessed on its own merits, with appropriate measures to manage the event and associated traffic and access arrangements, drawn up and agreed with the City Council and Kent Highway

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Services prior to the event. Due to the unknown nature of such events, I consider that this is a sensible approach to take with regards to managing their highway implications. Kent Highway Services also appreciate that arrangements/agreements cannot be formulated/agreed until an event is actually proposed. Therefore, Kent Highway Services request that they be consulted directly prior to any major event taking place to approve transportation details. Kent Highway Services suggest that a major event can be defined as anything that attracts more spectators/participants than the land could already generate in its current permitted use. This could be open to interpretation and, therefore, I would recommend that for the purposes of this development, a major event be defined as anything that would attract over 100 people, be that spectators or participants. Although such major events at this site would have an impact upon the local highway network, I consider that subject to the imposition of a condition requiring the applicant to consult and agree parking and transport arrangements in writing with the City Council and Kent Highway Services prior to any major events, that the application should not be refused on the grounds of its impact upon the local highway network. It should be borne in mind that it remains entirely possible that such major events may not eventually take place.

Residential and Local Amenity – Noise and Light Pollution

30. The application site is bounded to the north and west by residential properties, and the impacts of this development upon the amenity of local residents needs to be addressed. Kent and Medway Structure Plan Policy NR5 seeks to conserve and enhance the quality of Kent's environment, including noise and levels of tranquillity, and light intrusion. Therefore, development proposals must seek to minimise levels of pollution, and be deemed to be acceptable in terms of impact upon local and residential amenity.
31. As detailed in this report, the applicant proposes that the proposed facility be used in the evenings and at weekends. Although the proposed facility would be located upon an area already used for recreational tennis, by providing an upgraded surface, the beach volleyball courts and floodlighting, the use of the site would no longer be constrained by poor weather or low lighting levels. This, in conjunction with management by the Canterbury Campus, and subsequent promotion of community use of the facility, as well as aiming to attract national and international events, the use of the site will undoubtedly increase. The impacts of this increase in use with regards to highway implications have been discussed above. However, the potential impacts with regards to light and noise pollution, and other amenity issues, will be discussed below.
32. The proposed floodlighting for the volleyball facility would comprise eight luminaires, each housing a 2kW multi vapour asymmetric lamp, mounted on six 10metre high galvanised steel columns. The adjacent tennis courts would be floodlit using the same lighting equipment, but there would be only four luminaires, supported on 4 columns. The applicant advises that the luminaires would be designed and installed to ensure that the light would be projected onto the playing surface only, with a sharp cut off outside the playing area, and no vertical light emitted by the luminaires. This is supported by the information given within the submitted lighting specification.
33. The County Council's Landscape Advisor would like to see the lighting element of the proposal removed, and states that this element of the scheme is likely to result in slight adverse effects during the day and slight to moderate adverse effects at night. In response to this suggestion the applicant states that it is essential for any newly constructed outdoor sports facility to be floodlit to allow for extended hours of play and training throughout the year. Unlit facilities do not sustain a coaching regime and deny players who only have the evenings during the week available to them for sport. It should

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be noted that Sport England specifically welcome the intention to include floodlighting. In light of this, I consider the inclusion of floodlighting to be acceptable in principle, subject to the lighting be acceptable in terms of impact upon residential amenity and the wider landscape.

