
Committee Date:	08/08/2013	Application Number:	2013/03908/PA
Accepted:	18/06/2013	Application Type:	Full Planning
Target Date:	13/08/2013		
Ward:	Hall Green		

Newey Goodman Open Space, 1451 Stratford Road, Hall Green, Birmingham, B28 9HT

Construction of junior play area, Multi Use Games Area and landscaping works to include tree planting, installation of benches, footpaths and earth bunds

Applicant: Landscape Practice Group
House of Sport, 300 Broad Street, Birmingham, B1 2DR

Agent:

Recommendation

Approve Subject To Conditions

1. Proposal
- 1.1. Planning permission is sought for the construction of a junior play area, Multi Use Games Area and associated landscaping, including new footpaths, furniture, planting and earth bunds.
- 1.2. The Junior play equipment would be installed to the northern end of the application site. The existing raised ground would be lowered 0.50m to form a level plateau. A new plastic safety surface would then be installed and four pieces of childrens equipment installed on this; spinner, hoop, seesaw and basket swing lantern. The play area would be enclosed by circular hoop top boundary railings 1m in height.
- 1.3. The proposed multi use games area (MUGA) would be 12m by 34m with powder coated green fencing 3.5m high including basket ball hoop and goal mouth in the centre of the site on an existing tarmac area. The works would include base levelling, drainage repair and new wearing course.
- 1.4. A new bund would be created to the west of the site between the proposed MUGA and houses facing the open space. This would measure 1m height with a 1:3 gradient.
- 1.5. A new footpath would be installed linking the existing accesses off Newey Road and Goodman Close to the Junior play area and multi use games area. This would be 1.2m wide with a timber edge and crushed limestone gravel infill.
- 1.6. To the west of the site 10 hawthorn trees would be planted alongside other decorative flowering screen tree and bulb planting.
- 1.7. Four benches and litter bins are proposed. A noticeboard is also to be installed.

- 1.8 There are no alterations to the access from Stratford Road which serves an electricity compound and small parking area.
- 1.9 The application has been submitted by Birmingham City Council's Landscape Practice Group following consultations with various bodies, including the local Police.

[Proposed Layout Plan](#)

2. [Site & Surroundings](#)

- 2.1. The application site is an irregular shaped area of open space with residential dwellings on three sides and Stratford Road on the other. The open space measures at its widest 84m and at its longest 240m. Dwellings to the west of the site form part of a 1990s housing estate and front onto the open space. Properties to the east and south mainly date from 1930s/40s and back on to the area. Many have significant tree and shrub planting on their boundaries.
Pedestrian access can be gained from Stratford Road, Newey Road, Goodman Close and Longfield Close to the north and west of the application site. There is a vehicular access from Stratford Road however there are bollards in place to prevent this from being utilised.

[Site Location](#)

[Street view](#)

3. [Planning History](#)

- 3.1. None recent relevant history

4. [Consultation/PP Responses](#)

The applicant carried out extensive consultation prior to the submission of the planning application, which is summarised below.

- 4.1 A questionnaire with outline sketches and pictures of various different types of play equipment was sent to 600 residents as well as displayed within Hall Green Library during January/February 2013. Details were also sent to Local Ward Members, local organisations and schools including Hall Green Primary School, Hall Green Infant School, BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir Hindu temple and Hall Green Neighbourhood Forum.
- 4.2 As part of this planning application Local Ward Members, Residents' Association and local residents were consulted – 41 objections were received as summarised below;

*Design and layout of scheme – areas will become shielded, facilitating crime.

*Attracting/concentrating youths in an area will increase crime

*Unightly and unnecessary

*Proposed play facilities are too large for the area in which they are proposed

*Visual and noise impact on neighbouring properties

*Heavy traffic on Stratford Road is close in proximity

*Open space is currently used by the whole community; creating play area/MUGA would only benefit younger people

*Close proximity to neighbouring houses

*Parking issues

- *Planting of trees is not sufficient to filter noise away from nearby properties
- *Invasion of privacy due to it being a small green space, the proximity of houses and scale/size of play area.
- *Public money should not be spent on MUGA but on other functions for the community
- *Noise, litter and vandalism problems will increase
- *District is built up area and should be retaining its green, open spaces, not constructing on them
- *Concern for animal habitat and flora/fauna loss, and not enough provided as part of the scheme
- *Will decrease property values of those in the vicinity
- *Proposed footpaths lead to/from locations not frequently used residents
- *No provision to repair existing dilapidated boundary fences
- *Spend was earmarked for Highfield Hall

4.3 6 letters of support were received as summarised below;

