

**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
DIRECTORATE OF STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT**

**DELEGATED APPLICATION**

**Application No:** 6/2015/2524/FULL  
**Location:** Stanborough School, Lemsford Lane, Welwyn Garden City, AL8  
 6YR  
**Proposal:** Extension of existing netball court and installation of 16no floodlighting columns  
**Officer:** Ms R Collard  
**Recommendation:** Granted

6/2015/2524/FULL

<b>Context</b>			
<b>Site and Application description</b>	<p>The application site refers to netball courts and land seen within the Stanborough School complex. The site itself is located on the southern side of Lemsford Lane, with the area subject of this planning application located to the south-western corner of the school site close to the boundary with the soft landscaped area visible from Stanborough Road and close to the boundary with Stanborough Park.</p> <p>The application seeks permission for an extension to the existing netball courts and the installation of 16 floodlighting columns.</p>		
<b>Constraints (as defined within WHDP 2005)</b>	<p>UOL - Urban Open Land (Proposal map 2)            WARD - HANDSIDE</p>		
<b>Relevant planning history</b>	<p>N6/1999/0511/CD – Erection of three double and one single mobile classroom units - Granted            N6/1998/0962/CD - Proposed new classrooms, sports hall, car park, hard play area and new vehicular access onto Lemsford Lane - Granted            N6/1998/0509/CD – Erection of 2 No.double mobile classroom units - Granted            N6/1997/0016/CC – Single storey extension to provide new design and technology classrooms - Granted            N6/1979/0918/CC – Laboratory Extension- Granted            N6/1974/0514/CC – Alterations and extension for music and drama – Granted</p>		
<b>Consultations</b>			
<b>Neighbour representations</b>	Support: 5	Object:	Other:
<b>Publicity</b>	<p>Site Notice Display Date: 29 January 2016            Site Notice Expiry Date: 19 February 2016</p>		

	<p>Press Advert Display Date: 3 February 2016</p> <p>Press Advert Expiry Date: 17 February 2016</p>
<b>Summary of neighbour responses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This will be a wonderful resource for the community. Our local netball league has played there for many years and it is a great venue. With more courts and floodlights, our local women (young and not so young) will be able to participate more often in our fantastic sport and we will be able to add new teams to our league (we always have quite a big waiting list). It is the home of the Welwyn Hatfield Netball League (of which I am the current Chairman) and this league has been a continuous part of our community since 1953. It would be great if we could have dedicated, state-of-the-art netball facilities to play on for the next 60 years!</li> <li>• I cannot emphasise enough the value of this proposed development for all age groups. This area needs such a facility to accommodate netball at all levels, and I fully support it.</li> <li>• I believe that the plans proposed to increase the number of courts and introduce lighting would be of great benefit to the local netball league which both my daughter and myself play in and the many schools that currently use the location for tournaments and events. The location is ideal and with the added facilities, I believe that other clubs, schools, groups and the local community will look to use the courts particularly making use of the site of an evening as these types of facilities are limited in the local area.</li> <li>• I am in complete agreement with this netball project. I am the School Sports Coordinator for Stanborough School and as part of my role I provide sporting opportunities for the 9 primary schools in my cluster; 7 main stream schools and 2 special schools. A development of this nature will provide a venue which they will be able to access all year round due to the flood lights and the improvement in the surface. I host a lot of events for the Welwyn Hatfield Primary Schools' Partnership and I will be able to accommodate many more teams and involve more children due to the increase in size of the venue.</li> <li>• Friends of Stanborough School (FOSS) supports this application for the following reasons: FOSS is actively raising money to support this development and would like to see it come to fruition. The funds raised come from events held at the school and so are raised with the support of students and parents? The new development is an extension to existing facilities, which will mean a minimum environmental impact, and the floodlights are designed and sited in such a way as to cause little disturbance to neighbours ? this is a clear requirement for FOSS: FOSS has as one of its charitable aims the fostering of links between the school and its stakeholders in the local community. Improved sports facilities, which will be available to the local community, will further this aim and, although we recognise that this will mean that more people use the facilities than at present. Adequate arrangements have been made for parking to minimise any disturbance to neighbours.</li> </ul>
<b>Town / Parish representations</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Consultees and responses</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sport England – No Objection</li> <li>2. Environmental Health - Having read through this application I would like to make the following comments: Extension to netball court and installation of 16no floodlighting: Time of use has not been defined? I would like to impose a condition that it is used no later than 10pm</li> </ol>

