

<b>Application No:</b> 2009/0362	<b>Application Type:</b> Full Application
<b>Proposal:</b> Enabling works for the proposed post 16 College consisting of: 1) Removal of existing redgra surface to all weather pitch and replacement with synthetic grass pitch with new perimeter fence and installation of new drainage system; 2) Creation of new staff car park on existing tennis courts to replace the shared 40 space car park.	<b>Location:</b> Alder Grange Community & Technology College, Calder Road, Rossendale, Lancashire, BB4 8HW.
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Business	<b>Status:</b> For Publication
<b>Report to:</b> Development Control Committee	<b>Date:</b> 9 <sup>th</sup> November 2009
<b>Applicant:</b> Mr David Hampson	<b>Determination Expiry Date:</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2009
<b>Agent:</b> Hartington, Fleming and Worsley	

REASON FOR REPORTING	Tick Box
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Outside Officer Scheme of Delegation	✓
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Member Call-In	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Name of Member:  
Reason for Call-In:

More than 3 objections received	✓
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Other (please state) .....

**HUMAN RIGHTS**

The relevant provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights have been taken into account in the preparation of this report, particularly the implications arising from the following rights:

**Article 8**

The right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence.

**Article 1 of Protocol 1**

The right of peaceful enjoyment of possessions and protection of property.

## **APPLICATION DETAILS**

### **1. SITE**

- 1.1 Alder Grange Community and Technology School occupies a terraced sloping site to the north of Rawtenstall town centre. The school is accessed from Calder Road, an access route that is shared with Constable Lee Primary School which is situated to the west of Alder Grange School. Between the two school sites is a gravelled area that is presently used as a car park for the Alder Grange School.
- 1.2 The main school building at Alder Grange is a two- to three-storey modern building with a steeply sloping pitched roof. A modern three-storey sports centre is located to the east of the main school building and beyond this, occupying an elevated position, is a redgra surface all weather pitch. Open countryside is to the north, east and south of the all weather pitch.
- 1.3 To the south east of the main school building are macadam surface tennis courts and grass playing fields. Rawtenstall Cemetery is to the south and southwest of Alder Grange School grounds. A footpath runs alongside the perimeter of the cemetery.
- 1.3 There is a band of mature trees along the northern boundary of the school site that provide a good degree of screening from residential properties on Pendleton Avenue.

### **2. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 2.1 In May 2003 Lancashire County Council approved the erection of a sports hall incorporating a single storey link corridor to an existing teaching block together with the provision of an additional eight car parking spaces (application reference 2003/015).
- 2.2 In February 2005 Lancashire County Council approved an extension to the sports hall to provide toilets special educational needs group rooms, classroom and office accommodation (application reference 2005/015).

### **3. THE PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 The application seeks permission to upgrade the existing all weather pitch and create a new staff car park on the site of the existing tennis courts. The proposal is effectively an enabling development to support an application for the construction of a new post 16 college adjacent to the Alder Grange school (2009/0384).
- 3.2 It is proposed that the existing redgra surface of the all weather pitch will be replaced with synthetic grass. The all weather pitch would remain in the same location and would be at the same dimensions as the existing facility. A new weld mesh fence would however be erected around the perimeter of the all weather pitch, which would be 3m in height on the north-east, north-west and

south east boundaries and 4.5m in height on south-west boundary. No floodlighting is proposed as part of this application.

- 3.3 The proposal also seeks permission to create a new staff car park on the site of the existing tennis courts. The existing 40 space staff car park, which is located between the two schools, will be remodelled and provide a reduced parking provision. Consequently, it is proposed that the existing macadam surface tennis courts will be made into a new staff car park simply by removing the court markings and replacing them with car spaces. Forty-six 2.4m x 4.8m bays will be provided on the new car park. The tennis courts have been used periodically for overspill parking for parents' evenings and other special events.