- *Ward has few facilities for its children and young people
- *Site is central to the area, open to view and easily accessible
- *Proposed new paths, benches and plantings will encourage more people to use what is currently an underused space
- *Children need somewhere to play, however must be well-maintained by the council in order to have continued benefits
- *Will encourage greater use of the space and increase social capital formation

4.4 Transportation Development – No objection

4.5 Regulatory Services – No objection

4.6 West Midlands Police – No objection, with the following comments made:

- (i) I have visited the site on a number of occasions, and the local Neighbourhood Team have been contacted;
- (ii) There is no ambiguity as to which children and young people should use which facility, so should provide opportunity for parents / guardians with younger children to utilise the smaller area without hassle from older youths;
- (iii) I note that the design of the play area has been influenced by vandal resistance, robustness, longevity and value for money - this is supported. I recommend anti-graffiti coating for this area, and for the MUGA;
- (iv) The park is accessible by a number of points. The dwellings to the east predominantly have their rears adjacent to the park, which will reduce the level of natural surveillance from this side but also reduce the negative impact of any anti-social behaviour. The western dwellings face out onto the park, increasing the potential for natural surveillance but any anti-social behaviour could be more readily felt;
- (v) I recommend that the canopies of all the trees around the play area and MUGA be raised to a height of approximately 2.7 m, to allow surveillance opportunities and light to reach the site.

5. Policy Context

5.1. NPPF, Birmingham UDP, Draft Birmingham Development Plan, Places for All SPG

6. Planning Considerations

- 6.1. The main considerations in the determination of this application are the impact of the proposal on residential amenity, visual amenity, highway safety and parking and whether the principle of the proposal is in accordance with policies of the Development Plan.
- 6.2 At paragraph 73 the NPPF states 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”.
- 6.3 Paragraph 3.61 of the UDP states that it is important that a safe and accessible play area is available for all children. It states that careful attention should be paid to the location to avoid the risk of disturbance to nearby residents. Policy 3.53 states that the quality of public open space is equally important to the amount, and that the overall objective is to provide safe, attractive and useable public open space, accessible to all sectors of the community. I consider that this development meets with the objectives of NPPF and Birmingham UDP.

Residential Amenity

- 6.4 Whilst it is recognised that the play equipment and games area ought to make the park more popular and so noise levels could increase, this sort of activity is entirely to be expected and welcomed in an area of public open space. The MUGA would be sited on an existing tarmaced court games area, between 35 to 40m from the nearest houses' elevations. For the children's play area, ambient noise levels are higher closer to Stratford Road and there is unlikely to be levels of noise that would result in harm to residential amenity. Furthermore, the park is unlikely to be used so much during the early morning for either facility, and there are no proposals for lighting to illuminate either area for evening use.
- 6.5 Local residents have expressed concern about the use of the site, potential vandalism and anti social behaviour. However it is recognised that the site is open space that is already used by local residents and could already attract anti-social behaviour. I do not consider that a children's play area and MUGA would significantly influence or encourage new anti-social behaviour. Conversely, the provision of a play area for young children, and a multi-use games area for older children, are very positive, community measures which provide important and constructive play and activity facilities for younger people. I also note the police do not object to the application.

Highway Safety and Parking

- 6.6 Objections refer to parking issues and pedestrian safety. It is anticipated that most users would be local residents and so arrive on foot. It is considered that teenagers using the site are unlikely to be dropped off at the site and would make their own way there. The majority of visitors by car are likely to be parents and younger children using the junior play equipment to the northern end of the site. The closest parking available to this is located on Stratford Road where there is unrestricted on street parking. There would not be a reason to park anywhere else such as Newey Road. It is, however, noted that Newey Road and the other cul de sacs are public highway where people can park responsibly. Transportation Development therefore does not object to the proposal.

Visual Amenity

- 6.7 The proposed works are commonplace on areas of open space. The area of open space is not prominent within the wider area, with only one open boundary to Stratford Road, the rest are bounded by residential properties, with the eastern and southern boundaries being enclosed by close boarded fences. The boundaries have mature trees and other vegetation providing screening to the park. The proposal includes some bunding to the west of the site to minimise visual impact to neighbouring dwellings. However, it is recognised that it is important to have some overlooking of the site to provide natural surveillance, which dwellings to the west would provide.
- 6.8 It is considered that the proposed footpaths and planting would enhance the visual amenity and ecological value of the site.

7. Conclusion

Play facilities on existing public open space provide important recreational benefit for local children, which is lacking in Hall Green Ward. This site would provide appropriate facilities in well-located areas, not too close to surrounding houses, yet neither too isolated or distant. These facilities are to be expected and welcomed in an area of public open space, and I do not consider that local amenity would be adversely affected.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1. Planning permission is approved subject to conditions.

