



## Report to East Area Planning Committee

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<b>Application Number:</b>	PL/21/0770/FA
<b>Proposal:</b>	Southeastern turning circle extension to existing car park
<b>Site location:</b>	Buryfield Car Park, Link Road, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire
<b>Applicant:</b>	Buckinghamshire Council
<b>Case Officer:</b>	Mr Mike Shires
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	Great Missenden
<b>Parish-Town Council:</b>	Great Missenden Parish Council
<b>Valid date:</b>	2 March 2021
<b>Determination date:</b>	27 April 2021
<b>Recommendation:</b>	Defer to approve, subject to the expiry of the consultation period.

### 1.0 Summary & Recommendation/ Reason for Planning Committee Consideration

- 1.1 The application proposes a turning circle for coaches, to transport pupils to and from Great Missenden Church of England Combined School, in the corner of the school playing field.
- 1.2 The application has been brought about due to the current unsatisfactory provision for coach turning in the adjacent Parish Council car park, where pupils are currently dropped off and collected. Presently, coaches have to drive in forward gear to the drop-off point in front of the school gates, then reverse back through the car park to turn in reverse gear, before exiting to the Link Road. This proposal would allow coaches to turn and exit without reversing.
- 1.3 The proposal is considered to preserve the openness of the Green Belt, the setting of the nearby conservation area and would have significant highway safety benefits. Although a small section would be on playing field land, Sport England does not object to the application.
- 1.4 The application has been reported for determination by the East Area Planning Committee, as the Council is the applicant.
- 1.5 The recommendation is to defer, to grant conditional permission, subject to the expiry of the consultation period. It should be noted that this expires on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2021, so a decision can be issued on 10<sup>th</sup> April.

### 2.0 Description of Proposed Development

- 2.1 The site is located within the Green Belt and Chilterns AONB. It is located outside the Great Missenden Conservation Area, but borders it along the SW edge of the site. A

public footpath runs through the site, along Buryfield Lane, linking The Square at the end of Church Street with the Link Road.

- 2.2 The proposal is for a new coach turning circle, creating a new curved area of hardstanding in the corner of the playing field. It would be accessed via the Link Road car park, and a recently permitted extended area of this car park. Coaches would circle around in a clockwise direction, through the newly proposed area of hardstanding, allowing them to stop and drop off school children, before exiting the car park to the Link Road in forward gear. The application proposes new hedging and fencing around the turning circle, along with small lamp columns and bollards.

### **3.0 Relevant Planning History**

- 3.1 Relevant planning history for the site:

CH/2005/2074/FA - Formation of staff car park and setting down area on north-west end of playing fields. Conditional permission granted on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2006, but the planning permission was never implemented. This was for a considerably larger area of hardstanding in a similar location, to create a staff car park and dropping off area.

- 3.2 PL/20/0325/FA - Increase the existing car park at Buryfield Recreation Ground with changes to landscaping. Conditional permission granted on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2020. This car park extension relates to the adjacent Parish Council car park and has now been laid out. The new coach turning circle will utilise this area for part of the initial coach turning facility. The current application also proposes changes to the layout of the parking spaces originally approved under this application.

- 3.3 PL/20/0723/FA - Resurfacing works on an existing semi-formal car park, including the creation of 37 formalised car parking spaces and a two-way carriageway, a new pedestrian footpath, the installation of low-level lighting and the erection of a new, electric vehicle access gate and a new pedestrian access gate and fencing. Conditional permission granted on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020. This relates to the continuation of the linear, staff parking, area, within the grounds of the school, and adjoining the currently proposed coach turning circle.

- 3.4 PL/21/0774/VRC - Variation of Condition 5 (approved plans) of planning permission PL/20/0723/FA to allow relocation of footpath and changes to lighting. Currently under consideration. The Applicant for this application is the school, therefore it does not need to come to the Planning Committee under the Constitution and will be decided under delegated powers. Again, this relates to the linear staff parking area within the school site.

### **4.0 Summary of Representations**

- 4.1 Consultation response from Sport England: No objection.
- 4.2 Consultation response from Rights of Way Officer: comments will be subject to a verbal update at the Planning Committee meeting.
- 4.3 Consultation response from Tree Officer: Verbally advised no objection. Written comments will be subject to a verbal update at the Planning Committee meeting.
- 4.4 No third party letters of representation or comments from the Parish Council have been received at the time of drafting the report. Any that are subsequently received will be subject to a verbal update at the Planning Committee meeting. The scheme has been planned in full liaison with the Parish Council.

