



South Tyneside Council

Reference:	260233
Location:	SOUTH SHIELDS GOLF CLUB LTD, Hillcrest, South Shields, NE34 8EG
Ward:	Cleadon Park and Harton Moor
Description:	Erection of side / front extension, erection of retaining wall incorporating external stair access, and ramped access
Recommendation:	Grant Permission with Conditions
Case Officer:	Nick Graham
Case Officer Contact No.:	0191 4247427 or 07741108995

Description of the Site and Proposal

The application site is located within the Marsden area of South Shields and forms part of a golf club with the course extending to the south and east of the clubhouse building. Residential properties at Fellside are located north of the site. This proposal seeks permission for a single storey side and front extension, and the erection of a retaining wall incorporating external stair and ramped access. The site has been subject to several planning applications in the last 20 years including for extensions to the existing clubhouse and replacement clubhouses, but it would appear that not all of these permissions have been implemented.

Following consideration of the application, an amended site location plan was submitted as the original site location plan red line was located around the existing building only. Given this change, it was not considered necessary to re-notify neighbours of this as the proposal itself was unchanged.

Relevant Planning History

The following planning history of the site is relevant:

ST/1029/22/FUL - Side extension to pro shop forming a simulator room, alterations to rear extension, proposed viewing balcony - Approved 03/08/2023

Summary of Consultation Responses

N/A

Summary of Representations

One representation has been received in objection to the proposal. The issues raised are summarised as follows:

- Our property directly backs onto the area affected by the proposal. The development would have significant adverse impact on our residential amenity, privacy, outlook and the local environment.
- The relocation of golf shop and associated facilities would increase activity in this area. In particular, the proposed rerouting of the path to trolley store would alter pedestrian movement resulting in golfers facing bedroom windows. Any associated changes in ground levels could further reduce privacy and increase overlooking.
- Negative impact on existing vegetation and surrounding wildlife. The mature green boundary behind our property provides an important natural screen between the golf course and neighbouring homes. It supports a variety of wildlife, including nesting birds, bats, foxes and squirrels contributing positively to local biodiversity. Loss, reduction or disturbance of this habitat would diminish both environmental value and residential privacy. Proposed plans would also cause drastic change to natural lighting in this area which currently receives full sunlight.
- There are also concerns that the rear of the proposed extension would become neglected, unkempt and used for unsightly storage.
- During construction phase, residents would be subjected to disturbance from heavy machinery, construction traffic, noise, dust and debris. We have previously experienced disruption during the installation of the nearby practice nets, when the use of machinery and construction materials generated considerable noise and dust. Following their installation, tarpaulin surfaces produced loud ricochet noises when struck by golf balls, which could be heard clearly from neighbouring properties, even with doors and windows closed. These noises disturbed both residents and local wildlife. We are concerned that similar unintended consequences could arise from the proposed development.

Relevant planning policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that an application for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the adopted development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The statutory development plan comprises the Council's adopted South Tyneside Local Plan 2023-2040. Relevant policies are listed below:

- Policy SP1: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy 1: Promoting Healthy Communities
- Policy 3: Pollution
- Policy 4: Contaminated Land and Ground Stability
- Policy 7: Flood Risk and Water Management
- Policy SP23: Sports Provision and Playing Fields
- Policy 33: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Ecological Networks
- Policy 37: Protecting and Enhancing Open Spaces
- Policy 39: Areas of High Landscape Value
- Policy 41: Green Belt
- Policy 47: Design Principles
- Policy SP26: Delivering Sustainable Transport

The Local Development Framework (LDF) development plan documents also remain part of the development plan at the current time.

National planning policy is also a material consideration in determining this planning application. Relevant national policy comprises the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code.

