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Committee Date:	31/10/2013	Application Number:	2013/06661/PA
Accepted:	16/09/2013	Application Type:	Full Planning
Target Date:	16/12/2013		
Ward:	Hodge Hill		

Hodge Hill Sports & Enterprise College, Bromford Road, Hodge Hill, Birmingham, B36 8HB

Erection of new sports hall, 3G playing pitch with floodlights, car park and new glazing with shading fins to the existing college building

Applicant: Hodge Hill Sports & Enterprise College  
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Agent: The Architects Practice  
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Recommendation

**Approve Subject To Conditions**

1. Proposal

1.1. The application includes a number of different elements to enhance existing facilities as well as modernisation of a number of the existing school buildings. They include:

- Erection of new detached sports hall measuring a maximum of 34m by 36m by 10m high to ridge level to the east of the existing school building, setback 14m from Bromford Road and located on existing playing fields. The building would accommodate a sports hall, equipment store, entrance/lobby as well as changing facilities. It would be clad in colour coated profiled steel sheet up to 2.5m with vertical Thermowood boarding above. Occasional coloured metal planks would replace individual timber boards to produce a series of bands echoing the proposed external works to the school building. Abstract images of the figure from the Hodge Hill Sports & Enterprise College (HHSEC) logo participating in a variety of sports would be scorched into the timber cladding.
- Creation of new all weather 3G pitch (61m by 97m) to the immediate north of the proposed sports hall on existing playing fields, which would be enclosed by dark green 3m high steel weldmesh fencing with 5m section to the northern end to prevent balls flying into the adjacent Hodge Hill Girls' School premises. The new pitch would also include 6no. 10m high floodlight columns, each with 2no. 400 lux floodlights.
- Extension of existing car park located adjacent to the new sports hall, providing 29 additional spaces, including 4 additional disability spaces. This would be used as an additional car park for the school as well as stand alone parking for the sports hall/pitches. This element of the proposal also includes a new internal link road with the adjoining Braidwood Trust School for the Deaf. This would provide vehicular access to the Braidwood School via Bromford Road, which currently gains access via Asholme Close to the northwest. Vehicular access would still be available for HHSEC from Asholme Close, in addition to their existing main access off Bromford

Road, and would create a vehicle-free route for pedestrians between the school's east and west blocks.

- Installation of new double glazing and solid panels in four autumnal colours (terracotta, olive green, yellow and orange) to match the school's new branding and identity to the west block closest to Bromford Road. The works would also include solar shading comprising of 600mm glass fins fixed at 90 degrees to the elevation in the same four colours.
- 1.2. During school hours the new sports hall and pitch would be exclusively used by HHSEC and the other schools on the site. After school hours between 1630 to 2230 as well as 0800 to 2230 hours in school holidays, 0900-2230 hours on Saturday and 1000-2230 hours on Sundays, the facilities would be available for community booking and club use by arrangement with the school.
  - 1.3. The proposals have been screened under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 and there is no requirement for an Environmental Assessment.

[Proposed site plan](#)

[Perspective site views](#)

[Proposed sports hall floor plans](#)

[Proposed sports hall elevations](#)

[Proposed West Block front elevations](#)

2. Site & Surroundings
  - 2.1. The application site forms part of a larger education campus containing, in addition to the HHSEC, Hodge Hill Girls' School, Braidwood Trust School for the Deaf and Hodge Hill Primary School. HHSEC and the Girls' School both use the main sports field, of which the new sports hall and 3G pitch would be located on.
  - 2.2. The school site measures over 7.5ha and consists of two distinct characters, these being the 1970s /1980s school building to the western half and a large expanse of open playing fields to the eastern half. Ground levels rise gently from west to east and drop away into a wooded valley to the northern end of the site. The entire site has an open feel to the adjoining Bromford Road and is enclosed by high fencing. A key characteristic of the site is a significant line of Poplar trees along the edge of the site on Bromford Road.
  - 2.3. The school's main access is off Bromford Road and there are some parking restrictions within the immediate vicinity of this access point and marked out on-street parking bays on the north side of Bromford Road adjacent to the school. To the opposite side of Bromford Road and the area surrounding the wider schools campus are residential properties.