## 5.0 Policy Considerations and Evaluation

The main issues for consideration are the impact on the Green Belt, the Chilterns AONB, the views into and out of the adjacent conservation area, the impact on existing playing field provision and matters of highway safety.

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), February 2019.
- Core Strategy for Chiltern District - Adopted November 2011:
- Chiltern District Local Plan adopted 1 September 1997 (including alterations adopted 29 May 2001), consolidated September 2007 and November 2011.

### Green Belt

Core Strategy Policies:

CS1 (The spatial strategy),

CS2 (Amount and distribution of residential development 2006-2026),

CS3 (Amount and distribution of non-residential development 2006-2026)

Local Plan Saved Policies:

GB2 (Development in general in the Green Belt)

- 5.1 The site is located within the open Green Belt. Paragraph 133 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (hereafter referred to as "the NPPF") states:

*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.*

- 5.2 Paragraph 134 of the NPPF continues:

*Green Belt serves five purposes:*

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*

- 5.3 Paragraph 145 of the NPPF states that "A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt." Paragraph 146 of the NPPF states that "Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it." It continues by setting out a series of exceptions, one of which is:

*b) engineering operations*

- 5.4 Local Plan Policy GB2 considers "Development In General In The Green Belt" and states:

*Most development in the Green Belt is inappropriate and there is a general presumption against such development. Development which is not inappropriate is set out in this Policy. Planning permission will be refused for inappropriate development in the Green Belt, but may be given for the categories of development set out in clauses (a) to (f) below.*

Clause (f) states:

*(f) Engineering and other operations and the making of material changes in the use of land (as distinct from buildings) which maintain openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.*

The policy concludes:

*The granting of planning permission is subject to other Policies in this Local plan being complied with.*

- 5.5 In terms of the Green Belt and the above policy references, the key issue is whether the proposal preserves or maintains the openness of the area. The hardstanding itself is at ground level and would have little impact on openness in a spatial sense. There would be a little more impact in a visual sense, but it is a small area relative to the large areas of open land on all sides and would be screened by hedging. The reconfigured row of parking in the adjacent Parish Council car park would be little different to the previously consented scheme that has recently been implemented. Mindful of the above, it is considered that the development would preserve and maintain the openness of the Green Belt and hence would comply with paragraph 146(b) of the NPPF and Local Plan Policy GB2(f).

### **Landscape and visual Impact**

Core Strategy Policies:

CS4 (Ensuring that development is sustainable)

CS20 (Design and environmental quality)

CS22 (Chilterns Area of Outstanding Beauty)

Local Plan Saved Policies:

GC1 (Design of development throughout the district)

LSQ1 (Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as defined on the Proposals Map)

- 5.6 The whole area is within the Chilterns AONB, which is afforded the highest state of protection in relation to the landscape. That said, the area is characterised by the recreation ground, play area, tennis courts, skate park, existing car parking areas and school playing field. It is therefore a landscape with much human influence, and is not a wholly natural landscape with wider visual impacts. The area of additional hardstanding is modest in size and tucked into the corner of the playing field, adjacent to the existing car park areas on two sides. The remainder of the boundary would be enclosed by hedging. It would form a natural extension of the car park and would not appear to visually encroach onto the wider AONB landscape. The surfacing materials can be subject to a condition, to ensure they blend into the landscape as far as possible. Likewise, with the proposed lighting, although no specific details have been supplied, this could be subject to a condition to ensure they do not exceed 4 metres in height. It is noted that the three new lighting columns are a modest height, at 4 metres, which is the height that a local authority can normally undertake as permitted development.

### **Historic environment**

Core Strategy Policies:

CS4 (Ensuring that development is sustainable)

Local Plan Saved Policies:

LB2 (Protection of setting of Listed Buildings throughout the district)

CA2 (Views Within, out of, or into the Conservation Areas as defined on the Proposals Map)

GC7 (Noise-generating developments throughout the district)

5.7 The Great Missenden Conservation Area borders the site to the SW. The character of this part of the area is defined by the open recreation ground and school playing fields, with the roofscape and buildings of the medieval village layout forming a backdrop to the open land, in views to the south and west. These are important views into the conservation area, but the proposed works would not disrupt these views as they would largely reconfigure and modestly extend the hardsurfacing that already exists. There are listed buildings dotted along the High Street, but the proposal is sufficiently distant from them so as not to harm their setting. Mindful of the above, the proposal is not considered to harm the views into or out of the conservation area or the setting of any other heritage assets.