Assessment

The key issues in the assessment of this planning application are as follows:

- The principle of development including the impact on the Green Belt;
- Visual amenity / Design;
- Impact on the Area of High Landscape Value / Biodiversity;
- Impact on residential amenity;
- Highway Safety and Parking;
- Land Contamination; and
- Flooding

The principle of development including the impact on the Green Belt

Both the Local Plan Proposals Map and LDF Site Specific Allocations development plan proposals map show this application site forming part of the designated Green Belt where local and national planning policies are in force to protect the character and openness of such areas. Local Plan Policy 41 seeks to determine applications in the Green Belt in line with national planning policy, and LDF Policy EA1 seeks to safeguard the openness of the Green Belt to prevent urban sprawl. Part 13 of the NPPF states that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. Policy GB6 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Paragraph GB7 of the NPPF states that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Local Plan Policy SP23 seeks to protect playing pitches and facilitate improvements and new facilities.

Local Plan Policy 37 seeks to protect and enhance open spaces.

The proposed development would involve an extension of the clubhouse itself. The external alterations are not considered to impact on the Green Belt. The age of the existing building and its original size is unclear however historic maps show a clubhouse at this site from the 1910s onwards. When assessing a development, whether it be an extension or a new building, is "appropriate", assessing proportionality is primarily an objective test based on size. In determining whether or not extensions will be disproportionate, the starting point is the size of the original building. The NPPF sets out the "original building" is "a building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally."

Within the 2023 planning application, the applicant's agent provided information including a history of the Golf Club, and a plan indicating the building as it existed on 1 July 1948, subsequent extensions, and the position of the proposed simulator room extension. On the basis of this plan, the building as it existed on 1 July 1948 would have measured approximately 444m².

The earliest planning history of the site from 1979 (ref. ST/057/79/DM) shows the majority of the current building in situ (excluding a lounge extension which was approved through the planning application and has since been built). The existing gross floorspace of the building measures approximately 577m², whilst the proposed extension has a gross floorspace of approximately 56m². The total internal floorspace would therefore measure approximately 633m², and therefore the total additional floorspace over and above the building as it existed would be approximately 189m², an increase of 42.5% floorspace from the building as it existed on 1 July 1948.

Part 13 of the NPPF relates to protecting Green Belt land and where this states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate. However, Policy GB7 NPPF also includes exceptions to this and that are, amongst others, the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it; 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.

The NPPF does not provide a specific definition of what would constitute a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building. Therefore, it is a matter of judgement for the decision maker. There are also no policies or guidance within the Local Plan or LDF indicating a figure. However, it is noted that the proposal would result in an extension of approximately 56m².

It is also noted the previous permission (ref. ST/1029/22/FUL), this proposed a simulator room and viewing balcony with a combined gross floorspace of approximately 42.0m² and therefore, if that development had been completed, the total gross internal floorspace would have been approximately 619.2m², an increase of 39.5% floorspace from the building as it existed on 1 July 1948. However, this planning permission has now lapsed, unimplemented.

On balance and given all of the above, and although the proposal within this application is marginally larger than the previous planning permission which appears to have lapsed, it is still not considered to result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the building as it existed on 1 July 1948 having regard to Part 13 of the NPPF. As such, the proposed development is not considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and would accord with Local Plan Policies SP23 and 41, Policy GB7 (b) of the NPPF and LDF Core Strategy Policy EA1 in respect of Green Belt matters. As the proposal is considered to meet exception (b) as set out in NPPF Policy GB7, it is not necessary to apply the openness test.

In terms of the provision of a sporting facility, Sport England made comment on the 2023 application and made no specific comments in relation to that proposal, however noted if the proposal involves the provision of a new sports facility [the indoor simulator] (which this proposal is considered to do), then consideration should be given to the recommendations and priorities set out in any approved Playing Pitch Strategy or Built Sports Facility Strategy that the local authority may have in place. In addition, to ensure they are fit for purpose, such facilities should be designed in accordance with Sport England, or the relevant National Governing Body, design guidance notes.

This development would not affect any playing pitch and would instead complement the existing Golf Club with the provision of an indoor simulator facility. In this regard the principle of the proposed use is not considered to conflict with the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy, as there is no reference to golf within this Strategy, or the guidance notes as set out by Sport England.