34. With regards to the wider landscape, it is recognised that Canterbury Cathedral is a World Heritage Site and careful consideration needs to be given to any impact new development might have upon it. However, given the distance of the proposed scheme from the Cathedral, the established screening between the Cathedral and the beach volleyball area and its proximity to an existing floodlit facility within the Campus, the applicant does not consider that the lighting would have an adverse effect on the setting of the Cathedral. In addition, the street lighting on Rheims Way and the Ring Road that lies between the Cathedral and the beach volleyball facility would continue to dominate lighting visible to evening visitors to Canterbury. English Heritage were consulted on this application with regards to the setting of the Cathedral, and do not wish to offer any comments on this occasion. In light of the above, I do not consider that the proposed lighting would have a significantly detrimental effect on the wider landscape, or the setting of the World Heritage Site. However, the potential impact upon residential amenity needs to be considered, and this will be discussed below.
35. The County Council's Lighting Advisor states that the facilities to be floodlit are some 25m from Rheims Way to the north and the nearest houses on Knight Avenue to the west. To the south of the proposed facility the Canterbury Campus car parking and general outdoor circulatory areas on the campus are lit by floodlights on 8m poles, while the athletics track is lit with high powered floodlights on 10 x 12m masts, erected around the perimeter. Most masts have 3 floodlights, while a couple have just 2. The view from Rheims Way is fairly well screened by mature trees of about 10 metres in height and to the east there is a hedge of about 5 metres and very large trees of around 20 metres plus. The floodlighting proposed comprises floodlights of a similar wattage to those already lighting the athletics track but at a lower height of 10m as opposed to 12m. The floodlights are of the flat glass type, which ensures minimum light spill to the surrounding areas and the night sky. The light spill diagrams also show that this is the case with most light contained within 10-15 metres of the courts. The County Council's Lighting Consultant concludes that the proposed lighting should be approved.
36. In light of the above and the distance between the proposed facility and residential properties, and the quality of the submitted lighting specification, I do not see any overriding reason to refuse the proposed floodlighting. In particular, the light spill would be entirely contained within the Recreation Ground and the sight of the lighting from neighbouring housing would be largely screened by existing mature trees. Therefore, subject to the imposition of conditions to ensure that the lighting is installed as specified within the application, and that lighting levels do not exceed those stated by the applicant, I consider that light pollution would not have a significantly adverse effect on the amenity of neighbouring residents or the wider landscape.
37. The proposed volleyball facility and adjacent tennis courts would be used by existing students of the Canterbury Campus as part of their normal PE courses and for after school clubs between 3.00 and 5.30pm, managed and supervised by the schools staff. As beach volleyball is played with teams of two on each side, a maximum of 16 people would use the courts at one time. A similar number may use all four volleyball courts at once for seven-a-side rugby or beach football. It is the applicant's intention to generate interest from young people and local groups who the applicant advises would use the facility after 5.30pm, at weekends, and during school holidays, up to 10pm. The community use would include use by clubs and individuals on a 'pay and play' basis, and

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would be supervised by 'Body and Mind', who currently operate the adjacent sports hall and fitness facilities at the Canterbury Campus. Local residents have expressed concern that the extended hours of use, and intensification of use, would have generate noise, having a negative impact upon residential amenity.

38. The Recreation Ground is currently freely available for use at all times, with no control or management. Although residential properties bound the site to the north and west, these properties face the site and are separated from the recreation ground by Knight Avenue and Rheims Way, a major access road into the City. In addition to local roads, the existing campus facilities, which are used in the evening and at weekends, add to the existing background noise levels. The use of the proposed facility on a day to day basis would not attract a significant number of people, having little impact on background noise levels. Major events, which the applicant wishes to accommodate at the site, would have a greater potential for noise generation, but it is expected that these may occur only once, perhaps twice a year. The major events would be held within the hours of use specified by the applicant, which would be conditioned should permission be granted. In addition, a further condition of consent would limit the number of major events to be held at the facility to 2 a year.
39. The County Councils Noise Advisor is of the opinion that the proposed facility would not cause a detriment to the nearest residential receptors in terms of noise. In light of this, and due to the fact that the facility would be used by only a small number of people, apart from on a couple of occasions a year, I consider that the hours of use specified by the applicant are acceptable, and would not have a detrimental impact upon residential amenity in terms of noise generation.
40. Local residents also express concern that the facility could generate additional litter and encourage vandalism. However, as the site would be closely managed by the Canterbury Campus, and 'Body and Mind', activities at the site would be more closely supervised than as existing. To enable the facility to attract local use, and national and international events, it would have to be maintained to a very high standard. The existing courts, and the Recreation Ground, are maintained by the City Council. However, the Campus and 'Body and Mind' would be on site on a daily basis, closely monitoring activities and discouraging anti-social behaviour. Therefore, I do not consider that the facility would exacerbate any current issues regarding litter and/or vandalism, and if anything, close supervision may reduce such matters.
41. In summary, I consider that the applicant has successfully demonstrated that the proposed facility would not cause light or noise pollution to a level that would significantly impact upon the amenity of neighbouring properties or the wider landscape. Therefore, I am of the opinion, subject to the imposition of conditions to limit the hours of use, that the proposed development would not have a significant detrimental impact upon residential and local amenity. In addition to the measures outlined above, hours of working during construction would be conditioned in an effort to minimise the impact upon local residential amenity.

