

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE
9th December 2021

Item No:

UPRN

APPLICATION NO.

DATE VALID

21/P1519

26/05/2021

Address/Site:

84 Edge Hill, Wimbledon, SW19 4NS

(Ward)

Hillside

Proposal:

Installation of a new 3G synthetic playing surface on existing grass playing field, including 5m perimeter fence, gates, drainage, landscaping and 6 x retractable floodlighting columns

Drawing Nos:

2930 010, 100, 150, 300, 400, 502, 503 & SUDS Drainage System Proposals (Rev A) dated October 2021

Contact Officer:

David Gardener (0208 545 3115)

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Planning Permission, Subject to no objection from Thames Water and Conditions

CHECKLIST INFORMATION

- Heads of agreement: None
- Is a screening opinion required: No
- Is an Environmental Statement required: No
- Has an Environmental Impact Assessment been submitted: No
- Press notice: Yes
- Site notice: Yes
- Design Review Panel consulted: No
- Number of neighbours consulted: 79
- External consultations: None

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application has been brought before the Planning Applications Committee due to the nature and number of objections received.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site comprises Wimbledon College, which is located on the east side of Edge Hill, Wimbledon. The main college building, as well as the Cottage and Cartshed, which flank the Edge Hill Road entrance are Grade II listed. The application itself relates to the sports field, which is located in the southeast part of the site.
- 2.2 The surrounding area is predominantly residential, with Sacred Heart Church, located to the southeast of the site being Grade II* Listed. The site is also bounded by Thackery Close to the southeast, Hillside and Berkeley Place to the northeast, and Ridgway Gardens to the north.
- 2.3 The site is located within the Merton (Wimbledon West) Conservation Area. The site is also in an identified area of open space.
- 2.4 The site has excellent public transport accessibility (PTAL 1b/2) and is also located in a controlled parking zone (zone W6).

3. CURRENT PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The application is for installation of a new 3G synthetic sports playing surface. The new synthetic area, which is suitable for playing football and rugby on, will measure 81m by 61m. The 3G turf system consists of synthetic turf filled with sand and SBR rubber. The proposed surface will replace the existing natural grass surface.
- 3.2 The new playing surface will be enclosed by a 5.0m high perimeter fence with gate access. All fencing including gates shall be coloured green to RAL6005. 6 x retractable floodlights, are also proposed measuring 15m height when fully extended. The floodlights would be fitted with LED lights.
- 3.3 It is proposed to use the playing surface between 07:30 and 21:00 Monday to Friday, 09:00 and 18:00 on Saturday, and 09:00 and 13:00 on Sunday and Bank holidays.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

There are a number of applications that relate to this application site, and the following are relevant:

- 4.1 98/P0701 - Formation of green artificial hard play area (50m x 35m) on part of existing playing field with 3m high chain link fencing around perimeter. Withdrawn.
- 4.2 00/P0155 - Demolition of existing gymnasium. Erection of new buildings (either side of the existing swimming pool building) to provide a new gymnasium with associated changing/spectator facilities, a library and 6 additional classrooms. Granted - 01/11/2000
- 4.3 08/P0268 - Formation of new entrance and alteration to existing access route. Removal of existing entrance gate and installation of new automatic gates and

pillars with bollard lighting, new wired fencing and landscaping works. Refused - 30/04/2008

- 4.4 08/P0269 Conservation Area Consent for demolition of existing entrance gates in connection with the formation of new entrance and alteration to existing access route. Installation of new automatic gate and pillars with bollard lighting, new wired fencing and landscaping works. Refused - 30/04/2008
- 4.5 19/P3294 - Erection of additional 2.4m high vertical bar perimeter fencing behind existing boundary fence. Granted - 03/12/2019
- 4.6 19/P3852 - Listed building consent for the erection of additional 2.4m high vertical bar perimeter fencing behind existing boundary fence. Granted - 02/01/2020
- 4.7 21/P1518 - Listed Building Consent for a new 3G surface on existing grass playing field, including drainage, landscaping and floodlighting. Registered.

5. POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1 Adopted Merton Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Maps (July 2014): DM C1 (Community Facilities), DM D1 (Urban design and the public realm), DM D2 (Design considerations in all developments), DM D3 (Alterations and extensions to existing buildings), DM D4 (Managing Heritage Assets), DM EP2 (Reducing and mitigating noise), DM F1 (Support for flood risk management), DM F2 (Sustainable urban drainage systems SuDS, wastewater and water infrastructure), DM O1 (Open Space), DM O2 (Nature Conservation, Trees, hedges and landscape features), DM T1 (Support for sustainable transport and active travel), DM T2 (Transport impacts of development), DM T3 (Car parking and servicing standards)
- 5.2 Adopted Core Strategy (July 2011): CS.11 (Infrastructure), CS.13 (Open space, nature conservation, leisure and culture), CS.14 (Design), CS.15 (Climate Change), CS.18 (Active Transport), CS.19 (Public Transport), CS.20 (Parking, Servicing and Delivery)
- 5.3 The relevant policies in the London Plan (March 2021) are: GG6 (Increasing efficiency and resilience), D2 (Infrastructure requirements for sustainable densities), D3 (Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach), D4 (Delivering good design), D5 (Inclusive design), D14 (Noise), G1 (Green Infrastructure), G4 (Open Space), G7 (Trees and Woodland), HC1 (Heritage Conservation and Growth), S5 (Sports and Recreation Facilities), SI 5 (Water infrastructure), SI 12 (Flood Risk Management), SI 13 (Sustainable drainage), T4 (Assessing and mitigating transport impacts), T7 (Deliveries, servicing and construction)
- 5.6 National Planning Policy Framework 2019

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 The application was originally publicised by means of a site and press notice and individual letters to occupiers of neighbouring properties. In response, 15 letters of objection were received including letters from the St John's Area Residents' Association, and the Wimbledon Society. The letters of objection were on the following grounds:

- Impact on surface and ground water flows
- The proposed use is too intensive for a residential area/commercial use
- Light pollution from floodlights
- Noise
- Traffic and parking impact
- Heat pollution from synthetic pitch material/contradicts net zero aims
- Hours of use is excessive
- Environmental impact including impact on wildlife, litter, loss of natural grass amenity space
- Inadequate and incomplete application
- Proposed facilities could be better accommodated at Coombe Lane site
- Poor precedent
- Financial viability is questionable
- No provision of toilet or changing facilities
- Unacceptable visual impact of floodlights on surrounding area
- Lack of consultation
- Unacceptable impact on Listed buildings, including Sacred heart Church
- Does not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area

6.2 St John's Area Residents' Association

The proposal does not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, would have a detrimental impact on Sacred Heart Church, biodiversity, would be visually intrusive, increase noise and traffic pollution, and general disturbance. Concerns are also raised regarding lack of consultation, surface and ground water flooding, and the impact on local wildlife, including the inadequacy of the ecology report submitted with the application.

6.3 The Wimbledon Society

Objects to the proposal due to impact of synthetic surface on local wildlife, biodiversity and carbon emissions. Also concerns raised regarding how the surface would be disposed of at the end of its life and lack of changing facilities/toilets.

6.4 Future Merton – Flood Risk Officer

6.5 The Flood engineer has reviewed the revised and updated report and note that the drainage scheme has substantially changed from the previous scheme, which is supported. No objections are raised to the proposed scheme and a condition requiring details of the final construction detail of the proposed surface water drainage scheme is submitted to and approved in writing by the local

planning authority. The details shall also include confirmation of the repair of the existing defects identified within the existing surface water line for connection.