[Site location](#)

[Street View](#)

3. Planning History
- 3.1. Various applications relating to previous works at the school premises.
4. Consultation/PP Responses
- 4.1. Transportation Development – No objection subject to condition relating to provision of new car parking and cycle parking.
- 4.2. Regulatory Services – No objection subject to conditions relating to floodlighting hours, lighting scheme and noise level from any plant and machinery.
- 4.3. Leisure Services – No objection. Improved sports facilities will benefit all schools on the shared campus and the community. Loss of playing field is outweighed by benefits of the new pitch, sports hall and associated facilities.
- 4.4. Sport England – No objection subject to conditions relating to use of new pitch for sports only, provision of new cricket pitches, community use agreement, and management and maintenance scheme.
- 4.5. West Midlands Fire Service – No objection.
- 4.6. West Midlands Police – No objection. Consideration needs to be given to the security of the school site/buildings outside school hours and when the sports facilities are open to the public, as well as review of building security, lighting and CCTV system, and works carried out to Secure By Design standards.
- 4.7. Severn Trent Water – No objection subject to drainage condition.
- 4.8. Environment Agency – No response received.
- 4.9. Adjoining Schools, local residents and Councillors, and MP consulted with site and press notices posted.
- 4.10. Representation received from the Head of HHGS raising the issue of lack of consultation with the school and the need to safeguard fair and equitable access to the playing fields to guarantee curriculum needs.
- 4.11. Representation received from the Clerk to the Governing Body at HHGS objecting to the application on the following grounds:
  - Land owned by the Local Authority and shared with HHGS.
  - No curriculum or fair usage agreement
  - 3G and football pitches do not provide flexibility to offer the sports currently offered by HHGS.
  - Reduction in full size athletics track.
  - Proximity of 3G pitch to HHGS classrooms leading to increased noise disruption.
  - Restrictions to remaining green space and impact on curriculum use.
  - Site security.
  - Potential for additional/unknown users on the site.
  - Impact on visual amenity.
  - Increased road traffic and impact on pupil safety.
  - Curriculum access during construction.

4.12. Four representations received from residents raising the following issues/concerns:

- Obtrusive and should be built elsewhere
- Light and noise pollution
- TV reception problems
- Traffic and parking
- Behaviour of pupils and parents
- Access to playing fields from HHGS
- Devalue property
- Insufficient time to comment
- Loss of green space

5. Policy Context

5.1. Birmingham UDP, Draft Birmingham Development Plan, Places for All SPG, Car Parking Guidelines SPD, Floodlighting of Sport Facilities, Car Parks and Secure Areas (Light Pollution) and the NPPF.

6. Planning Considerations

6.1. The key issues for consideration relate to the loss of playing field, neighbour amenity, visual amenity and highway safety.

6.2. Loss of playing field:

6.3. The NPPF recognises that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Furthermore, it highlights circumstances where there might be exceptions and a playing field could be lost. This includes where 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. The UDP identifies that the quality of sport pitches are also important and encourages improvements, for example to changing facilities and the provision of all weather pitches, which can be used more intensively than grass pitches. The UDP considers that an all weather pitch is equivalent to 2 grass pitches. The dual use of educational facilities by the general public is also encouraged.

6.4. The proposed new sports hall, 3G all weather pitch and additional parking would be located on part of a larger area of playing fields. The proposal represents both indoor/outdoor sport facilities, with associated changing facilities and the inclusion of flood lights to the 3G pitch would allow greater use than that of a grass pitch at all times of the year. Sport England indicates that the 'Birmingham Sports Halls Artificial, Grass Pitches and Fitness Suite Strategy' recognises the need for more indoor sports halls in this geographical area. In light of all of these factors, it is clearly evident that the proposal represents a significant benefit to the schools that would use the facilities as well as the wider community outside school hours and these outweigh the loss of the existing grass playing field. Leisure Service supports the application, whilst Sport England also raises no objection subject to conditions including a community use agreement. Sport England also has requested that cricket pitches are provided to the northern section of the school site. However, these works form part of the site's wider masterplan and do not form part of the current proposal. It is considered the proposed sports hall and 3G pitch adequately meets the exceptional circumstances required to justify the loss of playing fields.