	<p>Lighting To minimise light disturbance, the applicant should ensure that the development meets the guideline levels set within the Institution of Lighting Engineers guidance notes for the reduction of obtrusive lighting. It is recommended that a condition requiring lighting details to be submitted prior to building works starting is placed on the application. Information required will need to be in the form of vertical lux diagrams which show the positions of lighting fixtures in relation to nearby residential properties (existing and proposed) and their potential levels at those positions.</p> <p>3. Hertfordshire County Council Transport, Programmes and Strategy – No objection subject to conditions</p> <p>4. Hertfordshire Ecology – No objections, would favour the use of LED bulbs or low pressure/high pressure sodium lamps and would like to see restricted floodlight operating hours at the school to 21.00 hours Monday to Friday and 18.00 hours Saturday and Sunday and could be secured through a condition.</p>
<b>Relevant Policies</b>	
<p>NPPF  D1 D2 GBSP1 GBSP2 M14  Others</p>	
<b>Main Issues</b>	
<b>Is the development within a conservation area?</b>	
Yes No	
<b>Would the significance of the designated heritage asset be conserved or enhanced?</b>	
Yes No <b>Comment</b> (if applicable): N/A	
<b>Would the development reflect the character of the area?</b>	
Yes No <b>Comment:</b> The NPPF emphasises the importance of good design in context. The relevant policies of the Council’s local plan, D1 and D2 are broadly consistent with the aspirations of the NPPF. Policy D1 requires proposals to feature high quality design and is specifically supplemented by the Council’s Supplementary Design Guidance (SDG).  The proposal is for an extension to the existing netball courts and as such would not be overtly visible to neighbouring properties as it would be constructed at ground level . The site contains six netball courts and as a result of the relatively small extension, an additional three netball courts would be created resulting in nine netball courts at the above location. Although it is noted that there is a slight change in land levels and therefore in order for the extended part of the netball court to be level with the existing, some soil would need to be removed. As such a new bank would be seen to the rear of the netball courts. The submitted drawings show that this would be 2.25m higher than the ground level of the netball courts. Whilst this area would be raised, due to its location to the rear corner of the school site away from any nearby neighbours the development is not considered to be objectionable. Notwithstanding, it is considered appropriate to request more detailed existing and proposed levels drawings via condition.  As a result of the enlarged netball courts a new chain link fence would be seen to match the existing and is not considered to be objectionable. Additionally, 16 No new lighting columns 10m high would be seen at intervals around the netball courts.  The proposed development is not considered to be objectionable and would still reflect the character of the area.	
<b>Would the development maintain the amenity of adjoining occupiers?</b> (e.g. privacy, outlook,	

light etc.)

Yes No N/A

**Comment:** The location of the existing netball courts is located to the south-eastern corner of the school site, closest to the boundary with the soft landscaping seen (outside of the school site) to the west of Stanborough Road providing substantial screening. Immediately to the south of the site is Stanborough Park and to the west is the Stanborough Road.

The closest residential properties to the site is the property associated with the school and inhabited by the caretaker and properties opposite the school located on Lemsford Lane, these properties are located at least 160m from the netball courts, furthermore existing buildings within the school site obscure views from properties with only limited view towards the area from some properties providing distant views of the netball courts.