#### 4. POLICY CONTEXT

##### 4.1 National Planning Guidance

PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development  
PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas  
PPG13 – Transport  
PPG17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation  
PPG24 – Planning and Noise

##### 4.2 Regional Spatial Strategy Policies

DP1 – Spatial Principles  
DP2 – Promote Sustainable Communities  
DP4 – Make the Best Use of Existing Resources and Infrastructure  
DP5 – Manage Travel Demand; Reduce the Need to Travel, and Increase Accessibility  
DP7 – Promote Environmental Quality  
RDF1 – Spatial Priorities  
L1 – Health, Sport, Recreation, Cultural and Education Services Provision  
RT2 – Managing Travel Demand  
RT4 – Management of the Highway Network

##### 4.3 Saved Policies of the Rossendale District Local Plan

DS1 – Urban Boundary  
E1 – Greenlands  
DC1 – Development Criteria  
DC4 – Materials

#### 5. INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 **RBC Environmental Health** has no objections to the proposed development.
- 5.2 **RBC Drainage** has no objections to the proposed development but has recommended that a condition be attached to require the applicant to submit a scheme for the provision and implementation of a surface water regulation system.

## 6. EXTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

6.1 **LCC Highways** have stated that they have no objections to the proposed development.

## 7. REPRESENTATIONS

7.1 Two site notices were posted on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2009 as shown on the site plan. To accord with the General Development Procedure Order, nine neighbouring properties were notified by letter on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2009.

7.2 Three letters of representation have been received from the residents of nearby properties. The key issues raised are:

- The additional traffic, congestion and noise associated with relocating the car park will have a considerable impact on nearby properties;
- Any additional lighting for the all weather pitch will cause light pollution to adjoining properties;
- The all weather pitch will have a negative impact on noise levels;
- The area to the rear of the school adjacent to the tennis courts would be a better area for the all weather pitch and would have less visual impact and result in lower noise levels for adjacent residential properties;
- The proposals will lead to an increased number of parents and students parking on adjacent streets, such as Pendleton Avenue and Wiswell Close. This will result in cars being blocked-in on their driveways, have a negative impact on highway safety and restrict access for emergency services;
- There needs to be some form of management of school start and finish times to control traffic. It may also be beneficial to introduce drop-off points for pupils on Burnley Road or a roundabout at the Burnley Road/Hollins Lane junction;
- There are a number of errors in the traffic survey completed for the applications at Alder Grange school (note: this is for the application for the new college [2009/0384]);
- No provision has been made for the additional parking requirements of 17 and 18 year old pupils driving themselves to school; and
- The impact of the package of applications on traffic flows has not been adequately considered.

## 8. REPORT

8.1 The main considerations of the application are the principle of the development and its impact on visual and residential amenity and traffic and parking.

### Principle

8.2 The all weather pitch and tennis courts are on land designated on the proposals map as Greenlands. Policy E1 stipulates that the Council will seek to protect and enhance the Greenlands by only permitting development in these areas that is appropriate to the functions of the Greenlands. The policy goes on to state that a limited amount of development will be allowed where the retention of the open character of the land will still predominate and where the

development is ancillary to the use of the land: for example the extension to school buildings; the provision of new changing facilities on a sports field; and the creation of recreational routes or car parks.

- 8.3 The upgrading of the existing all weather pitch and the conversion of the tennis courts to a new staff car park is clearly ancillary to the primary use of the land as a school. It would not increase the footprint of built development. It is considered that the resurfacing of the all weather pitch would have a very limited impact on the openness of the Greenlands. Whilst the conversion of the tennis courts to a new staff car park will only involve the removal of existing court markings and replacing them with car spaces and will therefore also have a very limited impact on the openness of the Greenlands, albeit that parked cars on this area will have a marginally greater visual impact than the present tennis court.
- 8.4 The application does however also propose to erect weld mesh fencing around the perimeter of the all weather pitch. Nevertheless, due to the visually permeable nature of this fencing, it is considered that this boundary treatment would not have an unacceptable impact on the openness of the Greenlands. Furthermore, it would result in the removal of existing fencing which is in a poor condition. As a result, it is considered that the proposal is wholly consistent with the objectives of Local Plan policy E1.
- 8.5 PPG17 recognises that good quality sports and recreational facilities play a major part in improving people's sense of well being and also have a vital role to play in promoting healthy living and the social development of children of all ages through play, sporting activities and interaction with others.
- 8.6 The existing all weather pitch has a redgra stone surface which is an outdated technology with limited uses. The proposal would create a multiuse area with a synthetic grass surface and improved drainage, which would allow a much wider range of activities to be undertaken and provide a more flexible and usable space.
- 8.7 The proposal would result in the loss of the existing tennis courts. These courts are however presently in a poor state of repair and it is understood that they are no longer used for tennis. Furthermore, it is considered that the upgraded all weather pitch will more than compensate for the loss of the tennis court by providing a facility of better quality in a suitable location and for a multiplicity of uses.
- 8.8 Consequently, it is concluded that the proposed development is acceptable in principle.