### **Transport matters and parking**

Core Strategy Policies:

CS25 (Dealing with the impact of new development on the transport network)

CS26 (Requirements of new development)

Local Plan Saved Policies:

TR2 (Highway aspects of planning applications throughout the district)

TR3 (Access and road layout throughout the district)

TR11 (Provision of off-street parking for developments throughout the district)

TR15 (Design of parking areas throughout the district)

TR16 (Parking and manoeuvring standards throughout the district)

5.8 The main driver for this application is to pursue improvements to highway safety, with particular regard to schoolchildren. As discussed above, the application has been brought about due to the current unsatisfactory provision for coach turning in the adjacent Parish Council car park, where pupils are currently dropped off and collected in coaches. Presently, coaches have to drive in forward gear to the drop-off point in front of the school gates, then reverse back through the car park to turn in reverse gear, before exiting to the Link Road. This creates a danger to schoolchildren walking through the car park on their way to and from the school, as coaches have to reverse in their presence. The proposal would allow coaches to turn and exit without reversing. This is considered to be a significant improvement in safety terms.

5.9 In terms of the reconfigured layout of the Parish Council car park, as previously permitted, this contained 20 spaces. The new, currently proposed, layout, contains 23 spaces. It is acknowledged that 5 of these spaces are in a tandem layout, behind other spaces. Although these particular spaces are not ideal, even if the 5 rearmost spaces were not extensively used (with users preferring to park in the front spaces to avoid being boxed in) the number of parking spaces would only be reduced from that previously permitted by 2 spaces. This is a minimal number and not considered objectionable, given that the scheme still provides 18 new usable spaces over the original car park layout. In any event, even if it was considered that the rear of the tandem spaces would not be used, the highway safety benefits for schoolchildren are considered to significantly outweigh the loss of 2 usable spaces.

### **Playing field**

Core Strategy Policy:

CS28 (Retaining and improving leisure and recreational facilities)

Local Plan Saved Policies:

R2 (Loss of existing sports facilities)

R10 (Loss of other amenity open space (not open to the general public))

5.10 The coach turning circle would be located on a small section of the corner of the school playing field. Sport England is a statutory consultee for any development on a playing field. They apply their own list of strict exception criteria to such development. In this instance, Sport England has raised no objection, stating that the proposed development only results in a minor encroachment onto the playing field. Having considered the nature of the playing field and its ability to accommodate a range of pitches, Sport England state that the development would not reduce the sporting capability of the site.

### **Amenity of existing and future residents**

Local Plan Saved Policies:

GC3 (Protection of amenities throughout the district)

GC7 (Noise-generating developments throughout the district)

GC8 (Residential and other noise sensitive development in areas of high noise level throughout the district)

5.11 The coach turning circle would be located away from any residential properties and would not cause any harm to the amenities of any nearby dwellings. It is also noted that coaches already use this car park area to drop off pupils, and the new turning circle would in fact enable the coaches to turn much more safely and quickly. This would be likely to reduce vehicle movements and associated noise, by eliminating slow reversing manoeuvres and the inconvenience to other car park users arising from coaches having to reverse into the section of the car park parallel to the Link Road.

### **Flooding and drainage**

Core Strategy Policy:

CS4 (Ensuring that development is sustainable)

Local Plan Saved Policy:

GC10 (Protection from flooding in the areas as defined on the Proposals Map and throughout the district)

5.12 The site is located close to the River Misbourne, but is not within Flood Zones 2 or 3, nor a Critical Drainage Area. It would not therefore have any impact on surface water or fluvial flooding. Nonetheless, a condition is recommended to ensure that the new surfacing materials are either permeable, or allow for natural surface water runoff to drain to a permeable surface within the site. This is to ensure that any surface water flooding is not exacerbated.

### **Ecology / Trees**

Core Strategy Policies:

CS4 (Ensuring that development is sustainable)

CS24 (Biodiversity)

Local Plan Saved Policies:

NC1 (Safeguarding of nature conservation interests throughout the district)

GC12 (Protection of river character - Rivers Chess & Misbourne)

TW6 (Resistance to loss of woodland throughout the district)

5.13 The only vegetation affected by the proposal is some minor trees and hedging on the SE boundary of the Parish Council car park. This was not protected, as it lay outside the conservation area and has already been removed, before the start of the bird nesting season, to protect wildlife. The applicant proposes to replace this with native

hedge planting around the turning circle, which would be of a higher quality than the scrubby vegetation that has been removed. This can be secured by condition.