6.6 Environmental Health Officer

6.7 No objections subject to appropriate conditions.

6.8 Conservation Officer

6.9 No objection to the proposed development.

6.13 Thames Water

6.14 No comments received

7. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Principle of Development

7.2 Planning policy is generally supportive of development, which seeks to enhance sports facilities. Policy S5 of the London Plan 2021 seeks to ensure that there is sufficient supply of good quality sports and recreation facilities, and states that development proposals for sports and recreation facilities should increase or enhance the provision of facilities in accessible locations, well-connected to public transport and link to networks for walking and cycling. Development proposal should also support the provision of sports lighting within reasonable hours, where there is an identified need for sports facilities, and lighting is required to increase their potential usage, unless the lighting gives rise to demonstrable harm to the local community or biodiversity. Policy CS.13 of the Core Planning Strategy 2011 seeks to safeguard existing play facilities and provide enhanced facilities along with formal and informal play spaces where these are needed.

7.3 It is considered that the proposal complies with policy S5 of the London Plan and CS.13 of the Core Planning Strategy, given it would provide an enhanced playing surface, which would be available for year round usage. The proposed playing surface will also feature floodlights, which will provide suitable lighting for evening/nightly use. The floodlights will be directed towards the centre of the pitch limiting light spillage or glare beyond the site boundary. The floodlights are also retractable and conditions will be attached limiting hours of use to reduce their impact on surrounding residential properties. Although the site has a PTAL 1b/2 rating, which suggests it has poor public transport accessibility, it should be noted that the entrance to the site is located just over 400m from Worple Road, and approx. 170m from Copse Hill, which are well served by public transport, which given the nature of the use is not considered an excessive distance in this instance.

7.3 Design/visual Impact and Impact on Setting of Listed Buildings

- 7.4 Policy DM D2 of the Adopted Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Maps (July 2014) states that proposals for development will be required to relate positively and appropriately to the siting, rhythm, scale, density, proportions, height, materials and massing of surrounding buildings, whilst using appropriate architectural forms, language, detailing and materials which complement and enhance the character of the wider setting. Policy DM D4 states that all development proposals associated with the borough's heritage assets or their setting will be expected to conserve and where appropriate enhance the significance of the asset in terms of its individual architectural or historic interest and its setting. Policy DM O1 states that development in proximity to and likely to be conspicuous from designated open land will only be acceptable if the visual amenities of the open space will not be harmed by reason of siting, materials or design.
- 7.5 The application site is located in the Merton (Wimbledon West) Conservation Area. Within the site itself, the main college building, as well as the Cottage and Cartshed, which flank the Edge Hill Road entrance are Grade II listed, whilst Sacred Heart Church, which is located to the south of the site is Grade II* Listed.
- 7.6 The application itself relates to the sports playing surface, which is located in the southeast part of the site. It is considered that given the nature of the development coupled with the location, and surrounding context, of the site, that the proposal would have a limited impact on the setting of the Listed Buildings. There are modern buildings (Sacred Heart Church Hall), located between the proposed sports pitch and the Grade II* Listed Sacred Heart Church beyond the site boundary, and between the proposed pitch and the Grade II listed main college building within the site itself. This creates enough visual separation to limit any impact of the proposal given the low physical profile of the development, which apart from the proposed surface comprises a 5m high perimeter fence and floodlights. The listed buildings within the school site are also enclosed by a number of other modern buildings further limiting any impact. The proposed development has also been designed to limit its impact, with the perimeter fence coloured green to help blend it in with the surrounding open space. It is noted that the proposed retractable floodlights, would be very noticeable in its surroundings when fully extended, however, it is considered that the impact would be acceptable given the very limited hours these would be in use. A condition will be attached requiring they are retracted to no more than 5m in height when not in use.
- 7.6 Overall, it is considered that the proposal would result in a high quality development, which does not harm the setting of the nearby listed buildings, whilst also preserving the character and appearance of the Merton (Wimbledon West) Conservation Area, and visual amenity of the open space, and as such complies with all the relevant design and open space planning policies.

7.7 Residential Amenity

- 7.8 Policy DM D2 of the Adopted Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Maps (July 2014) states that proposals for development will be required to ensure provision of appropriate levels of sunlight and daylight, quality of living

conditions, amenity space and privacy, to both proposed and adjoining buildings and gardens. Development should also protect new and existing development from visual intrusion.

