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PLANNING DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT - CHICHESTER GOLF CLUB

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED WORKS

- 1.1 This Planning, Design & Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of Chichester Golf Sussex llp. It accompanies a detailed planning application for the replacement of a section of existing safety fence netting and support poles on the west side of the golf driving range, Chichester Road Hunston.
- 1.2 The current ball stop netting proposed for replacement is 9m high. However, the support poles are weak and due to storm damage, the netting has dropped and has ripped in places. Ground cover brambles and undergrowth have penetrated into the netting along the boundary making it difficult to maintain and repair.
- 1.3 The proposed new netting and support towers would be re -positioned approximately 6m inside the line of the current netting. 3 no. new 15m towers with 15m high fence netting is proposed to connect to an existing retained 15m single pole in the SW corner. The relocated fence line will be 96m long with the towers spaced at 26m, 35m and 35m intervals as shown on the Range Fencing Plan. Being positioned away from the existing boundary ground cover shrubbery will improve access for its ongoing maintenance. The extra 6m height in the netting from 9m to 15m will provide additional protection from flying golf balls to a residential dwelling in the adjoining field.
- 1.4 Apart from the CIL and Application forms, the plans and documents submitted with this planning application comprise:
- Location Plan: Dwg 100
 - Range Fencing Plan: Dwg 10012421
 - Tower Elevation Plan: Dwg 15052000
 - Fence Elevation Plan: Dwg 10012422
 - Current netting photograph
 - Annotated photograph showing new netting line approximation
 - Photo example of proposed tower and netting
 - Hi-Nets Ball stop Fencing System Specification



2.0 THE SITE AND PLANNING HISTORY

The Site

- 2.1 The proposed replacement fence netting and towers are situated on land at the existing golf driving range at Chichester Golf Club. The Golf Club is located to the south of the village of Hunston on the east side of the B1245 Chichester to Selsey Road. As well as the golf driving range it comprises 2 no 18 hole golf courses, members club house, a short 9 hole course and crazy golf.
- 2.2 The driving range buildings are located at the northern end of the range adjacent to the car park providing 16 no covered bays and 3 open bays, 19 bays in total. The range itself extends southwards toward the southern boundary which is doglegged and at its shortest point is approximately 194m from the range bays.
- 2.3 The driving range is not visible from any public vantage points having a mature tree screen along the north west and southern boundaries restricting views from the B2145 and the nearest public footpaths to the west and south. The driving range building itself prevents views from the north and only limited longer range views are possible from the east. The footpaths are shown coloured purple in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1 - Nearest Footpaths



- 2.4 In terms of planning policy, the driving range is within defined countryside in the Chichester Local Plan Key Policies and flood zone 1 which is land least liable to flood. The countryside is not of any landscape importance and is excluded from the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which is approximately 4km away to the west of the main A286 Birdham Road.
- 2.5 The proposed replacement length of fencing is located close to a residential property known as Brimfast Piggeries. The latter was consented as a 4 bed cottage in around 2007 as a replacement to a residential mobile home. There is an intermittent tree screen between the dwelling and the boundary of the driving range as shown on the Range Fencing Plan. At this point of the range, the existing fence netting is only some 9m high and the proposed fencing at 15m height along this boundary will catch more golf balls and provide immediate benefits to the residential amenity of the occupiers of the dwelling.

Planning History

- 2.6 The boundary fencing around this part of the driving range has been replaced and increased in height in the past. An application for the replacement of existing driving range safety netting comprising an increase in height and relocation of part was approved on 5th January 2011 under LA Ref HN/10/05210/FUL. Prior to the application the existing netting along part of the south boundary was 8m high located on a 2m high bank. To improve the netting however the fencing alignment was moved away from the earth bank where golf balls tended to embed themselves making mechanical recovery more difficult, and the overall fencing height was increased to 15m. At the same time, the fencing along part of the west boundary was increased in height to 9-10m for a distance of around 60m.
- 2.7 It is the 60m length of the 9-10m high fencing on the west boundary that is proposed to be extended again in this application. The length of fencing is around 96m, with an overall height of 15m. The new fencing height matches the 15m height of the existing fencing on the south boundary.



3.0 THE APPLICATION PROPOSAL

3.1 The application proposal comprises the erection of 3 no. latticework support towers each of 15m height to support a new run a fencing and netting of 15m in height. The new fencing will run from an existing 15m pole support located at the southwest boundary corner and connect to the 3 no. support towers spaced at 26m, 35m and 35m respectively. The length of the new run of fencing and netting is approximately 96m. The new netting and towers would be positioned roughly 6m inside the current netting. The fencing alignment is reproduced below in Figure 2 from the Range Fencing Plan.



