



Officer Report

Application Number:	HGY/2023/0695
Application Type:	Full planning permission
Address:	Highgate Wood Cricket Pitch, Muswell Hill Road, London N10 3JN
Proposal:	Installation of non-turf cricket pitch on existing cricket square.
Case Officer:	Ben Coffie
Valid Date:	10/03/2023
Applicant:	The City of London Corporation
Agent:	Mr Paul O'Neill

RECOMMENDATION

Approve with Conditions

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND LOCATION DETAILS

Proposed Development

This is an application for the installation of a non-turf cricket pitch on an existing cricket square.

Site and Surroundings

The application site relates to an existing cricket pitch in Highgate Wood, located to the south-west of the Pavilion Cafe. The existing pitch is made available by the City of London Corporation to hire for matches, practice and casual play. Highgate Wood is designated Metropolitan Open Land, a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), and an Historic Park. The subject cricket pitch is not within a designated Conservation Area.

Planning History

As on the portal there are different applications for works within Highgate Wood.

LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

The application has been publicised by way of press & site notice displayed in the vicinity of the site and consultation letters. A total of 1 objection have been received, as summarised below and commented on below in the assessment of this application.

Highgate CAAC– Object to the application for the following reasons:

- Health and safety concerns;
- Loss of Biodiversity;
- Environmental impacts of artificial turf.

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main planning considerations raised by the proposed development are:

1. Principle of development/ Impact on MOL
2. Layout and design;
3. Other considerations.

Principle of development and Impact on Metropolitan Open Land (MOL)

As pointed out above the site is located within Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and this designation therefore severely limits the use of the site and buildings and the opportunities for development. The London Plan states that land designated as MOL is the same as 'Green Belt' in terms of protection from development. Policy SP13 of the Local Plan requires that the character and quality of MOL will be safeguarded from inappropriate development.

The instillation of a non-turf cricket pitch would have no effect on the openness of the MOL and in line with the provisions of the NPPF, para 149, is an 'appropriate' intervention for the purposes of an established outdoor sports facility. The change here would improve the durability and functionality of the existing facilities.

Layout and design

The proposal is for the installation of two x non-turf cricket pitch (NTP) on the existing cricket square. This would be rectangular in shape measuring 24.1m x 2.74m in size. The proposed surface is the NottsGrass Ultra, which is a monofilament surface used within ECB Approved systems. The base system uses non-degradable porous geotextile membrane to wrap aggregate layers, which is within the Notts Sport range of ECB Approved pitch systems.

Such a small non-turf cricket strip is very small in size in relation to the overall extent of the open space. The visual effect of such a feature would be very limited and this would not affect the openness of this site, or the ecological and heritage designations of Highgate Wood. No trees would be felled or root protection areas disturbed to facilitate the development.

Other considerations

The application site is a significant distance away from any neighbouring residents to avoid harm to neighbouring amenity.

The concerns of Highgate CAAC are noted, however concerns in respect of health and safety concerns are not a matter which the LPA can consider. Such concerns relate to the governance/ playing of the game and as such are matters for the clubs that play here and possibly the ECB.

In terms of biodiversity and environmental impacts, as noted above the extent of such a non-turf cricket strip is very small in size in relation to the overall extent of the open space. Such concerns are not considered to be matters which would warrant a refusal of planning permission.

Conclusion

Having assessed the material considerations as outlined within the report above the proposal here is considered to be acceptable and as such this application is recommended for approval.

Conditions:

- 1 The development to which this permission relates must be begun no later than three years from the date of this decision notice, failing which the permission shall be of no effect.

Reason: This condition is imposed by virtue of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to prevent the accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions.

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved plans and drawings listed in this decision notice, other than where those details are altered pursuant to the conditions of this planning permission.

Reason: In order to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approved details and in the interests of amenity.