



REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE

3 December 2015

REPORT

Subject Heading:

P0954.15: Training Ground & Sports Stadium, Rush Green Road, Romford

Alterations and extensions to the existing buildings on the site including remodelling of the club building and extension of canopy over stands; erection of new offices, groundsman's building, gatekeeper lodge and irrigation tank; extension to hardstanding. (Application received 24 July 2015)

Ward:

Havering Park

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Policy context:

Local Development Framework
The London Plan
National Planning Policy Framework

Financial summary:

None

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

- Havering will be clean and its environment will be cared for [X]
- People will be safe, in their homes and in the community [X]
- Residents will be proud to live in Havering [X]

SUMMARY

The proposal is for alterations and extensions to the existing buildings on the site, including the remodelling of the club building and the extension of the existing canopy over the east terrace. The proposal also involves the erection of a detached groundsman's building and irrigation tank to the north of the site and a detached gatekeeper lodge to the south.

The application raises considerations in relation to the principle of the development, including the impact on the Green Belt and the visual impact of the development on the character and openness of the Green Belt. Additional considerations include the impact on the amenity of the neighbouring residents as well as the suitability of the proposed parking and access arrangements.

Staff consider that the proposed development raises matters of judgement. On balance the proposal is considered to be acceptable in all material respects and it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee notes that proposed development will be liable for a payment of £2369.00 (subject to indexation) under the Mayor's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in accordance with London Plan Policy 8.3.

That the Head of Regulatory Services be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the conditions set out below:

1. Time Limit

The development to which this permission relates must be commenced not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of section 91 of the Town and Country Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. In Accordance with Plans

The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved plans (as set out on page one of this decision notice).

Reason: The Local Planning Authority consider it essential that the whole of the development is carried out and that no departure whatsoever is made from the details approved, since the development would not necessarily be acceptable if partly carried out or carried out differently in any degree from the details submitted. Also, in order that the development accords with Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

3. External Materials

No works shall take place in relation to any of the development hereby approved until samples of all materials to be used in the external construction of the building(s) are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter the development shall be constructed with the approved materials.

Reason: Insufficient information has been supplied with the application to judge the appropriateness of the materials to be used. Submission of samples prior to commencement will ensure that the appearance of the proposed development will harmonise with the character of the surrounding area and comply with Policy DC61 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

4. Landscaping

No works shall take place in relation to any of the development hereby approved until there has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of hard and soft landscaping, which shall include indications of all existing trees and shrubs on the site, and details of any to be retained, together with measures for the protection in the course of development. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised within the scheme shall be carried out in the first planting season following completion of the development and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: Insufficient information has been supplied with the application to judge the appropriateness of the hard and soft landscaping proposed. Submission of a scheme prior to commencement will ensure that the development accords with the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61. It will also ensure accordance with Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

5. Restriction of Use

The groundsman's building hereby permitted shall be used in conjunction with the main use of the site as a sports ground for the storage of grounds maintenance related equipment with ancillary welfare facilities only and shall be used for no other purpose(s) whatsoever.

Reason: To restrict the use of the premises to one compatible with the surrounding area and to enable the Local Planning Authority to exercise control over any future use not forming part of this application, and that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

6. Wheel Washing

Before the development hereby permitted is first commenced, vehicle cleansing facilities to prevent mud being deposited onto the public highway during construction works shall be provided on site in accordance with details to be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved facilities shall be retained thereafter and used at relevant entrances to the site throughout the duration of construction works. If mud or other debris originating from the site is deposited in the public highway, all on-site operations shall cease until it has been removed.

The submission will provide;

- a) A plan showing where vehicles will be parked within the site to be inspected for mud and debris and cleaned if required. The plan should show where construction traffic will access and exit the site from the public highway.
- b) A description of how the parking area will be surfaced, drained and cleaned to prevent mud, debris and muddy water being tracked onto the public highway;
- c) A description of how vehicles will be checked before leaving the site - this applies to the vehicle wheels, the underside of vehicles, mud flaps and wheel arches.
- d) A description of how vehicles will be cleaned.
- e) A description of how dirty/ muddy water be dealt with after being washing off the vehicles.
- f) A description of any contingency plan to be used in the event of a break-down of the wheel washing arrangements.

