

<b>Item No</b>  2	<b>Classification</b>  OPEN	<b>Decision Level</b>  PLANNING COMMITTEE	<b>Date</b>  07/06/2004
<b>From</b>  INTERIM DEVELOPMENT CONTROL MANAGER		<b>Title of Report</b>  DEVELOPMENT CONTROL	
<b>Proposal</b> (03-AP-2320 )  Construction of artificial turf pitch, immediately to east of Charter School buildings, with 2.5 to 4.5 metre high fencing, eight x 15 metre high flood lighting columns and hard surfaced links to existing footways/access road together with the construction of athletics facilities and link pathways		<b>Address</b>  James Allen's Girls School, East Dulwich Grove SE22  <b>Ward</b> South Camberwell	

## PURPOSE

- 1 To consider the above application. This application requires Planning Committee consideration due to the number of objections received and because it is for development on Metropolitan Open Land.

## RECOMMENDATION

- 2 Grant planning permission.

## BACKGROUND

- 3 The application site comprises part of the existing 4.7 hectare playing fields of the James Allen's Girls school (JAGS). The main school itself is located on East Dulwich Grove to the south east of the railway line that splits the school site. The playing fields are located to the north east of the railway line together with the school's sports hall, swimming pool and other sports facilities. Aside from the railway line to the south, the playing fields and existing sports facilities are bounded by the Charter school to the west, the residential street of Nairne Grove & the Bessemer Grange Primary School to the north and Greendale public footpath to the east (with further playing fields beyond the footpath). The principal vehicle access to the playing fields and sports facilities is from Red Post Hill where there is currently a car park providing 52 spaces and 7 bicycle spaces. It is not proposed to increase the number of car parking or bicycle spaces as part of this planning application.
- 4 The most recent history relates to:
  - construction of a swimming pool and parking area to the north east of railway line with access from Red Post Hill granted planning permission in February 2000 (LBS Reg 99-AP-0830);
  - erection of new groundsman accommodation and alterations to sports hall granted planning permission on 17/07/01 (LBS Reg 01-AP-0515); and
  - conversion of existing pool to school dining hall granted planning permission on 01/05/02 (LBS Reg 02-AP-0533).

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Planning permission is now being sought for the construction of a 101.4 metre x 63.0 metre artificial turf pitch (ATP) to be located to the north of the existing sports facilities. The ATP will have perimeter 'ball stop' weldmesh fencing between 2.5 and 4.5 metres high (the highest part of the fencing will be around the goal mouths) and eight 15 metre high lighting columns to provide illumination. The proposed ATP will enable the school to offer a better range of sports activities to its own pupils and to the wider local community through the JAGS Sports Club. Priority sports activities for the proposed ATP are hockey and tennis and, while now playing hockey to a County level, the School intends to build the new facility to full National Club standard in order to accommodate future development of the sport. Other works include the provision of a new pedestrian footpath for access and new vehicular access road for the sports pitch. The submitted drawings also show new field markings in the form of a high jump D, long/triple jump and pole vault runway/pit with linking paths.

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The proposed artificial pitch will be used primarily by pupils of the school, however, outside school hours it is intended that the facility will be available to the JAGS sports club which is open to families, friends and local residents.

## **FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **Main Issues**

7 The main issues in this case are the principle of the development on Metropolitan Open Land (MOL), the of the fencing and floodlights on the character of the MOL and on neighbouring properties.

### **Planning Policy**

8 Southwark Unitary Development Plan 1995 [UDP]:  
The site is located with Metropolitan Open Land (MOL)  
E.2.3 [Aesthetic Control] - considered to comply.  
E.3.1 [Protection of Amenity] - considered to comply.  
C.4.2 [New Leisure and Recreational Facilities] - complies.  
C.5.6 [Metropolitan Open Land] - complies.  
C.5.7 [Use of Metropolitan Open Land] - complies.

9 The Southwark Plan [Revised Deposit Unitary Development Plan] March 2004:  
The site is located with Metropolitan Open Land (MOL)  
2.2 [Provision of New Community Facilities] - partly complies, although the new facility cannot be used by all members of the community.  
3.1 [Environmental Effects] - complies, proposal will not cause material adverse effects on environment.  
3.2 [Protection of Amenity] - considered to comply.  
3.25 [Metropolitan Open Land] - complies.  
3.11 [Quality in Design] - considered to comply.