Policy 37 of the Local Plan sets out that designated areas of open space (such as this site) will be protected and enhanced, and proposals that would result in the loss in full or part of the designated open space, sports and recreation land and buildings will only be considered acceptable subject to certain criteria. One of these (criterion iii) is for the development of alternative sports and recreational provision and the benefits clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use and would positively contribute towards delivering high quality recreational facilities within the Borough. Regard should also be had to the Council's most recent Open Space Study and Playing Pitch Strategy documents.

Given the nature of the proposal and as stated above, it is considered that the proposal would compliment the existing sports provision at the site with the introduction of an enhanced facility. Additionally and as stated, there is no reference to golf within the Playing Pitch Strategy. In terms of the Council's Open Space Study, the site is allocated as 'Outdoor Sport (Restricted Access)' and was located in the former Whitburn and Marsden ward (before ward boundaries were changed in 2026). This former ward had a shortfall of 1.15ha in terms of 'parks and recreation grounds'. Notwithstanding this, it is noted the extension would only measure approximately 56m² (an increase of only 14m² from the previous lapsed planning approval). Given this and noting the proposal is considered to be in compliance with Local Plan Policy 37 (1) (iii), the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impacts on open space and in principle.

Visual amenity / Design

The development would be viewed in the context of the existing building. The proposed materials would be sympathetic to those on the existing building and the design is in keeping with the existing building. Given all of the above, subject to a condition requiring the materials to be those as applied for within the application, it is considered in visual amenity terms the proposal is considered appropriate in terms of its design, size and siting, and in this respect the proposal would accord with Local Plan Policy 47 and LDF Policy DM1 (A).

Impact on the Area of High Landscape Value / Biodiversity

The site is located within the Cleadon Hills Area of High Landscape Value. LDF DM Policy DM7 sets out all proposals for development will only be permitted where they would not affect the integrity, natural character or biodiversity and geodiversity value of the Cleadon Hills Area of High Landscape Value and significance. Local Plan Policy 39 seeks to prevent the Area of High Landscape Value from inappropriate development. All of the proposed works are associated with the existing clubhouse building and although these would partly extend beyond the existing hardstanding area, the development would also be viewed in the context of the existing building.

Concerns have been raised regarding possible impact on wildlife / vegetation. The Countryside Officer commented on the 2023 application and considered that development to be acceptable in terms of biodiversity, and considered a bat informative should be included with any consent granted, whilst no comments were received from the Environment Agency in relation to the 2023 application, and this proposal is similar in scale. In terms of Biodiversity Net Gain, the applicant has confirmed this would meet the 'de minimus' criteria and it would appear that on-site habitats would not be affected by the proposal and the site area is under 0.2 hectares. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact on the biodiversity and geodiversity value of the Cleadon Hills Area of High Landscape Value in accordance with Local Plan Policy 39, LDF DM Policy DM7 and Core Strategy Policy EA3.

Impact on residential amenity

Concerns have been raised by a resident of Fellside, to the north of the site, regarding the positions of the relocated golf shop and associated facilities increasing activity in this area and increased overlooking to their property and bedroom windows, including any associated levels changes.

In terms of the proposed extension, this would be single storey and positioned approximately 20 metres from the original rear elevations of properties at Fellside at its closest point. This is significantly in excess of the 14 metre guidance set out in SPD9 in relation to householder developments, and where that is considered to be a comparable marker for the acceptability of this development. In terms of increased activity, these neighbours at Fellside back onto a golf course that has been in existence since at least 1948, and where outdoor sporting and other leisure uses are to be expected. Notwithstanding this, given the position of openings to the extension, to the opposite side of properties at Fellside, and where the simulator room could only be accessed internally, it is not considered adverse amenity impacts would occur to these neighbours at Fellside.

Given all of the above, this is not considered any adverse amenity or privacy issues would occur to these neighbours as a result of the proposal, nor would any significant overshadowing impacts occur above and beyond the existing situation. No other neighbours would be affected by the proposal in terms of amenity or privacy given the nature of the development and the location of these neighbours. Given all of the above, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Local Plan Policy 47 and LDF Policy DM1 (B).

