

VINCENT+GORBING

QUEENSWOOD SCHOOL,
Brookmans Park

Proposed Netball Courts
Planning Design and Access
Statement

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Prepared by
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A large teal graphic occupies the bottom half of the page. It features a diagonal split from the top-left corner to the bottom-right corner. The area to the left of this diagonal is a lighter shade of teal, while the rest is a darker teal. In the bottom right corner of this graphic, the letters 'VG' are printed in a large, white, sans-serif font.

VG

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Introduction

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared to support a planning application to construct two outdoor netball courts at Queenswood School, Brookmans Park. It describes the site and surrounds, the proposals and assesses the acceptability of the proposals against the policies of the development plan and National Planning Policy Framework. It demonstrates that the proposals accord with relevant planning policies and that there are no material considerations that warrant refusal.

The Site and Surrounds

- 1.2 Queenswood School is located outside Brookmans Park, approximately 2 miles to the northeast of Potters Bar. Founded in 1894, the school was originally located in Clapham, London, but it relocated to the present site in 1926.
- 1.3 The site includes a range of facilities, including boarding houses, general and specialist classrooms, a theatre, a library, a chapel, a swimming pool, hockey courts, tennis courts, a sports pavilion, a gym and a medical centre.
- 1.4 The school site is situated to the south of Shepherds Way, which forms the northern boundary. The site is well screened by mature trees along the northern boundary. It is positioned approximately 125m AOD, from where the surrounding land gently falls away both to the southwest and the east. As such, there are no clear views into the site from surrounding public routes.
- 1.5 To the south and east, the boundary is with Leggatts Wood and Leggatts Park. This is a private estate, containing a number of mansion houses.
- 1.6 To the west the school site adjoins open countryside. Views towards the school can be had along Great North Road, however, the school buildings are well screened by the mature trees within and around the site.

Description of the Proposal

- 1.7 The School proposes to install two new netball courts on an area of amenity grassland in the middle of the School site. The School will shortly be commencing construction of its new indoor sports hall. This will involve the loss of indoor courts for a temporary period whilst construction takes place. This will leave the School with a deficit in courts; this will be addressed by these new outdoor courts. The school currently does not have any outdoor netball courts and so this proposal will be a significant enhancement to the school's sports facilities. Subsequent to the construction of the new sports hall, these new courts will in any event be retained in order to improve the sports facilities of the School and make good use of an area of under-utilised land.
- 1.8 Indeed, the proposed site of the courts is presently not used for any sporting purposes. It lies between existing hard surfaces tennis courts to the west, staff accommodation in 'Chapel Close' and areas of external grounds storage to the east and glass houses/groundsman's outbuildings to the north. To the south is further open space.
- 1.9 The proposal involves the laying of a hard surface of 34.50m x 36.5m. The surface will be marked out with two netball courts of 30.5m x 15.26m with surrounding run-offs. Two tennis courts will also be marked out.
- 1.10 No fencing or floodlighting is proposed. No above ground structures are proposed with the exception of removable netball hoops
- 1.11 The courts will be formed by a permeable macadam base course and surfacing course. A 20mm nominal size open-graded macadam will be imported and laid to a consolidated depth of 40mm. This will act as a sturdy base for the application of the surface course to follow. This course will be rolled and cross rolled to ensure a close knit finish, whilst maintaining the natural voids within the macadam to allow suitable drainage from the above surface course.
- 1.12 The surface course will be formed by a 6mm nominal sized open graded macadam suitable for tennis and multi sport use will be imported and consolidated to a depth of 25mm. This course will also be rolled and cross rolled where necessary to ensure a smooth finish with no ridges or hollows.
- 1.13 This structure will allow natural filtration of water with run-off rates unchanged, avoiding the need for any engineered drainage solution.

Assessment of the proposal against planning policies

- 1.14 The proposal will address a short term deficiency in the availability of courts and improve the sporting facilities of the School in the longer term. As such, the proposal is supported by national planning policy guidance which seeks *inter alia* to ensure access to opportunities for sport and recreation, which "*can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities*" (para. 73).

- 1.15 The site is situated within the Green Belt. The District Plan defines part of the School site as a 'Major Developed Site within the Green Belt.' The part of the site where the proposed netball courts will be located is outside of the Major Developed Site designation. As such, the proposal needs to be assessed against the general presumption against inappropriate development and the need to retain the openness of the Green Belt.
- 1.16 The NPPF defines a number of appropriate uses within the Green Belt. These include :-
- “provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.”*
- 1.17 The proposed netball courts clearly fall into this category and therefore do not conflict with Green Belt policy. They will not adversely impact on the openness as no above ground structures are proposed. They are also completely screened for any visual receptors outside of the School.
- 1.18 As such, the proposal accords with national and local Green Belt policy.
- 1.19 The proposal raises no other material planning considerations. The site proposed is amenity grassland and has no ecological value. The proposal will cause no changes to the overall drainage regime and therefore will have no impact on the risk of surface water flooding. The proposal is to address current School needs and will have no impact on pupil numbers or external use of the School site; as such there will be no impact on traffic associated with the School. No other potential impacts have been identified.

Conclusions

- 1.20 Queenswood School proposals to install two new hard surfaced netball courts on unused amenity grassland. The proposals are entirely compatible with the designation of the land as Green Belt and will have no on-site or off-site impacts. The application is commended to the LPA on this basis.

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