Reason: Insufficient information has been supplied with the application in relation to wheel washing facilities. Submission of details prior to commencement will ensure that the facilities provided prevent materials from the site being deposited on the adjoining public highway, in the interests of highway safety and the amenity of the surrounding area. It will also ensure that the development accords with the

Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policies DC32 and DC61.

7. Construction Methodology

Before development is commenced, a scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority making provision for a Construction Method Statement to control the adverse impact of the development on the amenity of the public and nearby occupiers. The Construction Method statement shall include details of:

- a) parking of vehicles of site personnel and visitors;
- b) storage of plant and materials;
- c) dust management controls;
- d) measures for minimising the impact of noise and ,if appropriate, vibration arising from construction activities;
- e) predicted noise and, if appropriate, vibration levels for construction using methodologies and at points agreed with the Local Planning Authority;
- f) scheme for monitoring noise and if appropriate, vibration levels using methodologies and at points agreed with the Local Planning Authorities;
- g) siting and design of temporary buildings;
- h) scheme for security fencing/hoardings, depicting a readily visible 24-hour contact number for queries or emergencies;
- i) details of disposal of waste arising from the construction programme, including final disposal points. The burning of waste on the site at any time is specifically precluded.

And the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme and statement.

Reason: Insufficient information has been supplied with the application in relation to the proposed construction methodology. Submission of details prior to commencement will ensure that the method of construction protects residential amenity. It will also ensure that the development accords the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

8. Hours of Construction

All building operations in connection with the construction of external walls, roof, and foundations; site excavation or other external site works; works involving the use of plant or machinery; the erection of scaffolding; the delivery of materials; the removal of materials and spoil from the site, and the playing of amplified music shall only take place between the hours of 8.00am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday, and between 8.00am and 1.00pm on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays/Public Holidays.

Reason: To protect residential amenity, and in order that the development accords with the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

9. Contaminated Land (1)

The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until the developer has submitted for the written approval of the Local Planning Authority:

a) A Phase I (Desktop Study) Report documenting the history of the site, its surrounding area and likelihood of contaminants, their type and extent incorporating a site conceptual model.

b) A Phase II (Site Investigation) Report if the Phase I Report confirms the possibility of a significant risk to any sensitive receptors. This is an intrusive site investigation including factors such as chemical testing, quantitative risk assessment and a description of the site ground conditions. An updated Site Conceptual Model should be included showing all the potential pollutant linkages and an assessment of risk to identified receptors.

c) A Phase III (Risk Management Strategy) Report if the Phase II Report confirms the presence of a significant pollutant linkage requiring remediation. The report will comprise two parts:

Part A - Remediation Scheme which will be fully implemented before it is first occupied. Any variation to the scheme shall be agreed in writing to the Local Planning Authority in advance of works being undertaken. The Remediation Scheme is to include consideration and proposals to deal with situations where, during works on site, contamination is encountered which has not previously been identified. Any further contamination shall be fully assessed and an appropriate remediation scheme submitted to the Local Planning Authority for written approval.

Part B - Following completion of the remediation works a 'Validation Report' must be submitted demonstrating that the works have been carried out satisfactorily and remediation targets have been achieved.

d) If during development works any contamination should be encountered which was not previously identified and is derived from a different source and/or of a different type to those included in the contamination proposals, then revised contamination proposals shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority; and

e) If during development work, site contaminants are found in areas previously expected to be clean, then their remediation shall be carried out in line with the agreed contamination proposals.

For further guidance see the leaflet titled, 'Land Contamination and the Planning Process'

Reason: Insufficient information has been supplied with the application to judge the risk arising from contamination. Submission of an assessment prior to commencement will ensure the safety of the occupants of the development hereby permitted and the public generally. It will also ensure that the development accords

with Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policies DC54 and DC61.

10. Contaminated Land (2)

a) If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority) shall be carried out until a remediation strategy detailing how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved.

b) Following completion of the remediation works as mentioned in (a) above, a 'Verification Report' must be submitted demonstrating that the works have been carried out satisfactorily and remediation targets have been achieved.

Reason: To ensure that any previously unidentified contamination found at the site is investigated and satisfactorily addressed in order to protect those engaged in construction and occupation of the development from potential contamination. It will also ensure that the development accords with Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policies DC54 and DC61.

