

Section '3' - Applications recommended for PERMISSION, APPROVAL or CONSENT

Application No : 12/00642/FULL1

Ward:
**Bromley Common And
Keston**

Address : Bishop Justus C Of E School Magpie
Hall Lane Bromley BR2 8HZ

OS Grid Ref: E: 542395 N: 166787

Applicant : Mr Glen Day

Objections : YES

Description of Development:

Resurfacing of existing grass pitch with new synthetic surface to include underground heat recovery system, new perimeter fencing maximum height 5 metres with associated netting area, and 8 no. floodlight columns, maximum height 15 metres, to be used 8:00 to 22:00 Mondays to Saturdays and 08:00 to 18:00 Sundays and bank holidays.

Key designations:

Green Belt

Proposal

- Permission is sought for the provision of a synthetic playing surface, by converting an existing grass pitch, with associated floodlights and perimeter fencing.
- The replacement pitch is sought in order to provide an upgraded facility, seeking to increase the use of the sporting equipment within the school but also serving the wider community who at present have limited opportunity to play and enjoy the sporting facilities.
- The application site is currently in use as a grass pitch, with an area of approximately 9,713m². The replacement synthetic pitch will be located on a similar footprint as the existing grass pitch.
- The proposed synthetic surface playing area will measure 120 metres x 75 metres, with the existing access position being re-used as part of the proposal.
- The fence height will measure 5 metres, raising to 8 metres by providing 3 metres of ball stop netting over the fence system, similar to the existing synthetic court which is located closer to the school building than the current application site. This netting system would aim to prevent ball loss and to protect vehicles within the site infrastructure during court play.

- The floodlight columns will be 15 metres in height, stand alone and drop column systems, similar to those on adjoining facilities.
- The actual playing surface will be 3G which is a sand and rubber in-filled carpet system, with white markings to indicate the recreational areas. The fencing will be colour coated dark green (RAL 6005) with black ball stop netting. The floodlight columns will be galvanised.
- The facility will primarily be used by the school, however appropriate access will be provided to the wider community and adjacent primary school for recreation, training and league matches throughout the year.
- The proposal will use a heat recovery system in one-third of the pitch, which would provide services to the school.
- The proposed opening hours for the replacement facility would be from 08:00 – 22:00 Monday to Saturday, and 08:00 – 18:00 on Sundays.
- The proposed replacement works will be located entirely within the footprint of the existing pitch. A new pedestrian and maintenance access point will be constructed off of the existing school foot/vehicle infrastructure.
- The applicant has submitted information to support the application which can be summarised as follows:
 - The site is within close proximity to one existing full-size floodlit synthetic sport pitch to the East of the proposals;
 - The facility's position is well-screened and separated by Magpie Hall Lane, and when coupled with the relatively low level of floodlighting is considered to facilitate its usage during the proposed hours without creating disturbance outside the boundaries of the site;
 - With the growing demand on energy companies and the rising costs of energy bills, the need for this will provide long-term benefit the running costs and carbon footprint of the school;
 - The existing grass pitch has limited use due to the inclement UK weather. The application will enhance opportunities to use the facilities for an extended range of activities over an extended period of time.

Location

The application site is located to the south of Magpie Hall Lane, close to the boundary with Bromley Common. The site lies wholly within the Green Belt.

The proposed site is adjacent to other sports facilities within an area of the school grounds that comprise mainly of open space, infrastructure roadways and footways, which affords the site an open aspect.

The site is generally level in line with the immediate surroundings, with dense tree planting along 2 edges and the nearest residential buildings are some 110 metres away.

Comments from Local Residents

Nearby properties were notified and the following representations have been received:

- much emphasis is placed on the green benefits of the ground source heat pump;
- area in question has a high water table and has often suffered from flooding;
- large area of impermeable surface in an area known to be prone to flooding;
- in the event that the water levels are within 1200mm of the playing surface the pitch heating system would be heating not only the pitch but the ground water of South London – a wasteful arrangement;
- combination of the two proposed technologies (heated pitch and ground source heat extraction) are likely to result in one system robbing the other;
- although pitch is min. 100 metres from the nearest dwelling, noise from spectators carries a great distance;
- concerns these times would be extended to the other artificial pitch, only 15 metres from nearest dwelling;
- unacceptable for residents to be disturbed six days a week up to 22:00 and one day a week up to 18:00;
- noise levels of players and spectators should be restricted so as not to exceed 'good' standard in bedrooms and living rooms as specified by BS 8233:1999;
- local residents disagree that there are adequate parking spaces within the school;
- flood lights will consume a lot of energy;
- plans include properties in Magpie Hall Lane but not Princes Plain properties which are closer to the school site;
- substantial extension of operating days and times to the existing pitch;
- noise levels already high;
- nearby residents will only have 4 hours per week during a waking day, on a Sunday evening, to get some peace;
- request a site visit from Planning Committee Councillors;
- releasing this land for an all-weather pitch leaves the school short of its requirements for actual playing fields;
- the school was allowed to be built on green belt land; it is government policy to keep school playing fields, so why is more concrete being considered?
- the school is built on a flood plain and feel the drainage of the surrounding area will be affected;
- the impact of flood lights is already huge, more are not wanted or needed;
- the school was built as a so-called green school, how does more concrete and flood lights comply with this and help the environment.