- 7.9 The surrounding area is predominantly residential, with the site bounded by Thackeray Close to the southeast, Hillside and Berkeley Place to the northeast, and Ridgway Gardens to the north. Residential properties located along Edge Hill are located to the west of the site, whilst Sacred Heart Church, is located to the southeast.
- 7.10 It is considered that given the proposal is located in the southeast part of the school site that it would have a limited impact on properties located along Hillside, Berkeley Place, and Ridgway Gardens, given these properties would be located a substantial distance away (for example the closest property would be No.21 Hillside, which would be located approx. 50m from the perimeter fence of the proposed surface), and the existing school buildings would offer significant screening. It is also considered that there would be a limited impact on properties located along Edge Hill, with the closest properties located a minimum of 45m from the proposed playing surface, and trees located along the Edge Hill boundary also offering good screening. Given the screening provided by the school buildings and trees to these surrounding properties, it is likely that only the top of the floodlights would be visible, which given their distance and the limited time period, which they would be in operation is considered acceptable.
- 7.11 It is considered that residential properties along Thackeray Close, which bounds the site's southeast corner would likely be most impacted by the proposal. The site boundary of the closest property, No.14, which is a block of three residential units is located approx. 24m from the proposed sports surface, with the rear elevation located approx. 35m away, which means the impact on occupiers of this building, and other properties along Thackeray Close, which are located further away, should still be limited. It should be noted that there is an existing sports pitch in the same location, and the proposed sports pitch would be a similar size, so the noise generated during the day will be similar to existing. It is accepted that there will be increased use during evenings due to the incorporation of floodlights, however it is considered that this will have an acceptable impact given the hours of use will be limited to no later than 9pm Monday to Friday, 6pm Saturday, and 1pm on Sundays and Bank Holidays. The floodlights have also been designed to minimise any light spill, and a condition will be attached requiring they are turned off and retracted when the sports surface is not in use, which means they would only be extended for a very limited time period.
- 7.12 Notwithstanding the considerations in the previous paragraph, it should be noted that the school also intends to commercially hire out the proposed playing pitch, which means there would also be an intensification of the use. The Council's Environmental Health Officer have assessed the proposal, and consider it acceptable, subject to conditions, however, given this commercial element, have requested a condition is attached requiring a noise impact

assessment is submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to first use.

- 7.13 Overall, it is considered that the proposal would not have a materially harmful impact on the levels of amenity currently enjoyed by occupiers of surrounding properties and would accord with policies DM D2 and DM D3 Adopted Merton Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Maps (July 2014):

7.19 Parking and Traffic

- 7.20 Policy DM D2 of the Adopted Merton Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Maps (July 2014) states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals provided they do not adversely impact on the road or public transport networks, safety or congestion particularly on strategically important routes.

- 7.26 The proposed synthetic playing surface would simply replace the existing natural grass surface, so there will not be an increase in the size of sports playing surface, number of sports pitches provided, and therefore capacity. However, given the proposal will incorporate floodlighting, the playing surface will be available for use for longer periods throughout the day, particularly the evenings during winter, when daylight hours are limited. There will also be a commercial element, with the surface also available to hire, therefore increasing the intensity of its use. This is likely to be evident at weekends and during school holidays. This means there will be increased traffic movement to and from the site during these periods, however, it is considered that this would not have an adverse impact on the surrounding road network, given the limited size and capacity of the sports surface.

7.23 Flood Risk and Drainage

- 7.24 The applicant has submitted a report, which was amended following the original submission, outlining the proposed SUDS drainage for the proposed playing surface. The Council's Flood Risk Officer has reviewed the revised and updated report and note that the drainage scheme has substantially changed from the previous scheme, which is now supported. No objections are raised to the proposed scheme and a condition will be attached requiring details of the final construction detail of the proposed surface water drainage scheme is submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The details shall also include confirmation of the repair of the existing defects identified within the existing surface water line for connection. The Flood Risk Officer also advised that officers consult Thames Water on the proposal. No comments have been received from Thames Water, and thereby the recommendation would need to reflect this.