- 6.5. Neighbour amenity:
- 6.6. The NPPF aims to avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impact on health and quality of life as a result of new development. It is acknowledged that the application site already generates noise and disturbance associated with a large established secondary school that is attended by approximately 1200 pupils. These proposals would not result in an increase in pupils and staff present at the school. Furthermore, the location of the new 3G pitch is on existing playing fields used for outdoor sports.
- 6.7. Outside normal school hours and term time the new sports hall and 3G pitch would be available for booking by the wider community. These facilities would operate until 2230hours, including the floodlights to the 3G pitch and would generate additional activity at the site outside normal school hours. The applicant anticipates that at its busiest during change over times, there could be up to 90 people present. Whilst this is a noticeable number of people, within the context of the facilities' location within the wider campus it is not considered to be excessive for a significant community destination. The sports hall and adjoining car park would be some 39m from the closest residential property to the opposite side of Bromford Road. The 3G pitch and associated floodlights would be to the opposite side of the sports hall from these residential properties, at a distance of some 80m.
- 6.8. In light of the above, it is considered that the impact of the additional sports facilities would have an acceptable affect on neighbour amenity. The floodlights would be designed to minimise light spillage and be in accordance with Sport England Artificial Sports Light Design Guide (2012) and Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light (GN01:2011). Regulatory Services raise no objection subject to safeguard conditions relating to floodlighting hours, lighting scheme and noise levels for any plant and machinery.
- 6.9. Visual amenity:
- 6.10. The new sports hall would be visible from the public realm (Bromford Road), being set back some 14m from the back of the pavements and behind a significant line of large mature Poplar trees. Due to the internal layout, use and nature of a sports hall it is acknowledged that the opportunity to create an active frontage to Bromford Road is very limited. No objection is raised in principle to the location and size of the proposed sports hall as it is proportionate to other buildings within the context of the wider campus. Whilst the building is of a relatively functional appearance, the use of timber cladding would represent a modern appearance to the building that also signifies that its use is different to the other school buildings. The use of timber cladding would also be responsive to the mature trees that line the site's Bromford Road frontage. Furthermore, the occasional use of coloured metal planks, reflecting the school's new branding and identity, in place of individual timber boards and the scorching of abstract images of the figure from the HHSEC logo participating in a variety of sports would add an appropriate level of visual interest to the building.
- 6.11. The enhancements to the existing West Block's elevation would update the building's currently tired looking facade, reflecting the school's new branding and identity. The glazing has also been configured to allow far greater use of natural light in the classrooms by reducing the overall extent of glazing and providing external shading to limit direct sunlight and glare. The new glazing would also enhance the energy performance of the building.
- 6.12. Highway safety:

- 6.13. The proposal includes the formation of a new 29 space car park for use by the school and for the sport hall outside school hours. Also included, is the formation of a new internal road to Braidwood School, which shares the site, so they can use the main access off Bromford Road and reduce the level of vehicular movements off Asholme Close. Transportation Development considers that the proposal level of parking is appropriate and the reduction in traffic using Asholme Close would be beneficial.
- 6.14. Other matters:
- 6.15. The comments made from the adjoining HHGS relating to communication between the neighbouring schools and how the playing fields are to be shared to meet their individual curriculum needs are noted. However these are matters between the schools and the Local Education Authority to resolve and not for the Local Planning Authority to intervene. They are not relevant planning matters that should delay the determination of this current application.
- 6.16. The submitted Tree Survey identifies the extent of the root protection area (RPA) of the mature Poplar trees along the Bromford Road boundary. The proposed works in close proximity to these, namely the new sports hall and car park, would be located a sufficient distance from the RPA. Regarding flood risk, surface water from the sports hall and 3G pitch would be disposed via sustainable drainage systems including swales and soakaways located to the immediate south of these works. Whilst the school site measures some 7.5ha, the size of the new 3G pitch, sports hall and new car park would measure in the region of 0.95ha.
- 6.17. Disturbance to TV reception can be an issue associated with particularly large structures such a tower blocks, stadia and wind turbines. However, the proposed sports hall is not a large structure and it is considered that it would not have an adverse impact. The impact a proposal might have on the value of a property is not a material consideration in the determination of a planning application.

## 7. Conclusion

- 7.1. The proposal would provide indoor and outdoor sport facilities, that adequately compensates for the loss of the grass playing field it would occupy, as well as have an acceptable impact on neighbour amenity, visual amenity and highway safety. It is in accordance with relevant policy and guidance and planning permission should be granted.

## 8. Recommendation

- 8.1. Approve subject to conditions.

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| 1 | Limits the hours of use of the sports hall to 0800-2230hours Monday to Friday, 0900-2230hours Saturday and 1000-2230hours Sunday and Bank Holidays |
| 2 | Limits the use of the floodlighting to 0800-2230hours Monday to Friday, 0900-2230hours Saturday and 1000-2230hours Sunday and Bank Holidays        |
| 3 | Limits the noise levels for Plant and Machinery  |
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- 4 Requires the prior submission of a lighting scheme
  - 5 Requires the prior submission of a drainage scheme
  - 6 Requires the prior submission of a sustainable drainage scheme
  - 7 Requires the prior submission of hard and/or soft landscape details
  - 8 Requires the implementation of tree protection
  - 9 Requires the prior submission of sample materials
  - 10 Requires the prior submission of a community access agreement
  - 11 Prevents the all weather pitch being used for any other purpose other than outdoor sport
  - 12 Requires the prior submission of a Management and Maintenance Scheme
  - 13 Requires the provision of the new car park
  - 14 Requires the prior submission of cycle storage details
  - 15 Requires the scheme to be in accordance with the listed approved plans
  - 16 Limits the approval to 3 years (Full)
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Case Officer: Peter Barton