Landscaping

42. The wider landscape implications of the floodlighting have been considered above and are deemed to be acceptable when balanced against the need for the floodlit facility. However, concern is expressed over the removal of a Cherry Tree, which a local resident states 'would be a great loss to the natural beauty of the Recreation Ground'. However, the applicant advises that one tree would need to be removed to accommodate the facility. However, should the pitch be reoriented to retain this tree, the crown spread of

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four other mature trees on the boundary of the site could be adversely affected. That would have a detrimental impact on the screening of the site, and It would be regrettable to potentially lose four mature trees to save one smaller specimen. The County Council's Landscape Advisor considers the proposals to be acceptable in terms of impact upon trees, and I do not consider that the loss of a tree would be significantly detrimental to the overall landscape value of the Recreation Ground.

43. The County Council's Landscape Advisor makes a number of recommendations in order to ensure that existing trees are protected, and the landscape value of the site retained. In light of this, I consider that, should planning permission be granted, a scheme of landscaping should be submitted for approval, to include methods to protect trees to be retained, the provision of landscaping and tree planting, and details of hard surfacing. In addition, the Landscape Advisor recommends that the fencing, lighting columns and equipment storage hut be colour coated in a muted dark green finish. The applicant has proposed that the fencing be powder coated black, and I consider that this is an appropriate and acceptable colour finish. With regards to the storage hut, the applicant advises that the hut be finished in dark green, which I again I consider to be acceptable in principle. However, due to the many varying shades of green, and a lack of information regarding any proposed colour finish to the lighting columns, I recommend that exact details of the colour finish to the fencing, lighting columns and storage hut be submitted pursuant to condition should planning permission be granted. Subject the these conditions, I do not consider that the proposed development would have a significantly adverse impact on the local landscape.

Conclusion

44. In summary, I consider that, subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions, this proposal would not have a significantly detrimental effect on the amenity of local residents, protected open space or the local highway network. In my view, the development would not give rise to any significant material harm and is in accordance with the general thrust of relevant Development Plan Policies. There are no material planning considerations that indicate that the conclusion should be made otherwise. However, I recommend that various conditions be placed on any planning permission, including those outlined below.

Recommendation

28. I RECOMMEND that PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO conditions covering:
- the standard time limit;
 - submission of a scheme of landscaping and tree planting;
 - tree protection and clearance of the site outside of bird breeding seasons;
 - submission of details relating to the colour finish of the fencing, lighting columns and storage hut;
 - the floodlighting to be installed in accordance with the submitted details;
 - light levels not to exceed those stated within the planning application;
 - the use to be restricted solely to the uses applied for;
 - hours of use;
 - restriction of number of major events per annum;
 - car parking on campus to be available during hours of use;

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- the applicant to consult and agree with Kent Highway Services and the City Council prior to holding any major events in order that access arrangements can be made. Those arrangements to be implemented in accordance with the approved drawings;
- controls over hours of working during construction;
- measures to prevent the deposit of mud on the highway;

Case officer – Mary Green	01622 221066
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Background documents - See section heading.