11. Cycle Storage

The development shall not be commenced until details of cycle storage are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details, location and number of cycle parking spaces for both long-stay (for staff) and short-stay use (for spectators) should be clarified and provision should be in accordance with the London Plan (2015) Table 6.3. The cycle storage shall be permanently retained thereafter.

Reason: Insufficient information has been supplied with the application to demonstrate what facilities will be available for cycle parking. Submission of this detail prior to commencement is in the interests of providing a wide range of facilities for non-motor car residents and sustainability.

12 External Lighting

No building shall be occupied or use commenced until details of any external lighting to the groundsmen's building has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The lighting shall be provided and operated in strict accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: Insufficient information has been supplied with the application to judge the impact arising from any external lighting required in connection with the building or use. Submission of this detail prior to occupation in the case of new building works or prior to the use commencing in the case of changes of use will protect residential amenity and ensure that the development accords with the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

13. Flood Lighting

No additional or replacement floodlighting will be installed without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and ensure that the development accords with the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

14. Refuse and Recycling

The development shall not be commenced until details of refuse and recycling storage are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The refuse and recycling facilities shall be permanently retained thereafter.

Reason: Insufficient information has been supplied with the application to judge how refuse and recycling will be managed on site. Submission of this detail prior to commencement will protect the amenity of occupiers of the development and also the locality generally and ensure that the development accords with the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

15. Demolition of Existing Groundsman's Store

The existing groundsman's store building shall be demolished prior to the first use of the new groundsman's building.

Reason: To minimise the overall development impact on the openness of the Green Belt, in accordance with Policy DC45 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

16. New Plant or Machinery

Before any works commence a scheme for any new plant or machinery shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority to achieve the following standard: noise levels expressed as the equivalent continuous sound level LAeq (1 hour), when calculated at the boundary with the nearest noise sensitive premises, shall not exceed LA90-10dB and shall be maintained thereafter to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: Insufficient information has been supplied with the application to assess the noise levels of the plant or machinery to be used on site. Submission of this detail prior to occupation in the case of new building works or prior to the use commencing in the case of changes of use, will prevent noise nuisance to adjoining properties in accordance with the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policies DC55 and DC61.

INFORMATIVES

1. Statement Required by Article 35 (2) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015: In accordance with para 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012, improvements required to make the proposal acceptable were negotiated with the agent Matthew Taylor. The revisions involved alterations to the location of the proposed board room. The amendments were subsequently submitted on 30 September 2015.
2. The proposal is liable for the Mayor of London Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Based upon the information supplied with the application, the CIL payable would be £2369.00 (this figure may go up or down, subject to indexation). CIL is payable within 60 days of commencement of development. A Liability Notice will be sent to the applicant (or anyone else who has assumed liability) shortly and you are required to notify the Council of the commencement of the development before works begin. Further details with regard to CIL are available from the Council's website.
3. The applicant is advised that a water main crosses the application site and that further information in this respect should be obtained from Essex & Suffolk Water prior to works commencing.
4. The applicant is advised that a high pressure gas main crosses the application site and that further information in this respect should be obtained from the National Grid prior to works commencing.
5. The applicant is advised that an additional fire hydrant will be required within the site to service the development. Further information in this respect should be obtained from the London Fire Brigade on 020 8555 1200.
6. The applicant is advised that the extended roadway to the groundsmen's building must be capable of supporting a 14 tonne pump appliance with adequate turning facilities. Further information in this respect should be obtained from the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority on 020 8555 1200
7. A fee is required when submitting details pursuant to the discharge of conditions. In order to comply with the Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications, Deemed Applications, Requests and Site Visits) (England) Regulations 2012, which came into force from 22.11.2012, a fee of £97 per request or £28 where the related permission was for extending or altering a dwellinghouse, is needed.