The proposed extension of the netball court is not considered to result in an impact to any adjoining occupiers due to the nature of the works being carried out at ground level, whilst the lighting columns would be visible from outside the application site, it is considered that there impact would be most noticeable at night when the lights are on. A planning statement has been submitted stating that the proposed facility would be used by the school and by the community. The hours sought Monday – Sunday are 8:30- 22:00. It is considered that due to the nature of the site within viewing distance from nearby dwellings and close to the boundary with Stanborough Park, the lights should be switched off at 21:30. As a result of these times the proposal is not considered to result in a nuisance to any nearby dwellings to justify a refusal of the application.

The proposed floodlights are to be positioned at regular intervals around the courts with four floodlights located within the courts itself. The floodlights would be positioned facing the courts and not towards residential dwellings or towards the public realm. Therefore whilst some views of the floodlights and some light would be seen from the public realm and some properties located on Lemsford Lane, the development is not considered to result in an unacceptable relationship to adjoining occupiers to warrant a refusal of the application.

**Would the development provide / retain sufficient parking?**

Yes No N/A

**Comment:** The proposal would not impact any existing parking associated with the application site, however Hertfordshire County Council Transport, Programs and Strategy have been consulted and do not wish to restrict the grant of permission, subject to conditions. The conditions suggested include a construction management plan shall be submitted to and approved, it is considered reasonable to impose such a condition.

**Any other issues**

The location of the netball courts is designated as an area of Urban Open Land and is located on the edge of the residential area of Welwyn Garden City. Local Plan policy OS1 is relevant and states that land designated as Urban Open Land is vital to the form; character and quality of the built up areas of the district. Planning permission for development within these areas will not be granted unless it would:

- i. Assist in the maintenance or reinforcement of their function as essential open areas;
- ii. Be of a scale which did not compromise the value of the Urban Open Lane or use of the open space as defined in terms of its criteria; and
- iii. Not result in the loss or reduction in size of any playing pitches, if the open land is for formal recreation purposes, subject to the consideration set out in policy OS2.

The NPPF seeks to encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban areas and recognises that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife and recreation).

Furthermore, the NPPF paragraph 73 acknowledges that open spaces and

opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. In addition paragraph 74 states that existing open spaces, sport and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless;

- i. An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open spaces, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- ii. 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
- iii. The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

The proposal seeks an extension to the existing netball courts and would result in an extension of 12.7m, this extension would extend into the existing open space that backs onto the boundary with Stanborough Park. 16 lighting columns are also proposed and would be positioned at intervals around the edge of the court with four located within the courts. These lighting columns would be 10m in height and would be directed towards the courts.

With regards to Policy OS1 it is considered that the development complies with parts i) & ii) and assists in the maintenance or reinforcement of their function, and is of a scale that, does not compromise the value of the Urban Open Lane or use of open space, as the development is not of a scale that would impact the area adversely as it would still maintain the open characteristic of the Urban Open land.

It is noted that a large open space can be seen immediately to the north-west of the courts and is laid out as a sports pitch. The proposed development would not impinge on this space, as such the proposal is not considered to result in the loss or reduce the size of playing pitches, and would enlarge an existing area used for sport and as such the development is considered to be in compliance with part iii of Policy OS1, furthermore Sport England have been consulted in relation to the application and do not wish to raise an objection to the proposal.

With regards to the NPPF paragraph 73 it has been stated by the applicant that *'the additional land required to extend the existing facility is not fully utilised by the school. It is currently classified as playing fields but its shape, distance and drainage qualities do not lend themselves to be practical use throughout the year. The proposed development does not impinge on the marked out pitch'* as previously stated above.

The proposal would not result in the loss of netball facilities and would improve the existing facility enabling additional courts and the quality of the use would be improved. It is considered that the development would not be contrary to the NPPF.

The Council's Planning Policy team have been consulted on the application and do not wish to raise an objection to the planning application as it is in accordance with Council Policy.