### **Consultations**

10 Site Notice: 02/02/2004

Consultees:

89-115 (odd) Sunray Avenue, SE24 9PT; 17-31 (odd) Nairne Grove, SE24 9PU & 10, 12, 14 & 16 Nairne Grove, SE24 9PU.

Head Teacher, Charter School, Red Post Hill

Head Teacher, Bessemer Grange Infants School, Dylways, SE24

**Replies from:**

- 11 A petition of 22 signatures from residents of Nairne Grove objecting on the grounds of loss of green space, intrusive nature of flood lighting columns and fencing, light pollution and glare and the area already suffers from light pollution.

17 Nairne Grove - strongly protests as area has become blighted by bright floodlights e.g. from another nearby artificial pitch, in the car park at the Charter school. This is a form of pollution that is intrusive and unwelcome. Proposed facilities are questionable regarding need - there are other pitches elsewhere. Also concerned about increased traffic and noise.

31 Nairne Grove - strongly oppose the artificial turf pitch on grounds of loss of privacy, vulnerability to excess noise & loss of security. May increase teenagers climbing over fence to access sports pitches.

12 Nairne Grove - new pitch would cause unacceptable noise and over spill of flood lighting during hours of darkness. There are no trees between the houses in Nairne Grove and the proposed pitch.

25 Nairne Grove - asks what the impact will be on parking, where the access will be from, hours of operation and whether the facilities will be open to all members of the community.

Traffic Group - no comments

## **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

### Principle of Development

- 12 The application site has a Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) designation in the adopted and emerging Plans and is currently used for recreation activities as hockey and football playing pitches, primarily for pupils at the James Allen's Girls school.
- 13 Policy C.5.7 [Use of MOL] of the adopted UDP seeks to enhance the open nature and character of MOL by increasing wherever possible its '*use for open recreational activities*'. The proposed artificial turf pitch is considered to comply with this policy as it will enable a more intensive recreational use of this part of the MOL by being available for use for a longer period. However, consideration needs to be given to the physical impact of the fencing and lighting structures on the setting and character of the MOL.
- 14 Policy C.4.2 [New Leisure and Recreation Facilities] of the adopted UDP seeks to encourage the provision of new leisure and recreation facilities, particularly in those areas of the borough where there is an under provision. In their supporting statement, the applicants have provided information which demonstrates within a 3km radius of the school there are five other artificial turf pitches. However these are of different types in terms of ownership, elements provided, operational regime, opening hours and cost of use with each seeking to reach a slightly different market. The provision of suitable and accessible outdoor sports facilities is a priority for the London Borough of Southwark,

Sport England and the Government in terms of strengthening communities and promoting healthier living. On balance it is considered that whilst the fencing and lights will have some visual impact on the open character of this part of the MOL it will largely be seen against the backdrop of buildings rather than long views across the MOL. Accordingly it is considered that the proposal should be permitted for the following reasons:

- it will not result in any loss of MOL;
- the provision of sports facilities for the school and local area will be enhanced; and
- the pitch is discreetly located close to the existing built envelope of sports facilities which will minimise the visual impact on the MOL.

- 15 Notwithstanding the above, in order to soften the impact on the open character of the MOL it is recommended that details for a long term planting scheme be submitted. This will reduce the visual impact of the fence and lights and ensure that new trees grow to replace the older specimens which exist at present.

#### Impact on Neighbours.

- 16 The floodlit pitch is bounded by school buildings immediately to the south and west and to the east by additional playing fields, the Greendale footpath and then further playing fields. The nearest residential properties are at Nairne Grove approximately 50m to the north of the pitch. A petition and letters of objection have been received by the occupants of properties on Nairne Grove on the grounds of light pollution, noise and disturbance, traffic and parking and need for the facilities.

#### *Light pollution*

- 17 It is acknowledged that the proposed floodlights will increase the amount of 'sky glow' in the immediate area. However, it is not considered that this will result in any direct harm or loss of amenity to the occupants of Nairne Grove because:

- of the distance between the nearest houses and the floodlights (50m); and
- the floodlights have been specifically designed to minimise light spillage.