REPORT DETAIL

1. Site Description

- 1.1 The application relates to the Training Ground & Sports Stadium at Rush Green Road, Romford. The site is situated on the northern side of Rush Green Road and has an overall area of 11.2 hectares.
- 1.2 The site was formerly used as a private sports ground by Ford United Football Club. Since 2009 it has been owned by West Ham United Football Club, who use it for youth and reserve team training. For a temporary period the facilities were also used by Grays Athletic Football Club, who have since moved to a ground share arrangement with Aveley Football Club.
- 1.3 There are a range of buildings on the site which are used as facilities for the club. The buildings on the site include a covered spectator stand capable of seating 400 people, with a single storey club house building connected to this that forms the associated changing facilities, gym and fitness suites, kitchen and catering facilities, and offices. There is also a small groundsman's store building located adjacent to the northern boundary of the site.
- 1.4 Immediately surrounding the main club house building is a general circulation area, with access routes to the rear, along with a raised seating area and some ancillary parking for deliveries.
- 1.5 There are a number football pitches on the site comprising five training pitches and the main pitch along with accompanying spectator areas. The training pitches are situated on a large open area to the west of the site, whilst the main pitch has fencing on three sides with the large spectator stand to the west and a partially covered standing terrace to the east.
- 1.6 The site is accessed from the A124 (Rush Green Road) that forms the southern boundary. A large parking area is immediately adjacent to the access with approximately 160 parking spaces available. To the east and south of the site, the site is bounded by housing. The land to the north of the site forms part the Crowlands Heath Golf Course. To the west is a Cadet Training Centre and Wood Lane Sports Centre. A Public Right of Way (no. 151) runs parallel to the eastern and northern site boundary. The application site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

2. Description of Proposal

- 2.1 The application is seeking planning permission for alterations and extensions to the existing buildings on the site, including; remodelling of the club building and extension of canopy over stands; erection of new offices,

groundsman's building, gatekeeper lodge and irrigation tank, and an extension to the hardstanding adjacent to the main club house.

- 2.2 This application follows the approval of planning permission P1614.09 in February 2010, which was for a similar proposal. The previously approved scheme comprised external alterations to the existing sports club building and the erection of new grounds man's building, the provision of bunding on the northern and western boundaries, a new security office at the entrance to the site and the provision of ballstop fencing around pitches. This permission lapsed in February 2013. It should be noted that the current application does not include the provision of bunding or ball stop fencing.
- 2.3 The proposed groundsman's building would be located towards the northern site boundary and would measure 30.9 metres in width by 22.6 metres in depth. The main section of the building would incorporate a flat roof design with a height of 5.46 metres. The building will also include a subservient side section to the west elevation with a lower set mono-pitched roof rising from 3.45 metres to 4.32 metres in height. The existing groundsman's building would be demolished. No details of the external materials have been provided, however under the previously approved application the external walls and roof of the building were to be finished with metal cladding coloured olive green. The windows and doors to the building would be powder coated aluminium also coloured olive green.
- 2.4 Adjacent to the groundsman's building an irrigation storage tank is proposed to provide the water required to maintain the on-site pitches, an open wash-down area to clean the equipment and a rainwater harvesting tank to store the run-off from the groundsman's building that would be re-used on site. The proposed irrigation tank would measure 12 metres in width with a maximum height of 3.1 metres.
- 2.5 A new access track to the west of the existing sports club building is also proposed to give a vehicular access to the groundsman's building. The access track would be 4 metres in width and have an overall length of approximately 94 metres.
- 2.6 The proposal would involve the internal reconfiguration of the existing single storey building attached to the rear of the main stand. The building currently provides a variety of amenities including changing rooms, a gym/ fitness suite, treatment rooms, offices and catering facilities. As part of the internal alterations the building would be extended to the north at single storey level to provide a new treatment area, hydrotherapy pool and plant room as well as a boardroom and office to allow meetings to be held on site. The extensions would provide approximately 1,825 cubic metres of additional volume which equates to around a 35% increase in comparison to the existing building.
- 2.7 As part of the renovation and extension works the external elevations of the building would be re-clad using a mixture of club colours, glazing and timber cladding.

- 2.8 The existing canopy structure above the eastern standing terrace for the main pitch would be extended by approximately 5 metres on each side.
- 2.9 At the entrance to the site it is proposed to erect a security office to ensure that only club personnel are allowed into the site. This would be a small portacabin style building that would have an area to manage visitors to the site and a small area for rest breaks.