Comments from Consultees

The Council's Drainage Consultant is satisfied with the proposed use of a soakaway to drain surface water run-off from the new synthetic surface.

Thames Water raise no objections to the proposal.

The Council's Environmental Health (Pollution) Officer stated that they have looked at the application and visited the site, and have no objection to the application.

Sport England is a statutory consultee who as a result have considered the application in the light of its playing fields policy. The aim of this policy is to ensure that there is an adequate supply of quality pitches to satisfy the current and estimated future demand for pitch sports within the area. The policy seeks to protect all parts of the playing field from development and not just those which, for the time being, are laid out as pitches.

The key potential sports development benefits of the proposed floodlit 3G AGP are considered to be as follows:

- the floodlit 3G AGP would represent a significant new facility and improve sports provision on the site;
- a second full sized floodlit 3G AGP on the site would help meet the needs of the community and local clubs as it would be available for community use outside of school hours. Existing users of the site's sports facilities such as local football clubs would benefit from the additional capacity of a second full sized floodlit 3G AGP to complement the existing AGP and remaining grass playing field. Furthermore, the school would be willing to formally secure the community use of the floodlit 3G AGP;
- the floodlit 3G AGP would be available for use during low natural light levels;
- the facility would therefore encourage increased participation levels.

Taking the details of the application into consideration, Sport England does not wish to raise an objection to this application, subject to the addition of a suitable condition being attached to the decision notice if the Council are minded to approve the application.

Planning Considerations

The application falls to be determined in accordance with the following Unitary Development Plan policies:

- G1 Green Belt
- L1 Outdoor Recreation and Leisure
- BE1 Design of New Development
- C1 Community Facilities
- C7 Education and Pre-School Facilities
- C8 Dual Community Use of Educational Facilities

In strategic terms the most relevant London Plan policies are:

- 7.16 Green Belt
- 3.16 Protection and enhancement of social infrastructure
- 3.18 Education facilities
- 3.19 Sports facilities

The relevant national policy document for consideration of this application is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Planning History

The site has been the subject of numerous previous applications the most relevant of which can be summarised as follows:

Permission was granted under ref.11/00291 for a first floor extension for sixth form common room and office/ seminar room, with two storey staircase extension.

Details Pursuant to Outline Permission approved under ref. 07/01943 for details of all weather pitch flood lighting pursuant to condition 19 of outline permission ref. 01/02282 allowed on appeal APP/G5180/A/02/1089421 for the development of a new secondary school with associated facilities and a community sports centre.

Conclusions

The main issues to be considered are the impact that the proposed pitch would have on the Green Belt and the nearby residential properties.

The proposal is considered to constitute appropriate development in the Green Belt in that the pitch would provide essential facilities for outdoor recreation. In any event, the school have submitted detailed information to support the application in the form of providing very special circumstances to justify the application, and on this basis, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable, in principle, on Green Belt grounds.

With regard to the impact on the existing openness, the appearance of the synthetic pitch will not be significantly different to the grass natural pitch that exists at present. New fencing will be installed which will prevent loss of balls during use of the pitch, and this will be dark green with black ball-stop netting. The colour of this boundary treatment has been designed to blend in to the area and prevent an obtrusive impact upon the nature of the Green Belt location. Although the overall development will be visible, and will inevitably alter the appearance of the site, Members may consider that it will not significantly harm its openness and any impact is outweighed by the benefits that the development will bring to the school.

With regard to the impact on neighbouring residential properties it is considered that the pitch is sufficiently separated from the properties along Magpie Hall Lane so as not to cause any unacceptable noise nuisance. Whilst concern has been raised from two properties in Princes Plain with regard to noise, these properties are considered to be a sufficient distance away from the application site and the location of the replacement synthetic pitch so as to prevent any detrimental impact upon these properties in terms of noise or light pollution. Whilst it is acknowledged that these properties are close to the existing synthetic pitch, this does not form part of the application proposal.