Fig 2 - Proposed Length of Fencing with 3 no Support Towers

3.2 The tower supports and fencing are shown on the application plans and described in the Fencing System Specification. The lattice towers have a width at the highest 15m point of 0.75m widening to 1.13m at below ground level. The galvanized latticework supports are fabricated from high yield hot rolled steel tube (S355) and would be bolted to galvanised stubs set into concrete at a depth of 0.75m.

3.3 The fencing specification explains that the net panels are designed specifically for the towers, with an integrated fixing system designed to release at a loading approximately equivalent to a wind speed of 90mph to protect the supporting steelwork. For fences of 5m-20m high, the recommended tower spacings is up to 35m. The net itself would be made of black knotted 10/12 construction HDPE ultraviolet stabilised twine, with a mesh size of 28mm, border corded



around perimeter and with support ropes stitched in. The design life is 10 years. On completion the fence netting and towers would appear similar to the example from another golf course shown in figure 3 below:



Figure 3 - Image of the proposed netting and towers



4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework 2023

- 4.1 Relevant National Planning Policy is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework, revised in December 2023. There is little guidance of relevance to fencing associated with existing recreational facilities although section 8 paragraph 97 does say existing recreational facilities should be allowed to develop and modernise which supports the principle of the proposed improved fencing. Section 15 deals with the natural environment and paragraph 180 says planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. The proposed fence is not within an area designated as a valued landscape. The increased height of the fence from 9-10m to a consistent 15m will however still need to avoid harm to landscape impact as a general principle.

Local Plan Policy

- 4.2 The Chichester Local Plan: Key Policies was adopted in July 2015. Policy guidance for existing local and community and recreational facilities does not extend to new and improved fencing around golf driving ranges. Policy 48 deals with the natural environment and outside designated landscapes, it takes a permissive view of proposals that avoid adverse impacts on the tranquil and rural character of the area. In all cases, development is required to recognise the distinctive local landscape character and sensitively contribute to its setting and quality.
- 4.3 There is no Neighbourhood Plan policy as the draft Hunston Neighbourhood Plan was withdrawn from further consideration in 2022. A replacement plan has not yet been prepared.



5.0 DESIGN & ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS

Assessment of Physical Context and Evaluation

- 5.1 In the absence of any specific guidance for the proposed driving range fencing, it is our view that the marginal increase in height from 9-10m to 15m along a length of approximately 96m on the west boundary does not cause harmful landscape impact either in localised views from within the driving range or in more long range views from the east given the intervening landscape character of the land already in golf course use. Existing fencing has already been consented and erected at 15m height along the southern boundary of the driving range.
- 5.2 There are self-evident safety benefits of the increased height of the fencing in protecting the surrounding residential amenity of the nearby residential dwellings from over hit golf balls. The fencing will also make the mechanical golf ball retrieval easier for the running of the business.

Design Principles Layout and Appearance

- 5.3 The proposed support towers comprise galvanised steel and the fence netting itself would be made of black knotted 10/12 construction HDPE ultraviolet stabilised twine. The fencing will be largely indistinguishable from the existing. The height increase of 5-6m over its 96m length will be viewed against the back cloth of the existing boundary tree planting.

Need for the Development

- 5.4 The current ball stop netting (9m high) along the right-hand side (west side) of the driving range has come to the end of its useful life. The support poles are weak, the netting has dropped and ripped due to storm damage and trees/brambles are growing into it.
- 5.5 The new netting and towers would be positioned roughly 6m inside the current netting, allowing the area behind to be kept clear from the trees and brambles. The new netting of 15m height provides added protection to the residential dwelling in the next field and minimises golf ball loss.



Landscaping

- 5.6 The proposed replacement netting does not interfere with the retained landscaping and planting along the raised bank. It is not considered necessary to provide any additional planting in association with the replacement fencing and support towers.

Recommendation

- 5.7 The application proposal for a fence and support towers of 15m height benefits the operation of the golf driving range and the residential amenity of a neighbouring dwelling in the adjoining field by catching over hit golf balls. The fence avoids landscape harm to the surrounding countryside which is undesignated for its landscape value. It complies with the relevant Chichester Local Plan: Key Policies and National Planning Guidance.
- 5.8 We therefore trust that the Council will be able to grant detailed planning permission at your earliest convenience.