7.22 Trees

- 7.23 Policy DM O2 of the Adopted Merton Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Maps (July 2014) states that development will only be permitted if it will not damage or destroy any tree which:

- i. is protected by a tree preservation order;
- ii. is within a conservation area; or,
- iii. has significant amenity value.

7.24 The application site is located in the Merton (Wimbledon West) Conservation Area, and the proposed playing surface would not result in the loss or damage of any trees, and as such would comply with policy DM O2.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 The application does not constitute Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 development. Accordingly, there are no requirements in terms of EIA submission.

9. LOCAL FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

9.1 The proposal would result in a net gain in gross floor space and as such will be liable to pay a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 It is considered that the proposal would result in a high quality development, which enhances the existing sports provision of the School without harming the setting of the nearby listed buildings, and preserving the character and appearance of the Merton (Wimbledon West) Conservation Area. It is also considered that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the surrounding road network, surface and ground water flows, trees or neighbour amenity, and as such complies with all the relevant planning policies. It is therefore recommended that planning permission is granted.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to no objection from Thames water and the following conditions:

1. A.1 (Commencement of Development)
2. A.7 (Approved plans)
3. B.3 (External Materials as specified)
4. No music or other amplified sound generated on the premises shall be audible at the boundary of any adjacent residential building.

Reason: To protect the amenities of local residents and ensure compliance with policy DM EP2 of the Adopted Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Maps (July 2014).

5. D.11 (Construction Times)
6. H.09 (Construction Vehicles)

7. Prior to commencement of development, detailed drawings at 1:100 scale of the proposed floodlights, shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. Only the approved details shall be used in the development hereby permitted.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with the following Development Plan policies for Merton: Policy CS14 of Merton's Core Planning Strategy 2011 and policies DM D1 and D2 of Merton's Sites and Policies Plan 2014.

8. The development hereby permitted shall only be used between the hours of 07:30 and 21:00 Monday to Friday, 09:00 and 18:00 on Saturday, and 09:00 and 13:00 on Sunday and Bank holidays, and at no other time.

Reason: To protect the amenities of local residents and ensure compliance with policy DM EP2 of the Adopted Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Maps (July 2014).

9. D.1 (Hours of Use of Floodlighting)

10. Notwithstanding the approved drawings the floodlights shall have a maximum height of 15m during permitted hours of use and shall be retracted to a maximum height of 5m outside of permitted hours.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance of the development and to comply with the following Development Plan policies for Merton: Policy CS14 of the Core Planning Strategy 2011 and policies DM D2, DM D3 and DM D4 of Merton's Sites and Policies Plan 2014.

11. Prior to the commencement of development, the final construction detail of the proposed surface water drainage scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The drainage scheme shall dispose of surface water by means of a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) including attenuation with the final surface water discharge rate restricted to no more than 2.7l/s. The details shall also include confirmation of the repair of the existing defects identified within the existing surface water line for connection and this should be supported by a before and after CCTV survey.

Reason: To reduce the risk of surface and foul water flooding to the proposed development and future users, and ensure surface water and foul flood risk does not increase offsite in accordance with Merton's policies CS16, DMF2 and the London Plan policy 5.13.

12. Prior to any commercial use, a noise impact assessment shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Any recommendations set out in the approved noise impact assessment shall be complied with permanently thereafter.

Reason: To protect the amenities of local residents and ensure compliance with policy DM EP2 of the Adopted Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Maps (July 2014).

13. Any external lighting shall be positioned and angled to prevent light spillage or glare beyond the site boundary.

Reason: To protect the amenities of local residents and ensure compliance with policy DM D2 of the Adopted Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Maps (July 2014).

Informative - No surface water runoff should discharge onto the public highway including the public footway or highway. When it is proposed to connect to a public sewer, the site drainage should be separate and combined at the final manhole nearest the boundary. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required (contact no. 0845 850 2777).

Informative - No waste material, including concrete, mortar, grout, plaster, fats, oils and chemicals shall be washed down on the highway or disposed of into the highway drainage system.

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