#### Residential and Visual Amenity

- 8.9 Policy DC.1 states that when assessing applications for planning permission consideration will be given to the location and nature of the proposed development, including its relationship to existing and other uses. Concern has been raised from neighbouring properties that the proposal would have a negative impact on their amenity due to noise from people using the all weather pitch and light pollution from floodlights.

- 8.10 The all weather pitch is in excess of 50m from the closest residential property and is well screened by a band of mature trees along the northern boundary of the school. The proposal does not seek to increase the size of the all weather pitch and it would remain in the same location and would be at the same dimensions as the existing facility. Similarly, the only physical works involved in converting the tennis courts to a car park will be the replacement of the court markings with car spaces.
- 8.11 The proposed weld mesh fence that would be erected around the perimeter of the all weather pitch is considered to be acceptable in design terms. It would be visually permeable and would therefore not constitute a visually intrusive feature. It is however recommended that a condition be attached to ensure that the fence would be powder coated in an appropriate colour. In addition, the proposed fencing would enable the whole enclosed pitch to be visible from the outside area and, as a result, it is considered that the proposed fencing would minimise the risk of anti-social behaviour.
- 8.12 Consequently, it is considered that the proposal is unlikely to impact significantly upon visual amenity.
- 8.13 It is also considered that the distance between the all weather pitch and neighbouring properties should ensure that the use of the pitch would not have an unacceptable impact on residential amenity through noise generation and RBC Environmental Health has confirmed that they have no objections to the proposal. It must also be recognised that the lawful use of the site at present is a playing field. Furthermore, it is noted that the proposed fencing that would enclose the all weather pitch was chosen because it is less noisy when struck by balls than a timber rebound board.
- 8.14 No flood lighting is proposed for the all weather pitch as part of this application. If this is sought in the future this would be the subject of a further planning application that would be considered on its own merits.
- 8.15 Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on residential or visual amenity.

#### Traffic and Parking

- 8.16 Policy DC.1 states that all applications for planning permission will be considered against, inter alia, its relationship to the road and public transport network, traffic generation, access arrangements and car parking provision.
- 8.17 The proposal involves the creation of a new staff car park on the site of the existing tennis courts. An objection from a local resident has been raised to this part of the proposal on the grounds that it would lead to increased traffic and congestion.
- 8.18 The proposed car park would contain forty-six 2.4m x 4.8m parking bays and would replace the existing 40 space staff car park located between the two schools, which will be remodelled to provide 11 parking spaces for staff and nine spaces for visitors, including two spaces reserved for disabled motorists.

Consequently, there is a net increase of 20 spaces. Lancashire County Council has no objections to this increased level of parking and considers that this greater parking provision is unlikely to have a significant impact on traffic or congestion. It must also be recognised that the tennis courts are already used intermittently for overspill car parking. Accordingly, it is concluded that the proposal to create a new staff car park on the site of the existing tennis courts would not have an unacceptable impact on traffic generation.