**Photo(s)**

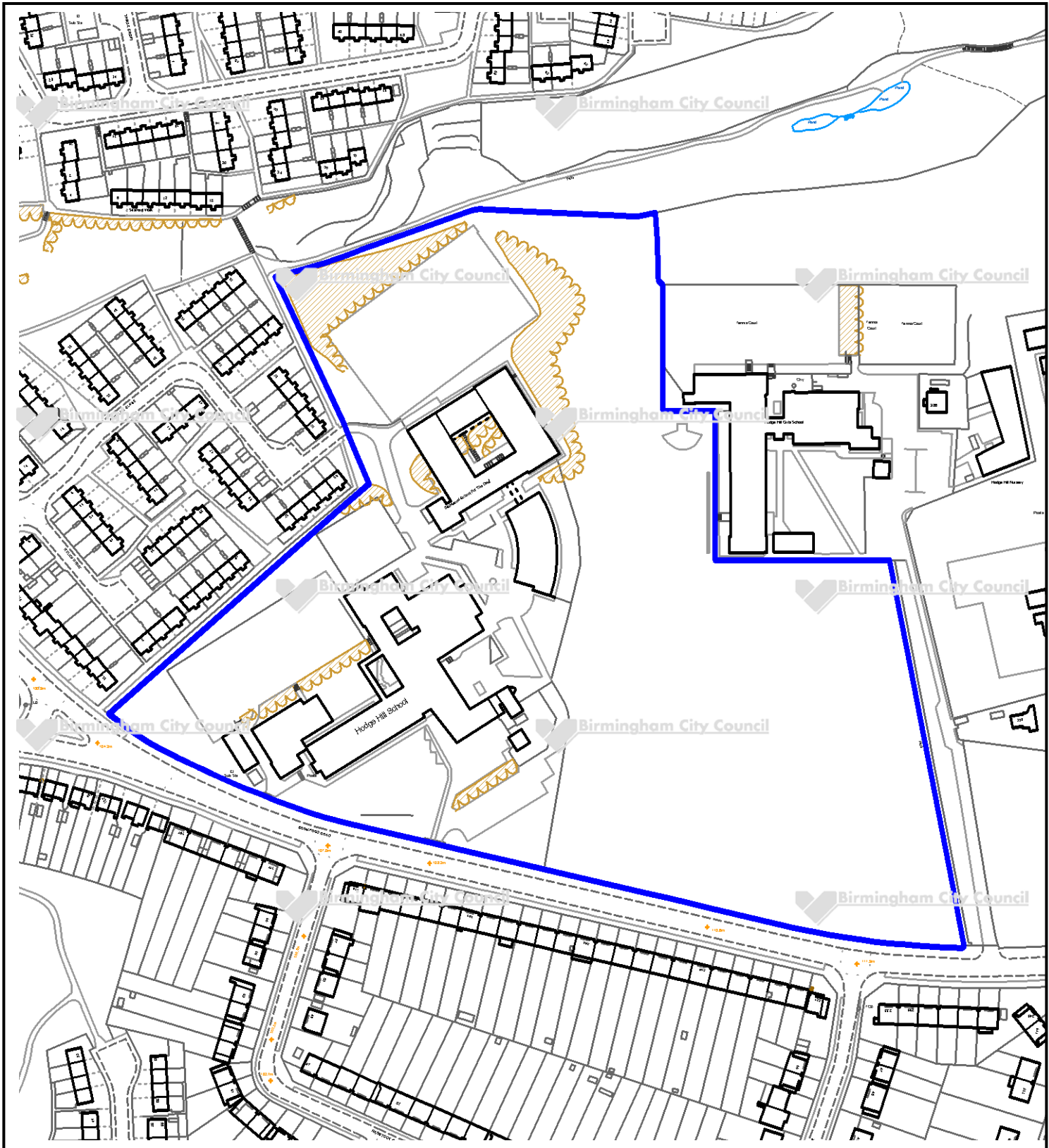


**Figure 1 – View of playing fields from Bromford Road**



**Figure 2 – West Block's Bromford Road elevation**

# Location Plan



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