3. Relevant History

- 3.1 P0230.15 - The retention of a temporary Portakabin modular building following the proposed relocation to an alternative area within the site boundaries. The building will continue to be used as classroom facilities, to be hired from Portakabin Ltd for a period of 5 years – Approved 27 May 2015
- 3.2 P1614.09 - Erection of new groundsman's building. Bunding on the northern and western boundaries. New security office at entrance to the site. Reconfiguration and minor external alterations to the existing sports club building. Provision of ballstop fencing around pitches – Approved 5 February 2010

4. Consultations/Representations

- 4.1 Notification letters were sent to 63 properties and 1 representation has been received. The comments can be summarised as follows:
- The application provides a chance for the local authority to enter negotiations with West Ham United in order to ensure opportunities for local schools to benefit from the development; such as access to first team training sessions, school visits to the ground and rewards for pupils achieving excellence in educational attainment.
 - Giving the local community access to Premiership football players, training facilities, ground maintenance staff and working environments could be of great benefit to young people in Havering and local residents.
- 4.2 In response to the above: a variety of community initiatives and activities that West Ham United Football Club are currently involved in within Havering, as well as potential programmes to be implemented in the future, are detailed in the following sections of this report.
- 4.3 The following consultation responses have been received:
- Essex & Suffolk Water - the applicant is required to undertake further consultation in order to trace and mark the route of a water trunk main and easement which runs through the site.

- London Fire Brigade Water Team - no objection, the applicant will be required to install 1no. private fire hydrant.
- London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority - no objection, subject to the extended roadway being capable of supporting a 14 tonne pump appliance with adequate turning facilities.
- Designing Out Crime Officer - no objection.
- Greater London Authority (GLA) - no objection.
- Transport for London (TfL) - no objection.
- Environmental Health - no objection, recommended conditions relating to contaminated land and new plant and machinery.
- Local Highway Authority - no objection, recommended a condition relating to vehicle cleansing.

5. Relevant Policies

- 5.1 CP14 (Green Belt), CP17 (Design), DC18 (Protection of Sports and Leisure Facilities), DC32 (The Road Network), DC33 (Car Parking), DC34 (Walking), DC35 (Cycling), DC36 (Servicing), DC45 (Green Belt), DC51 (Water Supply, Drainage and Quality) DC53 (Contaminated Land), DC55 (Noise), DC58 (Biodiversity), DC61 (Urban Design) and DC63 (Delivering Safer Places) of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document are considered to be relevant.
- 5.2 Policies 3.19 (sport facilities), 5.3 (sustainable design and construction), 6.9 (cycling), 6.10 (walking), 6.13 (parking), 7.3 (designing out crime), 7.4 (local character), 7.6 (architecture), 7.15 (reducing noise and enhancing soundscapes), 7.16 (Green Belt) and 8.2 (planning obligations) of the London Plan, are material considerations.
- 5.4 The National Planning Policy Framework, specifically Sections 7 (Requiring good design), 8 (Promoting healthy communities) and 9 (Protecting Green Belt land) are relevant to these proposals.

6. Staff Comments

- 6.1 This application is put before Members as the proposal has a number of judgements in respect of Green Belt policy. The main issues in this case are considered to be the principle of the development, including the impact on the Green Belt; the visual impact of the development on the character and openness of the Green Belt and the general landscape; impact on the amenity of adjoining residential occupiers and highways/parking issues.

Principle of Development

- 6.2 The applicant (West Ham United Football Club) took over the former Ford United Football Club ground in 2009 to use it for youth and reserve team training and games. The former use of the site by Ford United Football Club came under Class D2 of the Use Classes Order; the use of the site by West Ham United also falls under the same use class therefore no planning permission is required for a change of use.
- 6.3 The application site is designated as being within the Metropolitan Green Belt where Government guidance and local planning policy encourages specified uses which have a positive role in fulfilling Green Belt objectives. The occupation of the site by West Ham United ensures that the site continues to be used to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation in a manner that supports Green Belt objectives.