1 Limits the approval to 3 years (Full)

2 Requires the scheme to be in accordance with the listed approved plans

Reason for Approval

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- 1 Birmingham City Council grants Planning Permission subject to the condition(s) listed below (if appropriate). The reason for granting permission is because the development is in accordance with:
Policies 3.8, 3.10 and 3.14 of the Birmingham Unitary Development Plan 2005; Places for All (2001); and the National Planning Policy Framework.
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Case Officer: Emily Summers

Photo(s)



Figure 1: Access from Stratford Road



Figure 2: View from existing tarmac base to properties on Robin Hood Croft



Figure 3: View from tarmac base to south (rear of properties on Robin Hood Lane)

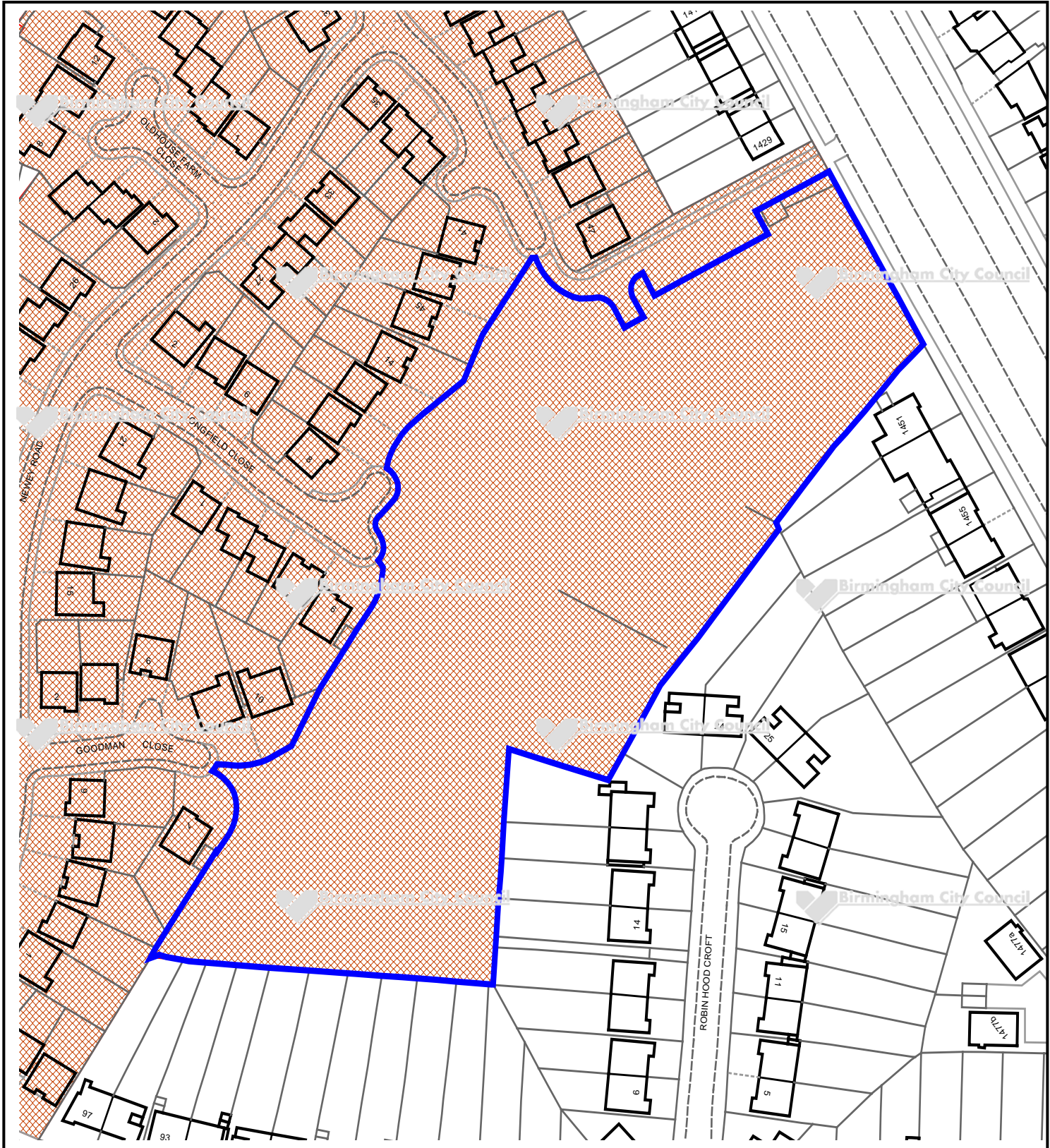


Figure 4: View of properties on Goodman Close



Figure 5: View of properties on Longfield Close facing in to the site

Location Plan



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