- 5.14 In relation to the River Misbourne, Policy GC12 states that development should not detrimentally affect the character of the Area's rivers, river banks or land in the vicinity of a river. The nearest edge of the turning circle is 50 metres from the line of the River Misbourne, and as discussed above, the character of this area is as a recreation ground. Given there is already a car park in the vicinity and coaches already use this area, the proposal would not impact on the character of the river.

## **6.0 Weighing and balancing of issues / Overall Assessment**

- 6.1 This section brings together the assessment that has so far been set out in order to weigh and balance relevant planning considerations in order to reach a conclusion on the application.
- 6.2 In determining the planning application, section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In addition, Section 143 of the Localism Act amends Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act relating to the determination of planning applications and states that in dealing with planning applications, the authority shall have regard to:
- a. Provision of the Development Plan insofar as they are material,
  - b. Any local finance considerations, so far as they are material to the application (such as CIL if applicable), and,
  - c. Any other material considerations
- 6.3 As set out above, it is considered that the proposed development would accord with the relevant Development Plan policies.
- 6.4 Local Planning Authorities, when making decisions of a strategic nature, must have due regard, through the Equalities Act, to reducing the inequalities which may result from socio-economic disadvantage. In this instance, it is not considered that this proposal would disadvantage any sector of society to a harmful extent.

## **7.0 Working with the applicant / agent**

- 7.1 In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF (2019) the Council approach decision-taking in a positive and creative way taking a proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions and working proactively with applicants to secure sustainable developments.
- 7.2 The Council works with the applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service, and as appropriate updating applications / agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.
- 7.3 In this instance the application was acceptable as submitted and no further assistance was required. In addition, the application was considered by the Planning Committee where the applicant had the opportunity to speak to the Committee and promote the application.
- 7.4 The following recommendation is made having regard to the above and also to the content of the Human Rights Act 1998.

**8.0 Recommendation:** Delegate to the Director of Planning and Environment to approve subject to conditions and the expiry of the consultation period.

Subject to the following conditions:-

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.  
Reason: To prevent the accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions, to enable the Local Planning Authority to review the suitability of the development in the light of altered circumstances and to comply with the provisions of Section 91 (1) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, as amended.
2. The materials to be used for the surface of the new area of hardstanding shall be permeable, or shall allow for natural surface water runoff to drain to a permeable surface within the site.  
Reason: To maintain the character of the area and to alleviate surface water runoff and flooding.
3. The lighting columns shown on the approved drawings shall not exceed 4 metres in height.  
Reason: To ensure that any lighting columns are properly controlled, in the interests of the visual amenity of the area, highway safety and ecology.
4. A hedge whose species, size and stem spacing shall have been previously agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, shall be planted on the outer edge of the new hardstanding, as shown on the approved drawings, not later than the first planting season following the completion of the development hereby permitted. Thereafter the hedge shall be allowed to mature to a height of at least 2 metres and be maintained thereafter for a period of 5 years in the following manner. The hedge shall not be removed without the prior consent in writing of the Local Planning Authority and if at any time the hedge shall die, be uprooted, injured, wilfully damaged or be removed for any other reason, it shall be replaced with a hedge of the same species in the next following planting season.  
Reason: In order to maintain, as far as possible, the character of the locality.
5. This permission relates to the details shown on the approved plans as listed below:

**List of approved plans:**

<u>Received</u>	<u>Plan Reference</u>
23 Feb 2021	HS2-MISC-100-003B Rev. R4
23 Feb 2021	HS2-MISC-100-004 Rev. R0
23 Feb 2021	HS2-MISC-100-015 SITE PLAN Rev. R0
2 Mar 2021	HS2-MISC-100-013 Rev. R1



## **APPENDIX A: Consultation Responses and Representations**

### **Consultation responses:**

#### **Sport England:**

It is understood that the proposal prejudices the use, or leads to the loss of use, of land being used as a playing field or has been used as a playing field in the last five years, as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 595). The consultation with Sport England is therefore a statutory requirement.

Sport England has considered the application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (in particular Para. 97), and against its own playing fields policy, which states: 'Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of:

- all or any part of a playing field, or
- land which has been used as a playing field and remains undeveloped, or
- land allocated for use as a playing field,

unless, in the judgement of Sport England, the development as a whole meets with one or more of five specific exceptions.'

Having reviewed the plans, the proposed development results in a minor encroachment onto the playing field. However, having considered the nature of the playing field and its ability to accommodate a range of pitches, it is not considered that the development would reduce the sporting capability of the site.