Green Belt Implications

- 6.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) attaches great weight to Green Belts in preventing urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. In addition the NPPF sets out five purposes of the Green Belt, which includes to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas and to safeguard the countryside from encroachment. As with previous Green Belt policy, the NPPF advises that inappropriate development is by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
- 6.5 The NPPF sets out forms of development that are deemed to be appropriate within the Green Belt and states that construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate development. A given exception to this is the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
- 6.6 The proposed extension to the existing canopy structure above the eastern standing terrace would result in an increase the length of the existing structure by approximately 5 metres on each side. Nevertheless, the applicant has provided supporting evidence which states that it is a requirement of the League to be able to accommodate 500 spectators under cover. As such the extension is considered to be an appropriate facility for outdoor sport. On balance it is considered that the partial addition to the stand enclosure would result in a minimal impact on the openness of the Green Belt and would be of a scale that could reasonably be expected for a professional football club of this nature. Furthermore, the proposed redevelopment is for ancillary facilities associated with the Football Club on previously developed land.

- 6.7 It is considered that the other key elements of the proposal, specifically the new groundsman's building and associated irrigation plant enclosure and tank and hardstanding, the gatekeepers lodge and the extensions to the main club house building would be disproportionate. As such they would result in an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt and are in effect inappropriate. Therefore very special circumstances should exist that justify the development.
- 6.8 It is for the applicant to show why planning permission should be granted and very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations (NPPF, paragraph 88).
- 6.9 The proposal is for West Ham United Football Club to use the site as their main training centre for the first team squad, along with holding reserve team games in the stadium and using the existing stand and terracing for supporters. West Ham United currently train at a facility in Chadwell Heath, however, this is a shared facility with the youth teams and first team. The applicant's supporting statement advises that this causes the club logistical problems due to the constant changes in the requirements of the various levels of training facilities used to service all of the parties. Under the proposal the Rush Green Road site would solely be used by the first team and the youth teams would continue to be based at Chadwell Heath and another facility at Little Heath.
- 6.10 The supporting statement contends that the main aim of the alterations and extensions to the existing building on the site is to provide the required facilities internally that are necessary for a Premier League football team, to improve the external appearance of the building and to use the West Ham United colours to imbed the club's identity at the site.
- 6.11 The training ground would include six high quality pitches, including the pitch within the stadium area, that are the same standard and size of the pitch used by the first team. This is to improve the quality of training provided to the players and to ensure that all their training mirrors the conditions they will encounter in a first-team game. All the pitches will be irrigated and maintained to Premier League standards, including the composition of the soil and grass.
- 6.12 Given the nature of how much time and work, on a daily basis, will be required to maintain the six pitches at the site, the applicant has advised that the existing groundsman's building is not sufficient to meet the needs of the staff and to house the necessary equipment. Therefore it is proposed to demolish the existing building and to construct a new groundsman's building that can accommodate all the equipment required to maintain the pitches to the appropriate standards.
- 6.13 The applicant's supporting statement advises that the size of the proposed groundsman's building has been dictated by the space required to house the

necessary equipment to maintain the pitches. Indeed the submitted floor plan is annotated to show which pieces of equipment would be sited in each area of the building. Part of the building would include an administration area for the groundsmen, including offices and a welfare room. The applicant has advised that the welfare facilities need to be immediately adjacent to the storage area to ensure the management of the equipment within it and also, to keep a clear separation between the first team training and management that would take place within the main building.

- 6.14 The proposed groundsman's building would occupy the same footprint as that of the groundsman's building previously approved under application P1614.09 in 2009, albeit with a minimal increase in the roof height. The applicant has stated that the reasoning behind the increase is that the height is set by the type and number of large tractors and associated machinery, together with high level of storage racking for facility management of the entire site. As such, following a review of the machinery required, this resulted in the need to marginally increase the height of the building.
- 6.15 Along with the groundsman's building there would also be an irrigation storage tank to provide the water required to maintain the on-site pitches, an open wash down area to clean the equipment and a rainwater harvesting tank to store the run-off from the groundsman's building that would be re-used on site.
- 6.16 The applicant asserts that the proposed groundsman's building and associated facilities are essential to maintain the standard of pitches proposed. The applicant's supporting statement advises that the existing facilities fall well below the standard required for a facility the size of Rush Green, whether it was to be used by a Premier League Football Team or any other team further down the footballing ladder. The applicant asserts that without the proposed groundsman building it would be impossible to maintain all of the pitches.
- 6.17 The proposals for the existing main building would involve the internal reconfiguration of the existing space, which currently provides a variety of amenities including changing rooms, a gym, treatment rooms, offices and catering facilities. The proposed extensions to the north of the building would include a treatment area, hydrotherapy pool and plant room as well as a boardroom and office to allow meetings to be held on site.
- 6.18 The extensions would provide approximately 1,825 cubic metres of additional volume which equates to around a 35% increase. Nevertheless, the extensions would be single storey in height and on balance the majority of the additional massing would be adsorbed by the overall bulk and scale of the existing building and adjoining grand stand structure, particularly when viewed from the site entrance and main approach to the south. On balance it is therefore considered that the harm to the openness of the Green Belt would be minimal in this instance.

