

EFFINGHAM
GOLF CLUB

Guildford Borough Council
Planning Department
Millmead House
Millmead
Guildford
Surrey GU2 4BB

22 February 2024

Re: Effingham Golf Club letter in support of Warren Farm Application

Effingham Golf Club (EGC) is a Members' Club which, according to its Articles of Association, "*exists to promote the game of golf and social intercourse amongst its members*". As such, EGC is not corporately owned and nor does it have a profit motive but seeks to balance the books at the end of each financial year. All the funds that are raised through subscriptions, green fees or any other activity are reinvested in the club.

EGC has over 900 members, virtually all of whom live in Guildford Borough Council or its neighbouring districts. The Club promotes the game of golf to a wide range of members including around 180 ladies, a vibrant junior section, an intermediate section (to encourage those in their 20's and 30's to play golf) and an Academy to encourage new members to take up the game or to improve their golfing skills.

The course was designed by Harry Colt, who is generally regarded as one of the best course designers of his era. EGC's members are proud to note that the course is ranked amongst the top 100 courses in England and is rated the best downland course in the country. The Club has hosted many prestigious events in the past including acting as a qualifying course for The Open (British) and its aims are to host further such events.

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EGC's principal property assets include the Clubhouse, which is an important Grade II Listed building which lies within the Effingham Conservation Area, five cottages at Warren Farm and two Greenkeepers Building and an associated yard located at Warren Farm. The Club's Articles of Association make it clear that the Club should seek to "*manage, improve, cultivate and maintain all or any part of the lands and other property of the Club*".

It is in this context that EGC has evaluated the future of its five cottages at Warren Farm. At this time only two properties are occupied with the remaining residences empty. Our investigations have shown that the current limited use, providing residential accommodation for Greenkeeping staff, is very unusual and we have found no examples of other Clubs still doing so. Some clubs provide residential accommodation for their Course Manager while others do not. Our Course Manager lives locally and has no need of onsite accommodation. The present use of the cottages being linked to the golf course represents an outdated and costly method of operation. It is now considered to be an unnecessary burden on the Club's finances.

It is against this background that EGC has sought permission to change the use of the five cottages at Warren Farm to C3 general open residential market use. This was approved on 28/04/2022 (Ref 21/P/01964).

A review of the cottages has been completed and shows that they are in a poor visual appearance and are showing significant and extensive deterioration to the exterior roof, wall cladding and walls. The interior fabric is in parts only, suitable for its existing use but falls short of standards required for open market rental. The interiors, fixtures and finishes are all dated and in need of very substantial investment to refurbish them to an acceptable standard. The primary layout and presentation of the houses are also outdated so assessments of expected returns on any investment are that they would be significantly depressed compared with new properties.

The ongoing capital costs associated with retaining the existing buildings are extensive. Works needed include repair and correction of structural and fabric items with a complete upgrade of the thermal performance of the envelope, a strip out of the interiors and the complete replacement of heating, electrical and plumbing systems. The exterior would need enhancement and relandscaping to market expectations. The capital investment to achieve the improvements outlined is not considered commercially viable. We therefore seek to redevelop the land for the long-term benefit of the Club.

The proposal is to develop the site with appropriate and modern new residential buildings for open market sale or rental. We wish to turn the existing situation from being a drain on the Club's finances to making, over time, a positive contribution to the Club's finances.

EGC has put in place in recent years a Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) programme for its Grade II Listed Building. That programme has led to the investment of some [£300,000] over the last few years and a further [£30,000-£50,000 annually] is expected to be invested in the future before dropping to reduced annual maintenance costs.

As part of the overall strategy for the properties at EGC we need to put the Warren Farm location on a sound commercial footing, creating an income stream and capital investment return from appropriate building stock rather than the current situation which is an ongoing cost for the club.

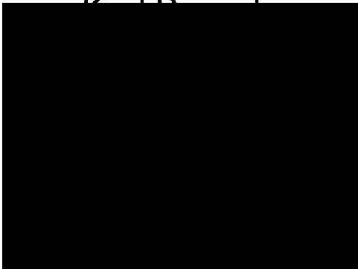
This proposal will enable EGC to continue to invest in its important Listed Building and its surroundings for the benefit of the Club and the wider community. Investment is needed to refurbish two unoccupiable single bedroom flats within the clubhouse to attract key staff to live and work within Effingham, bringing much needed smaller format accommodation to the area benefiting key staff within the club. It can also provide investment into course improvements by increasing water storage on site and generating more electricity for the machinery currently running on diesel and petrol to new electric equipment.

Investment is needed to capture and retain water on site as climate change to date has stressed our existing water management capabilities. Our dependency on mains electricity saw cost rocket when markets reacted to world events.

By removal of the inefficient properties and providing new, energy efficient dwellings we can harvest grey water, providing individual Photo Voltaic panel arrays to generate on site electric power for the dwellings and greatly improving the energy efficiency of the housing.

We thank you for your consideration of the proposals as outlined. We respectfully request support from the Council for the application.

Kind regards



John Meade.

Property Chair

For and on behalf of

Effingham Golf Club