- 18 In documentation provided by the applicant it demonstrates that, even in the worst case scenario when the lights are at their brightest, illuminance levels drop significantly outside the area of the artificial turf pitch. For example, the high light levels required for hockey (350 lux) will be controlled to ensure that almost no light spills out more than 10 metres from the fence-line. On many evenings, according to the applicant, the lights will be on a reduced 200 lux setting suitable for football and other activities. It is considered that the 50m distance from the pitch to nearest houses in Nairne Grove is sufficient to ensure that there will be no direct light pollution into these homes, including the occupiers of numbers 16 and 31 Nairne Grove which have blank flank walls facing onto the playing fields.

- 19 It is recognised that despite the use of ultra low glare floodlights there will be a glow from reflected light. This glow will increase general back ground lighting levels and as such it will clearly be obvious to residents when the lights are on.

Whilst this may cause annoyance to some local residents, especially as letters of representation raise the issue of sky glow from other lighting, it will not cause sufficient harm to residential amenity to justify a refusal.

#### Noise and Disturbance

20 As existing, the school playing fields are used for team sports, such as hockey and football, which do generate noise. The installation of the floodlights will extend the use of the existing playing fields by allowing games to be played when light levels are poor or at winter time during the hours of darkness. This will also extend the hours of potential noise and disturbance generated by activities on the playing fields. As the general character of the playing fields will remain the same in terms of their use by the school and local community, this extension of the playing hours has to be considered as to whether it is reasonable for team sports to continue into the evening.

21 On balance, given that the Nairne Grove properties are 50m from the pitch it is considered reasonable to allow the floodlit pitch to be used until 9pm (the time requested by the applicant). However in order to protect the residential amenity of the occupants of Nairne Grove it is recommended that a condition be attached to the decision notice requiring sports activities to cease at 9pm and the floodlights to be switched off at 9.30pm. The additional 30 minutes is at the request of the applicant to allow 30 minutes of clearing up. Given that there will be no sports activities during this additional 30 minutes seems a reasonable request.

#### Traffic and Parking

22 In considering the impact of the ATP on traffic and parking, the daytime and evening uses of the proposed facility need to be assessed separately:

##### *Daytime*

23 As most daytime use of the ATP will be by JAGs pupils, there will be very little traffic or transport impact during working hours. In fact there may well be some reduction in traffic in view of the fact that pupils will not need to travel to Beckenham to practice hockey.

##### *Evening*

24 In terms of the impact from the use of the ATP out of school hours and for special events, there may be times when the existing car parking facilities, which are accessed from Red Post Hill, will not be able to accommodate all parking. This situation may result in an increased demand for on-street parking on neighbouring roads, however, if this does happen the applicants state that the East Dulwich Grove car park can also be made available to provide additional off-street spaces. On the whole it is considered that such occurrences will be infrequent and that for typical evening uses the existing car park will be sufficient.

25 It is for these reasons that the Traffic Group have not objected to the proposed ATP. In terms of Nairne Grove, it is considered that the impact will be very limited both during the daytime and evening as there is no vehicular or pedestrian access to the playing fields from this street and, the entrance to the sports facilities is from Red Post Hill which is some distance away.

### Need for Facilities

- 26 The occupant of 17 Nairne Grove has objected on a number of grounds including need for the facilities. In this instance it is considered that, whilst there are strong planning grounds for supporting the proposal and the applicants have put forward a clear case for the proposed ATP. The existing sports pitches suffer from poor drainage which precludes their use for hockey and football during winter and periods of bad weather. The school's recent successful bid for Sportsmark Gold (a Sport England initiative to encourage higher standards of physical education and sports provision within secondary schools) will require the provision of outdoor facilities which can be used all year round. In addition, the provision of the improved facilities will mean that pupils will no longer have to travel to Beckenham to practice hockey.

### Other works proposed.

- 27 The description of development and drawings submitted also refer to the provision of other works to enhance recreational facilities. These include the provision of markings, a sand pit for long jumps together with linking paths. It is considered that these works are acceptable in principle and do not raise any planning policy issues.

