

Planning Application Statement

Alterations to Driving Range Netting

Applicant: Hennerton Golf Club

Site Address: Crazies Hill Road, Wargrave RG10 8LT

Description of development: Application to increase the height of driving range safety netting from 10m to 15 metres.

1. Introduction

Hennerton Golf Club is an existing 18 hole sport and recreation facility located to the north of the settlement of Wargrave. The club first open in 1992 and included the driving range as well as a number of other ancillary practice facilities.

The driving range, is an important and essential part of the Golf Club practice facilities and provides sport and recreation opportunities development for 600 members and 2,000 visitors a year.

Since the opening of the club there have been significant advancements in golf club technology, and as a result golf balls travel significantly further and higher than they did previously. The club previously sought to address this in 2004 receiving planning permission to increase the height of the netting from 6.5m to 10m.

Further consideration of increases in club technology in the past 2 decades and assessment of number of balls leaving the range has led to the conclusion that a taller fence is required to better protect golfers and members of the public from stray balls falling outside of the netting.

To address this health and safety issue the club the best solution is to increase the netting height from 10m to 15 metres. This would use the existing stanchion locations which would be adapted and increased in height to support the new netting.

The overall width and length of the Driving Range will remain the same.

2. Planning History

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
35041	Change of use from farm lane to golf course	Refused and granted on appeal

	*This was granted permission on appeal in May 1990	
031418	Proposed change of use of land from agricultural to form extension to existing 9 hole golf course to form 18 holes.	Approved 01/10/2003
041774	Proposed replacement of 6.5m high driving range fence with 10m high safety netting. Retrospective.	Approved 02/09/2004
071786	Proposed erection of extension to clubhouse, replacement green keeping facility and removal of 7 car parking spaces.	Refused 18/06/2007
082469	Proposed erection of single storey side extension to clubhouse and re-roofing of spike bar and conservatory	Refused 12/02/2009
092151	Proposed erection of single storey side extension to clubhouse and re-roofing of spike bar and conservatory.	Approved 31/03/2009
242895	Full application for proposed change of use of existing building to facilitate a training room, office, display room and a barber treatment room (Retrospective).	Approved 30/01/2025

3. Proposal Details

The proposal includes works to an existing golf driving range:

- Increasing the height of the protective netting from 10m to 15m high on the perimeter of the existing driving range
- Increasing the height of seven existing galvanised stanchions to 15m (from 10m).
- Increasing the height of two existing galvanised stanchions closest to the range building to 10m (from 5m).

There is no change to the footprint or area of the range and it will still operate ancillary to the golf club.

4. Planning Policy Context

Relevant Policy:	
National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP3 – General Principles for Development CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 –

	Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits CP12 – Green Belt CP15 – Employment Development
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction TB01 – Development within the Green Belt TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document Wargrave Parish Design Statement

5. Planning considerations

The principle of the driving range is long established having been granted permission in 1990 and opened in 1992. The proposal does not seek any changes to the lawful use of the site. As such, it is considered that the proposal would be acceptable in principle in land use terms, subject to normal planning considerations and constraints.

The primary driver for this application is health and safety as improvements in club technology, paired with the modest length of the range has significantly increased the risk of balls leaving the driving range and as such the club is keen to minimise this risk to golfers and the general public.

The site is located outside of settlement limits and within the metropolitan green belt. The relevant policies are the NPPF and policies CP11 & CP12 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy. The NPPF para 154 (part B) states that development for outdoor sport or recreation are not inappropriate so long as they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Policy CP11 generally accords with this and offers support for schemes that promote recreation and enjoyment of the Countryside.

The proposal is on the exact same location as the existing driving range fence, it is simply being increased in height.

The proposal is considered to preserve the openness of the Green Belt and character of the countryside. As with the existing netting, the netting will remain lightweight and relatively transparent in nature.

Since the club was laid out ahead of its opening in 1992 the vegetation and landscaping on the course and surrounding the range have matured significantly and the trees planted with the course and the course itself will offer significant screening of the proposal with most surrounding trees exceeding the height of the current range fencing. The range has never been less conspicuous since it was first built. The substantial nature of the vegetative screening is shown below and in the subsequent aerial photo.



From the south, and west the current range facility can only be seen from within the golf course. A public footpath runs to the east of the range, however does not afford views of the range due to existing vegetation. As this farm crosses Worley's Farm some very limited views of the end of the range are available, however these are from some distance and due to the transparent nature of the fencing, the significant separation distance and substantial vegetative screening the range is generally not noticeable within the landscape.



Existing transparent range fencing is inconspicuous within the landscape due to distance and mature vegetative screening

As shown in the photo above the netting is very inconspicuous, with very limited view points and the increasing of it in height would have no material impact upon the Green Belt, Countryside or landscape character and benefits from substantial screening. The

benefits to sport and recreation and public safety are however substantial which weighs significantly in favour of the proposal.

6. Other planning matters

- **Flood Risk & Drainage:** The site is located in flood zone 1 (lowest risk of flooding) there is no change in the footprint of the development. No additional
 - **Ecology:** The proposal does not alter the footprint of the development, it simply increases the height of the fencing. The existing stanchions are to be reused and there is no change to the position of the netting. It is considered that the proposal is unlikely to result in any impacts upon protected species including newts. The proposal does not alter any existing roof spaces or potential bat roosts. The netting replaces existing netting and although there is a modest increase in height it is not considered to have any material impact on bats.
 - **Traffic and Parking:** The application simply relates to the range fence, it does not result in any intensification or change of use, as such there is no material change in traffic or parking as a result of this application..
 - **Neighbour amenity:** There is no change of use arising and the only matter subject to this application is the height of the fence. No neighbouring properties outside the control of the applicant are in close proximity to the proposed development. As such no issues of loss of light or overbearing arise. The use is unaltered and as such no other amenity issues arise beyond existing lawful use levels.
 - **Community and Economic Benefits:** The proposal offers the following benefits
 - Increased opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity
 - Increased safety for golfers and footpath users
 - Enhanced facilities for coaching and junior development
 - Attraction of new members and visitors to support the club's viability
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7. Conclusion

This application proposes a high-quality refurbishment which supports national and local planning objectives for sport and recreation. The development is considered to be appropriate development which is appropriately scaled and designed and does not material impact the green belt or conflict with its purposes. The development delivers significant health and safety benefits and supports a sporting and recreational enterprise.

We respectfully request that the local planning authority grants planning permission for the proposed refurbishment.

Documents included::

- **Block/Location Plan**
- **Elevation**
- **Planning application form**