Highway Safety and Parking

The existing car park for the site would be unaffected by the development and the Transport Development Officer raised no objections within the 2023 application. In this regard given this is a similar sized proposal as previously it is considered the development would be in accordance with Local Plan Policy SP26, LDF DM Policy DM1 (G) and the parking standards as set out within SPD6.

Land Contamination

The Council's Environmental Protection Officer within the 2023 application raised no objections to that proposal in terms of land contamination, and where this is a similar sized proposal and is considered to accord with Local Plan Policy 4 and LDF DM Policy DM1 (M).

Flooding

The Council's Environmental Protection Officer raised no objections within the 2023 application in terms of flooding and drainage, and where this is a similar sized proposal and is considered to accord with Local Plan Policy 7 and LDF DM Policy DM1 (K).

Other matters

Concerns have been raised by a resident regarding possible disruption during construction works; but this would be a temporary effect. A construction working hours condition is not considered reasonable given the small scale nature of the extension, and where such a condition was not imposed on the previous planning permission granted either. Furthermore, if there were any noise complaint related issues associated with the existing site or as result of construction work associated with this application, they should be reported to Environmental Health for investigation. Equally, any unmanaged waste or bin storage matters should also be reported to Environmental Health for investigation.

In deciding whether to grant planning permission the Council must have due regard to the 3 equality aims contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the public sector equality duty). A preliminary assessment of the potential equality impacts of any grant of planning permission in this case has been undertaken. There are no apparent equality impacts of the proposed development which give rise to the need to undertake a more detailed equality impact assessment.

The development has been assessed against the provisions of the Human Rights Act, and in particular Article 1 of the First Protocol and Article 8 of the Act itself. This Act gives further effect to the rights included in the European Convention on Human Rights. In arriving at this recommendation, due regard has been given to the applicant's reasonable development rights and expectations which have been balanced and weighed against the wider community interests, as expressed through third party interests / the Development Plan and Central Government Guidance.

Recommendation

Grant Permission with Conditions

Conditions

- 1 The development to which this permission relates must be commenced not later than 3 years from the date of this permission.

As required by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to ensure that the development is carried out within a reasonable time.

- 2 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plan(s) as detailed below

Proposed Elevations Drg. No. C-10 received 19/05/2026
Proposed Plans Drg. No. C-12 received 14/04/2026
Proposed Site Plan Drg. No. C-11 received 14/04/2026

Any minor material changes to the approved plans will require a formal planning application under S73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to vary this condition and substitute alternative plans.

In order to provide a procedure to seek approval of proposed minor material change which is not substantially different from that which has been approved.

- 3 The external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be of similar appearance to those used in the construction of the exterior of the existing building on which the extension will form part.

To ensure a satisfactory standard of development and in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Local Plan Policy 47 and LDF Policy DM1.

Informatives

- 1 Approval of a Biodiversity Gain Plan NOT REQUIRED before development commences

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition "(the biodiversity gain condition)" that development may not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

However, based on the information available, this permission is considered to be one which will not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because one or more of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements are considered to apply - please refer to Biodiversity net gain: exempt developments - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

- 2 The proposed development lies within a coal mining area which may contain unrecorded coal mining related hazards. If any coal mining feature is encountered during development, this should be reported immediately to the Mining Remediation Authority on 0345 762 6846 or if a hazard is encountered on site call the emergency line 0800 288 4242.

Further information is also available on the Mining Remediation Authority website at: Mining Remediation Authority - GOV.UK

- 3 All British bats are protected by both UK and European legislation. This legal protection extends to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection whether bats are present or not. Should bats or signs of bats (such as droppings or dead bats) be discovered at any stage during the works, work must stop immediately and advice sought from Natural England. Failure to do this may result in an offence being committed, regardless of planning consent, and could lead to prosecution.

Case officer: Nick Graham

Signed: N. Graham

Date: 07/09/2026

Authorised Signatory: *G. Simonette*

Date: 07/09/2026