## **6. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Level access will be provided to the pitch.

## **7. LOCAL AGENDA 21 [Sustainable Development] IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The proposal will increase background levels of illumination in the local area.

LEAD OFFICER	James F Sherry	Interim Development and Building Control Manager
REPORT AUTHOR	Matthew Mason	[tel. 020 7525 5470]
CASE FILE	TP/2120-C	
Papers held at:	Council Offices, Chiltern, Portland Street SE17 2ES	
	[tel. 020 7525 5402]	

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## RECOMMENDATION

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This document shows the case officer's recommended decision for the application referred to below.  
This document is not a decision notice for this application

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<b>Applicant</b>	Mr John Reid Governors of James Allen's Girls School	<b>Reg. Number</b>	03-AP-2320
<b>Application Type</b>	Full Planning Permission	<b>Case Number</b>	TP/2120-C
<b>Recommendation</b>	Grant		

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### Draft of Decision Notice

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**Planning Permission was GRANTED for the following development:**

Construction of artificial turf pitch, immediately to east of Charter School buildings, with 2.5 to 4.5 metre high fencing, 8 x 15 metre high floodlighting columns and hard surfaced links to existing footways/access road together with the construction of athletics facilities and link pathways

**At:** James Allen's Girls School, East Dulwich Grove SE22

**In accordance with application received on** 09/12/2003

**and Applicant's Drawing Nos.** 1733.01, 0733.02 & 1733.03

Details of fencing and flood lighting report (dated November 2003)

Feasibility study and sustainability assessment report (dated November 2003)

**Subject to the following conditions:**

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the end of five years from the date of this permission.  
  
Reason  
As required by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 2 The artificial turf pitch shall not be in use after 21:00 on any day of the week and the floodlights shall be switched off by 21:30.  
  
Reason  
Use of the artificial sports pitch after this time would generate noise and disturbance late at night which may result in loss of amenity to local residents contrary to policy E.3.1 [Protection of Amenity] of the adopted UDP.
- 3 Detailed drawings of a landscaping scheme (2 copies) showing the provision for the planting of suitable trees and shrubs to screen the artificial pitch hereby approved including views from Nairne Grove shall be submitted to and approved by the Council before the development hereby permitted is begun and the landscaping scheme approved shall thereafter be carried out in the first appropriate planting season following completion of the building works.  
  
Reason  
To ensure that landscaping is provided which will help screen the artificial turf pitch from local views and in particular from Nairne Grove in accordance with policy C.5.7 [Use of Metropolitan Land] of the adopted UDP.
- 4 Any tree or shrub required to be retained or to be planted as part of a landscaping scheme approved, either as part of this decision or arising from a condition imposed as part of this decision, that is found to be dead, dying, severely damaged or seriously diseased within two years of the completion of the building works OR two years of the carrying out of the landscaping scheme (whichever is later), shall be replaced by specimens of similar or appropriate size and species in the first suitable planting season.  
  
Reason  
To ensure that landscaping is provided which will help screen the artificial turf pitch from local views and in particular from Nairne Grove in accordance with policy C.5.7 [Use of Metropolitan Land] of the adopted UDP.
- 5 The halide lamp heads shown on the approved drawings and installed as part of this permission shall not be replaced, other than with other identical lamp heads, without the prior written permission of the local planning

authority.

Reason

To ensure that the type of flood lighting which has been designed to reduce light spillage is retained in the interests of protecting residential amenity in accordance with policy E.3.1 [Protection of Amenity] of the adopted UDP.

**Reasons for granting planning permission.**

This planning application was considered with regard to various policies including, but not exclusively:

- a] Policies E.2.3 Aesthetic Control; E.3.1 Protection of Amenity; C.4.2 [New Leisure and Recreational Facilities & C.5.7 Use of Metropolitan Open Land of the Southwark Unitary Development Plan 1995.
- b] Policies 2.2 Provision of New Community Facilities; 3.1 Environmental Effects,; 3.2 Protection of Amenity; 3.25 Metropolitan Open Land & 3.11 Quality in Design of the Second Draft for Deposit of the Unitary Development Plan April 2004.

Planning permission was granted as there are no, or insufficient, grounds to withhold consent on the basis of the policies considered and other material planning considerations.