- 6.19 The applicant states that the need for the proposed facilities is an essential requirement for a modern Premier League football team. Each of the players and staff at the Club are highly valuable assets that require the best facilities available to ensure they can play at their optimum ability. The applicant advises that the extensions proposed would allow the Club to provide training and medical facilities, areas for players to eat, offices for staff, changing facilities for training and matches held at the site and an area for press conferences.
- 6.20 The applicant goes on to state that the sport of Football has received substantial investment over the last decade and the Government, Sport England and the Leagues place a great emphasis on the need to improve the football facilities at all levels of the game. The applicant advises that West Ham United are currently severely constrained by their existing first team training base at Chadwell Heath that has limited facilities and only 4 pitches to train on, meaning that training can become difficult, particularly in the winter when the pitches start to show the signs of constant use. The new facilities at Rush Green would bring them more in line with their Premier League rivals.
- 6.21 The supporting statement also raises the point that the Club, and indeed the Premier League, pride itself on trying to bring in the best players possible and the training ground plays a key part in this as it will be the players main location for 90% of the time they are at the Club. An attractive training ground that is up to modern standards will assist in attracting better players to the Club and the Premier League.
- 6.22 In respect of the need for the boardroom, the applicant states that this is primarily led by the changes in modern football. It is rare that board meetings and player purchases and contract negotiations are held at the main ground. The players are based predominantly at the training ground, as are the management staff, and so any meetings with the hierarchy at the Club need to be held at the training ground so that the Chairmen can retain a hands on approach.
- 6.23 The applicant's supporting information goes on to state that furthermore, when the Club occupy the Olympic Stadium next season, they will have limited permanent office space available to them. Any office space they will have at the Olympic Stadium would be accessed by walking through public areas around the stadium. Often in professional football there is a need to bring players to meetings without it being public knowledge, particularly during player acquisitions when the Club may wish to avoid their rivals or the media knowing. As such, the training ground offers the ideal place to hold such meetings in private.
- 6.24 The applicant has also highlighted the current role that West Ham United Football Club has within the local community in Havering. A supporting document has been provided which details the variety of community initiatives and activities that West Ham United Football Club are currently

involved in within Havering, as well as potential programmes to be implemented in the future. This includes the following:

- **Football Development:**
 - Soccer Schools - Romford & Upminster.
 - Development Centre programme - Romford.
 - Premier League School Sport.
 - Commercial Schools programme.
 - SCL Learning Academy programme 16-18 year olds - Romford.
 - Barking & Dagenham College Learning Academy Football programme for 16-18 year olds.
 - Disability provision - Down Syndrome 21.
 - Junior Football Club provision.
 - Housing Association Football Programmes - Orchard Housing Foundation.
 - 18+ Women's Football programme - delivered in partnership with the Havering Sports Development Team.

- **Community Sport:**
 - Kicks delivery programme - on-going satellite session.
 - LycaMobile Regional Tournament - 2015/16 season.
 - Targeted Football programmes in partnership with Metropolitan Police, venue and timetable TBC by PC Darren Hepple.

- **Future Development - The key areas of development across the Foundation in Havering:**
 - Learning Academy programmes / Elite Squads in partnership with WHU Academy.
 - Commercial Football programmes - Schools / Soccer Schools
 - Junior Football Club partnerships - in conjunction with the Clubs support plan within Essex.
 - The Community Sports department are exploring all delivery and funding options across Havering with a development timeline of 2016/17 season start.
 - New alternative education programme in partnership with the Education Inclusion and Support Service.