In terms of the NPPF, Para 74 states in effect that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or the development is for

alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

Members may consider that whilst the current application will result in the loss of an existing grass playing field, the resulting provision will provide more opportunity for an increased level of sporting activity. During winter months, the existing grass pitch is not usable as it freezes, yet the demand for the existing artificial pitch elsewhere on the school site exceeds supply and availability. Policy G1 of the UDP allows for essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation provided the use of the land preserves the openness of it and does not conflict with the purposes of land being designated as Green Belt. Members may therefore consider that allowing the provision of an artificial pitch in place of the existing grass pitch would allow more use of the sporting facilities at the school site, especially as there are months of the year when the existing grass pitch is unable to be used. Allowing the current proposal would improve the sporting facilities at the site not only for the children who attend the school but for the wider community, and working alongside Sport England introducing a community use agreement will ensure that the requirements of Policies G1 and L1 are met.

In conclusion the proposed pitch will be visible from residential properties outside the site, and will introduce a more built up feature into this playing field. However Members may agree that the benefits to the school and the wider community, through improved provision for their successful sports programme, and the willingness of the school to enable use of the replacement synthetic pitch for community use, along with the sympathetic design of the new pitch and associated equipment, outweigh the impact on the openness of the countryside and render the application acceptable.

Background papers referred to during the production of this report comprise all correspondence on file ref. 12/00642, excluding exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: PERMISSION

Subject to the following conditions:

- 1 ACA01 Commencement of development within 3 yrs
 ACA01R A01 Reason 3 years
- 2 ACD01 Surface water drainage - implementation
 ADD01R Reason D01
- 3 ACD05 No change to ground levels
 ADD05R Reason D05
- 4 ACK01 Compliance with submitted plan

Reason: In order to protect the openness of the Green Belt, the amenities of the occupiers of nearby residential properties, and to comply with Policies BE1, G1 and C7 of the Unitary Development Plan.

- 5 The pitch shall be used for sporting activities in association with the use of the school and local community only and for no other purposes without prior approval in writing from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to comply with Policy BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan and to ensure that the use does not generate additional activity that could

adversely affect the amenities of the residents of nearby residential properties or the parking provision on the site.

6 The use shall not operate before 08:00 and after 22:00 on Mondays to Saturdays, nor before 08:00 and after 18:00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Reason: In order to comply with Policy BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan and in the interest of the amenities of the area.

7 The floodlights shall not operate unless the pitch is in use nor after 22:00 on Mondays to Saturdays nor after 18:00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Reason: In order to comply with Policy BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan and in the interest of the amenities of the area.

8 No occupation shall commence until a community use agreement prepared in consultation with Sport England has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The agreement shall include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-school users/non-members, management responsibilities and a mechanism for review. The approved agreement and shall thereafter be retained and maintained unless otherwise agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To secure well-managed safe community access to the sports facility, to ensure sufficient benefit to the development of sport and to accord with Policies L1 and C8 of the Unitary Development Plan and Policies 3.18 and 3.19 of The London Plan.

Reasons for permission:

In granting permission the Local Planning Authority had regard to the following policies of the Unitary Development Plan:

- G1 Green Belt
- L1 Outdoor Recreation and Leisure
- BE1 Design of New Development
- C1 Community Facilities
- C7 Education and Pre-School Facilities
- C8 Dual Community Use of Educational Facilities

and the London Plan:

- 7.16 Green Belt
- 3.16 Protection and enhancement of social infrastructure
- 3.18 Education facilities
- 3.19 Sports facilities

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The development is considered to be satisfactory in relation to the following:

- (a) the appearance of the development in the street scene;
- (b) the relationship of the development to adjacent properties;
- (c) the Green Belt policies of the development plan;
- (d) the Education policies of the development plan;

- (e) the character of the development in the surrounding areas;
- (f) the impact on the amenities of the occupiers of adjacent and nearby properties;

and having regard to all other matters raised.

INFORMATIVE(S)

- 1 Sport England recommend that the detailed design of the artificial grass pitch and floodlighting accords with Sport England's relevant design guidance in order to ensure that the facility is fit for purpose and of an appropriate quality. The guidance is available to view on Sport England's website at http://www.sportengland.org/facilities__planning/design_and_cost_guidance.aspx (Artificial Sports Lighting and Artificial Sports Surfaces (Selecting the Right Artificial Surface. Rev 2 and Comparative Sizes of Sports Pitches and Courts 2011)).
- 2 The applicant is advised that the absence of an objection to this application in the context of the Town and Country Planning Acts, does not in any way commit Sport England's or any National Governing Body of Sport's support for any related application for grants funding.

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