- 8.19 It is also considered that the upgrading of the existing all weather pitch would have a minimal impact on traffic generation. Whilst the proposal would allow a wider range of activities to be undertaken on the all weather pitch, it essentially involves the replacement of an out-dated pitch and tennis court with a better quality facility. As a result, the proposal would provide an enhanced facility for undertaking sports that already take place at the school rather than a new facility. Consequently, there would not be a significant intensification of activity.
- 8.20 There will be some traffic associated with the works that would be carried out to implement the proposal. However, in order to minimise the impact on the local highway network, the applicant has stated that all construction traffic and deliveries will be restricted to outside the hours of 8.00am to 9.15am, 12.00 noon to 1.30pm and 2.45 and 4.00pm on weekdays during term times. It is recommended that a condition be attached to secure this.
- 8.21 Consequently, it is considered that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact on the local highway network.

#### Other Issues

- 8.22 The Council's drainage officer has no objection the proposed development but has requested that a condition be attached to any permission to require the applicant to submit a scheme for the provision and implementation of a surface water regulation system. It is recommended that such a condition be attached.
- 8.23 Objections received from local residents raised concerns over the accuracy of the traffic surveys, the lack of additional parking spaces for the 17 and 18 year old pupils of the proposed college and the potential congestion resulting from vehicles turning on to the new access road that is proposed in a separate planning application. These objectors also suggest a number of mitigation measures/alternative proposals to alleviate the impact on the local highway network. Nevertheless, it is considered that these objections relate to the other two applications for the Alder Grange site that have been submitted – namely the application to erect a new sixth form college (2009/0384) and the application to construct a new access road (2009/0363) – rather than the proposal being considered in this report.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 The proposed application consists of the resurfacing of the existing all weather pitch, the erection of weld mesh fencing around the perimeter of the pitch and the conversion of the existing tennis courts to a car park. The proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the site's designation as Greenlands and would result in an enhanced sports facility for the school by providing a

multiuse area with more flexible and usable sports pitches. It is also considered that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on residential amenity or highway safety.

## 10. RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 That the Development Control Committee approves the application subject to conditions.

## 11. REASONS FOR APPROVAL

- 11.1 The proposal is in accordance with the provision of the development plan and would result in an enhanced sports facility provision for Alder Grange Community and Technology School. There are no material considerations that would justify a refusal of permission. The proposal therefore accords with national planning policy as set out in PPS1, PPS7, PPG13, PPG17 and PPG24; RSS policies DP1, DP2, DP4, DP5, DP7, RDF1, L1, RT2 and RT4; and Local Plan policies DS1, E1, DC1 and DC4. Consequently, it is recommended that the application be approved subject to the following conditions.

## 12. CONDITIONS

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

**Reason:** *Required by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase 2004 Act.*

2. No development approved by this permission shall be commenced until a scheme for the provision and implementation of a surface water regulation system has been approved by the Local Planning Authority.

**Reason:** *To reduce the increased risk of flooding by ensuring the provision of a satisfactory means of surface water disposal and to comply with Policy DC1 Development Criteria of the Rossendale District Local Plan (Saved Policies).*

3. Prior to the commencement of development full details of the colour of the perimeter fence hereby approved shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The perimeter fence shall be powder coated in the approved colour prior to installation and shall be maintained as such thereafter.

**Reason:** *In the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Policy DC1 (I) Development Criteria of the Rossendale District Local Plan (Saved Policies).*

4. No construction traffic or deliveries should access or leave the site between 8.00am and 9.15am, 12.00 noon and 1.30pm, and 2.45pm and 4.00pm on weekdays during term time.



**Reason:** To minimise noise disturbance to neighbouring residents and to ensure that the development complies with Policy DC1 (f) Development Criteria of the Rossendale District Local Plan (Saved Policies).

5. Any construction works associated with the development hereby approved shall not take place except between the hours of 7:00 am and 7:00 pm Monday to Friday and 8:00 am and 1:00 pm on Saturdays. No construction shall take place on Sundays, Good Friday, Christmas Day or Bank Holidays.

**Reason:** To minimise noise disturbance to neighbouring residents and to ensure that the development complies with Policy DC1 (f) Development Criteria of the Rossendale District Local Plan (Saved Policies).

<b>Contact Officer</b>	
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<b>Document Details</b>	<b>Appendix Number</b>
Location Plan	Appendix A