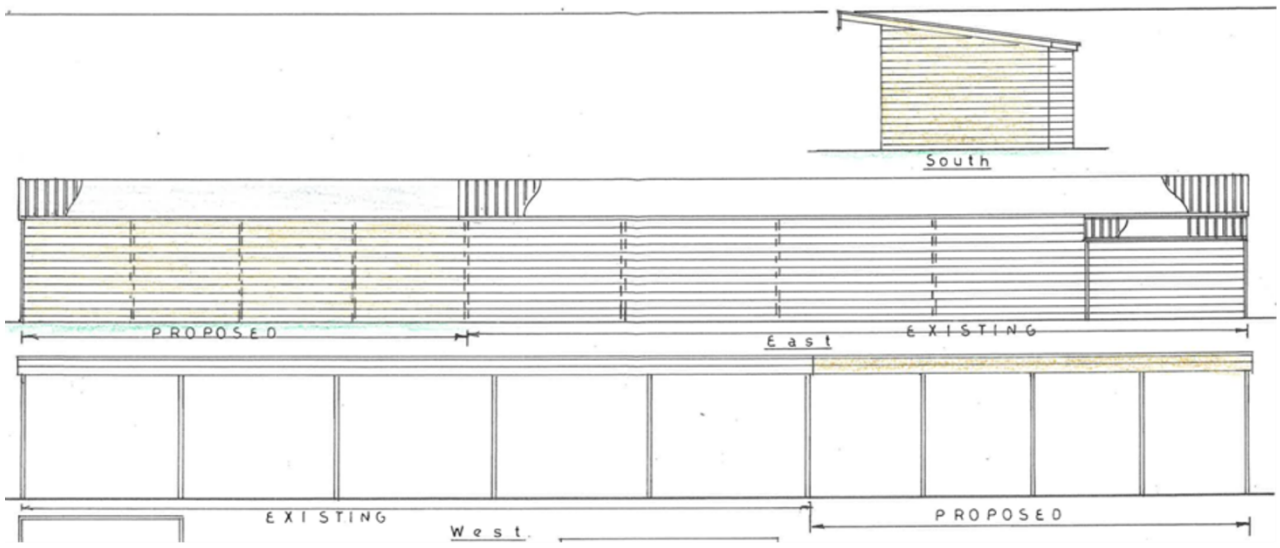
CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/08310
Application Type:	Full planning permission
Consultation ends:	7 December 2023
Case officer:	Verity Giles-Franklin
Site Address:	White Horse Country Park, Trowbridge Road, Westbury,BA13 4LX
Proposal:	Proposed four additional driving range bays
Recommendation:	Approve with Conditions

Proposal and Site Description: This application seeks planning permission for an extension to an existing driving range to provide four additional driving range bays at an established golf club in Westbury at the White Horse Country Park. The bays would be completed in timber cladding under steel profile sheeting to match existing, with an open side to the west, as detailed in the below extracts taken from the submitted proposed elevations (drawing no. WW/3):



This proposal would not result in the loss of any existing recreational sports facilities or land, as the proposal seeks to increase the number of driving ranges at the existing golf club, to support and expand it's offering.

The application site is located to the west of the main golf complex, to the south of the railway line. The site is located within the Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area (SPA) buffer zone, the grey hatched zone associated with the Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy (TBMS) and within a core roost buffer zone for greater horseshoe bats. The application site is located in Flood Zone 1 and is not shown to be suspect to future groundwater or surface water flooding with reference to the council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment map.

Policies

National Context: National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

Local Context: The adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) 2015, namely core policies (CP): CP1 - Settlement Strategy; CP2 - Delivery Strategy; CP32 - Spatial Strategy for the Westbury Community Area; CP50 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity; CP52 - Green Infrastructure; CP57 - Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping; CP60 - Sustainable Transport; CP61 - Transport and New Development; CP64 - Demand Management

Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), adopted January 2020

Draft Westbury Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2036 - currently at examination

Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 Car Parking Strategy

Policy LP 2 of the West Wiltshire Leisure and Recreation DPD (adopted in 2009) which relates to proposals that involve the loss of open space or sport and recreation provision