6.25 Notwithstanding the very special circumstances outlined above, it should be noted that the GLA regard the proposal as an enhancement to the provision of outdoor sports and recreation in accordance with policy 3.19 of the London Plan. This assessment is consistent with the Mayor's consideration of other similar proposals concerning Tottenham Hotspur FC, Queens Park Rangers FC and Crystal Palace FC which were also located on sites within the Green Belt.

6.26 It should also be noted that there is an absence of suitable non-Green Belt sites within the borough that could realistically accommodate the same facilities as the Rush Green Road site, whilst simultaneously fulfilling the special requirements of a Premier League football team.

6.27 Members are therefore invited to consider as a matter of judgement whether the supporting information provided by the applicant in relation to the proposed detached groundsman's building, the extensions to the existing building and the gate keepers lodge constitute special very special circumstances to justify the inappropriate development proposed. On balance, staff consider that the case put forward is sufficient to support a recommendation of approval.

Impact on Amenity

6.28 The application site is largely removed from adjoining residential properties with Crowlands Heath Golf Course to the north and Wood Lane Sports Centre to the west. To the south the site fronts onto Rush Green Road with housing beyond. To the east the site is bounded by a Public Right of Way with the residential dwellings of those properties fronting onto Bellhouse Road and Meadow Road beyond.

6.29 Although there is potential for noise disturbance to adjoining residential occupiers from use of the land as a sports ground, as explained above, the use of the site by West Ham United does not in itself require planning permission.

6.30 The nearest residential dwelling to the proposed groundsman's building is situated in Meadow Road at a distance in excess of 60 metres. Existing landscaping adjacent to the eastern site boundary would screen the majority of the building from adjoining residential properties. Staff are of the view that the proposed building would not result in an adverse impact on residential amenity.

6.31 The proposed security office would be sited adjacent to the vehicular access road into the site. The building would be set back from the front site boundary with Rush Green Road by 16 metres and screened for the most part from view by existing boundary treatment. It is not considered that the security office would be harmful to residential amenity.

Environmental Issues

6.32 Environmental Health have raised no objections in relation to any historical contaminated land issues associated with the site, but have recommended the use of standard conditions in relation to contaminated land issues.

6.33 The site is not located within a Flood Zone and presents no issues in relation to flood risk.

6.34 The proposal is not considered to give rise to any significant or persistent noise issues.

Parking and Highway Issues

- 6.35 Policy DC33 seeks to ensure that all new developments make adequate provision for car parking.
- 6.36 Access to the application site is taken from Rush Green Road which changes to be Wood Lane as it crosses the Borough boundary into Barking and Dagenham. The existing access arrangements would remain unchanged as a result of this proposal. Staff are of the view that the proposal would not create any highway issues.
- 6.37 Within the site there is an existing large car park immediately adjacent to the access drive into the site with space for approximately 160 cars. A further car parking area for approximately 6 cars is also available outside the former sports and social club building. Staff are of the view that the existing on site car parking provision would be sufficient to cater for any additional parking requirements as a result of this proposal.
- 6.38 The Local Highway Authority has raised no objection in relation to the proposed amount of car parking provision and the access and servicing arrangements.

Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy

- 6.39 The proposed development would create 1184.5 square metres of new gross internal floorspace. Therefore the proposal is liable for Mayoral CIL and will incur a charge of £2369.00 (subject to indexation) based on the calculation of £20.00 per square metre.

Infrastructure Impact of Development

- 6.40 Given the nature of the proposed development, the application does not give rise to the requirements for any developer contributions payments in respect of additional school places.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Having regard to all relevant factors and material planning considerations Staff are of the view that this proposal would be acceptable.
- 7.2 Staff consider that the proposed development raises considerations in relation to the principle of the development, including the visual impact of the development on the character and openness of the Green Belt and the impact on the amenity of the neighbouring residents..
- 7.3 Staff are of the view that elements of the development would not be disproportionate, visually intrusive or have a harmful impact on the character

of the Green Belt or result in a loss of amenity to neighbouring occupiers. Staff are also of the view that very special circumstances have been demonstrated which justify the inappropriate element of the redevelopment. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in all other respects and it is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

None.

Legal implications and risks:

None.

Human Resources implications and risks:

None.

Equalities implications and risks:

None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Application form and supporting statements received on 24 July 2015 and amended plans received on 30 September 2015.