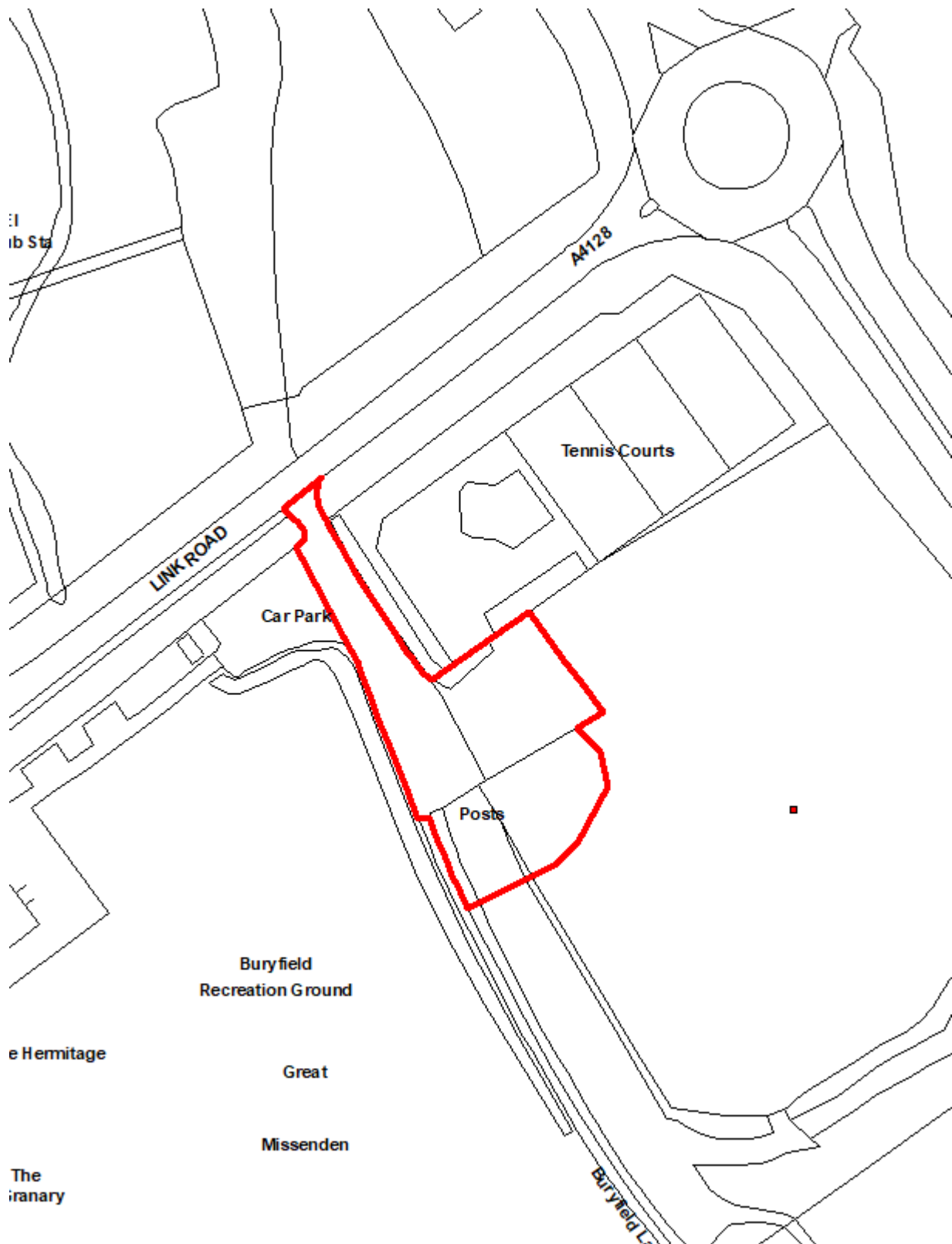
Consequently, Sport England are of the view that the proposal broadly meets exception E3 of our playing fields policy, in that:

'The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not:

- reduce the size of any playing pitch;
- result in the inability to use any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins and run-off areas);
- reduce the sporting capacity of the playing field to accommodate playing pitches or the capability to rotate or reposition playing pitches to maintain their quality;
- result in the loss of other sporting provision or ancillary facilities on the site; or
- prejudice the use of any remaining areas of playing field on the site.'

This being the case, Sport England does not wish to raise an objection to this application.

## APPENDIX B: Site Location Plan



Do not scale – this map is indicative only

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