Key Issues: Design and visual impact; highways; ecology

Relevant Planning History

The following planning application is of most relevance to this proposal:

W/10/02684/FUL - Change of use of land to leisure use and construction of golf driving range - Approved with conditions

Consultation Responses

Westbury Town Council: No objection

Wiltshire Council Highways: No objection

Wiltshire Council Public Protection: No objection

Representations

Third-party representations: No letters of objection received

Planning Considerations and Assessment

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require that the determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Design and Visual Impact: Policy CP57 of the adopted WCS requires a "*high standard of design*" for all new developments including extensions and alterations to existing buildings. This policy requires developments to "c*reate a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality*" with applications being accompanied by appropriate information to demonstrate how the proposal would "*make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire*". Criterion iii of CP57 requires proposals to respond "*positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting*".

In addition to the above, the latest iteration of the Framework has a greater focus on delivering high-quality design and sets out in paragraph 126 that the "*creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve*". Paragraph 130 moreover sets out a series of six criteria to ensure development is of high quality over the lifetime of the development, is visually attractive and sympathetic to the local character and history, and creates a strong sense of place.

The proposed extension to the existing driving range is considered to be of an acceptable size and design, which would complement the existing structure. Whilst the proposal would result in the creation of a larger structure in this predominately rural setting, it is noted that the proposal relates to an existing golf club and seeks an extension to an existing driving range. Therefore, it is not considered that the proposal would appear visual intrusive within this countryside setting, with the proposed materials being acceptable, as they would implement the existing driving range. On this basis, it is considered that the proposal would comply with CP57 and the requirements of the Framework.

Highways Safety: Criterion xiv of CP57 requires proposals to satisfy the requirements of CP61 (Transport and New Development). CP61 requires new developments to be "*located and designed to reduce the need to travel particularly by private car, and to encourage the use of sustainable transport alternatives*". CP61 also requires in criterion ii that proposals would be "*capable of being served by safe access to the highway network*". In addition, CP64 requires adherence to the council's adopted residential parking standards.

This application does not involve any alterations to the existing access to the site or on-site car parking arrangements. The driving range will continue to be served by an existing access off the unclassified Coach Road. The council's highways department were consulted on this application and have raised no objections as they consider the proposal to not be detrimental to highway safety.

Ecology: As stated above, the application site is located within an area sensitive to bat species. Core policy CP50 of the adopted WCS requires proposals to "*demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale*" and requires

all proposals to "*incorporate appropriate measures to avoid and reduce disturbance of sensitive wildlife species and habitats throughout the lifetime of the development*". All developments are also required to seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity with proposals.

Improving biodiversity has been enshrined within the environmental objective contained within paragraph 8 of the Framework for achieving sustainable development. The Framework also requires net gains for biodiversity to be provided including by "*establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures*" in paragraph 174d.

This application is seeking planning permission for an non-residential use and seeks an extension to an existing driving range on an established golf course. It is considered necessary to impose a restrictive planning condition on any planning permission granted, requiring the prior written consent of any external lighting to ensure any such lighting does not cause disturbance to bat species.

Conclusion: Approve subject to conditions

Conditions: (3)

1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

Location Plan, received on 23 October 2023; Proposed Block Plan, received on 27 September 2023; WW/2, Existing Driving Range Elevations and Floor Plan, received on 27 September 2023; WW/3, Proposed Elevation and Floor Plan, received on 27 September 2023

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3 No external lighting shall be installed on-site until plans showing the type of light appliance, the height and position of fitting, illumination levels and light spillage in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standards set out by the Institution of Lighting Professionals in their publication "The Reduction of Obtrusive Light" Guidance Note 01/21 (reference GN01/21), have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved lighting shall be installed and shall be maintained in accordance with the

approved details and no additional external lighting shall be installed.

REASON: In the interests of the amenities of the area and light sensitive species, and to minimise unnecessary light spillage above and outside the development site.

Informatives: (1)

4 Any alterations to the approved plans, brought about by compliance with Building Regulations or any other reason must first be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority before commencement of work.