### **Ecology**

Hertfordshire Ecology have been consulted in relation to the application and have not raised an objection to the proposal. However concerns have been made regarding the details particularly surrounding the lighting. They have noted that the application needs to take glare and the local ecology into account by reducing light spill and not directing light at the adjacent habitats.

The 10m high columns are acceptable in this respect. Baffled light units should be directed downwards to minimise light spill, in particular directing lighting away from the nearby hedgerows, to ensure dark corridors remain for use by wildlife as well as directing lighting away from potential roost/nesting sites. LED bulbs are favoured as is restricted floodlight operating hours at the school to 21:00hours Monday to Friday and 18:00 Saturday and Sunday. These should be controlled by time switch. It is considered reasonable in this instance to impose a condition regarding the operation times of the lights. The school have a preference to 22:00 hours, however it has been confirmed that 21:30 would be acceptable.

In this instance the issue relating to operating hours has been addressed and a condition would be imposed.

#### Trees

The Council's Landscape department were consulted on the application and do not wish to raise an objection although a condition has been suggested which would require a tree protection plan to be submitted and an arboricultural method statement should be submitted to demonstrate that the nearby trees located on the boundary with Stanborough Park and the boundary with Stanborough Road will be protected for the duration of the development. It is considered reasonable to impose such a condition.

#### **Conclusion**

The proposed development is considered to be acceptable and would accord with Policy OS1 of the District Plan and above mentioned sections of the NPPF. The proposed development would enhance the current facilities on the site and is not expected to detrimentally impact on the general amenity of neighbouring occupants. As such it is recommended that permission be granted.

#### **Conditions:**

1. The development/works shall not be started and completed other than in accordance with the approved plans and details:

Site Location Plan 050 & 100 & T107RLH & base hinged columns report received and dated 8th January 2016 & 200 C received and dated 2nd March 2016

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and details.

2. Construction of the development hereby approved shall not commence until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority in consultation with the highway authority. Thereafter the construction of the development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan. The Construction Traffic Management Plan shall include details of:

- a) Construction vehicle numbers, type, routing;
- b) Traffic management requirements;
- c) Construction and storage compounds (including areas designated for car

- parking);
- d) Siting and details of wheel washing facilities;
- f) Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway;
- g) Timing of construction activities to avoid school pick up/drop off times;
- h) Provision of sufficient on site parking prior to commencement of construction activities;
- i. Post construction restoration/reinstatement of the working areas and temporary access to the public highway.

REASON: In order to protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway and rights of way.

3. No development shall take place until full details on a suitably scaled plan of both hard and soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details.

The landscaping details to be submitted shall include:

- (a) original levels and proposed finished levels [earthworks to be carried out]
- (b) hard surfacing, other hard landscape features and materials
- (c) existing trees, hedges or other soft features to be retained and an arboricultural impact assessment/method statement showing tree protection measures to be implemented for the duration of the construction

REASON: The landscaping of this site is required in order to protect and enhance the existing visual character of the area and to reduce the visual and environmental impacts of the development hereby permitted in accordance with Policies D2 and D8 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

4. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted full lighting details shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and shall include vertical lux diagrams to show the positions of lighting fixtures in relation to nearby residential properties (existing and proposed). The development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

#### POST DEVELOPMENT COMMENCING

5. The floodlights hereby permitted shall not be switched on outside of the hours of 8:30 - 21:30 Monday to Sunday.

REASON: In order to protect residential amenity.

1. REASON FOR APPROVAL

The decision has been made taking into account, where practicable and appropriate the requirements of paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework and material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the

development plan (see Officer's report which can be viewed on the Councils website or inspected at these offices).

**Informatives:**

1. The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence. Further information is available via the website <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/transtreets/highways/> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

2. It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit mud or other debris on the public highway, and section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible. Therefore, best practical means shall be taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the site during construction of the development are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Further information is available via the website <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/transtreets/highways/> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

**Approved By:**

Ms F Nwanze  
4 March 2016