

38/2006/200

TAUNTON SCHOOL

**CONSTRUCTION OF TWO ALL WEATHER SPORTS PITCHES WITH FENCING AND FLOODLIGHTS TOGETHER WITH SPORTS PAVILION AND ANCILLARY CAR PARK FOR TAUNTON SCHOOL AT LAND NORTH OF GREENWAY ROAD, TAUNTON**

321836/126206

FULL

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**PROPOSAL**

The proposal is for the formation of two Astroturf pitches intended for school and community use together associated fencing, a sports pavilion and parking. In addition the proposal includes the floodlighting of the sports pitches via eleven 15m high columns.

**CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS**

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY there is no objection on transport grounds subject to the details of access, visibility, parking and turning shown on the drawings accompanying the application being conditioned to be constructed prior to the development permitted coming into use.

LIGHTING CONSULTANT the all weather pitch has uneven design of lighting for one pitch that will be noticeable to both players and spectators. The floodlighting scheme will have a major impact on the night time vision of drivers using Gypsy Lane and the scheme must be approved by the relevant Highway Authority. The scheme will have a major impact on the residents at 5, 7, 9 and 10 Gypsy Lane and their views and approval should be sought. A boundary mounted light proof fence would resolve the light ingress into the kitchen and lounge of the bungalow at 10 Gypsy Lane.

LANDSCAPE OFFICER subject to detailed landscape design and measures to protect trees during construction it should be possible to integrate the proposals into the local landscape. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER external lighting shall be so located, installed and permanently maintained that inconvenience from glare, whether direct or reflected shall not be caused at any other premises. LEISURE DEVELOPMENT TEAM the pavilion seems to be of a suitable size and the pitches large enough to comply with the English Hockey standards. It is unclear from the drawings whether there is enough overrun at the ends or side of each pitch. A 5 m clear overrun should be provided at each end and 4 m to the sides. The minimum size for each pitch and overrun area is 101.44 m x 68.86 m. Pitch A appears to meet this need, the plans do not make it clear whether Pitch B does the same. It is unclear whether both pitches meet the minimum required and are suitable for hockey. The floodlighting must comply with English Hockey standards. Currently the required horizontal luminance is 300 lux at pitch level for 'low level' games and junior hockey. This is a maintained figure and initial figures should be increased by a factor of 1.25 to ensure that this level can be achieved. English Hockey specifies that

floodlight masts must be provided at each corner to provide acceptable luminance for the goalkeeper for corners and that a pole height of 15 m is only enough for non-competitive activities. The plans show this luminance figure is not achieved for pitch A while the floodlight masts on both pitches do not meet English Hockey standards. I cannot support this proposal as it stands as it fails to meet basic guidelines set out by the governing body. The chosen surface must be suitable for both football and hockey and it is unclear if this is the case. I would want to see details before deciding if the surface was suitable for community use. The use is subject to the School and Council entering a Community Use Agreement relating to the pitches. I object to the proposal as the floodlighting does not appear to meet the standards laid down by the Governing Body concerned and there are doubts about the sizes of the pitches and overruns.

9 LETTERS OF OBJECTION have been received raising the following issues:- light shining through windows and would cause problems like Taunton Vale lighting; light pollution will be worse due to proximity to resident's houses; floodlighting totally unacceptable and would increase use of pitches late into the evening; light mitigation not acceptable and property will be more than inconvenienced from glare; it will blight property and lighting is completely out of place this close to housing (3 m fencing less than 8 m from house windows and 15 m lighting towers 10 from windows); is there a need for this use?; school do not need to reorganise pitches for school use, existing all weather pitches could be resurfaced; reorganising is related to the desire to generate revenue, not to the requirement for playing pitches; all weather pitches should be placed on the Uppers; increase in traffic onto A358 Greenway Road will add to traffic congestion, will cause access problems to private property, increase in noise and air pollution, loss of parking and lay-by and buildings will affect water table; concern over lack of parking for sports facilities; detrimental impact to ambience and character of area, loss of views across site to Staplegrove Green Wedge and Quantock Hills AONB contrary to policy S1(D) and EN12; impact on Neolithic archaeology; loss of value of properties and impact on quality of life; any tree planting should be semi-mature specimens and not saplings; the small gate to Gypsy Lane should remain sealed off.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1 – General Requirements, C5 – Sports Facilities, EN34 – Control of External Lighting.

## **ASSESSMENT**

The proposal consists of a number of separate elements to provide improved sports facilities that are intended for both school and community use. The issues here are whether the proposals have an acceptable impact on the amenity of the area and residential properties in particular.

The application proposes a new pavilion on site to replace a previous structure that was burnt down to provide changing facilities, a social area, small kitchen and a maintenance store. The building would be single storey and constructed of brick and render. It would be up to 4.5 m high and sited 5 m off the southern boundary and 13

m away from the property to the west. Parking would be provided to the east of the building and would consist of 18 car spaces and 4 minibus spaces. The design and impact of the pavilion on the nearby properties is considered to be acceptable and a condition could be imposed to limit the use and amplified music.

The access to the site is off Stanway Close and this is intended to remain the same. The Highway Authority has raised no objection on highway grounds subject to conditioning of the submitted details prior to the development being brought into use. The proposed sports pitches require a certain level of security and safety fencing and this is illustrated on the submitted drawings. The closest residential property at 10 Gypsy Lane lies adjacent to the sports pitches and the closest fencing in front of the dwelling is a wire mesh fence 3 m high. A further 2 m high security fence runs at right angles to the residential boundary. This fencing will be clearly visible from the adjacent property and while this will have an impact, this is not considered so severe an impact on amenity to warrant refusal of the proposal on these grounds.

The major impact of the scheme is the amenity impact on the area from the floodlighting proposed. The lighting is intended for school use up to 5pm year round and up to 10 p.m. for community use in the winter. The use would be throughout the week other than use on a Sunday until 4 p.m. The submitted lighting proposed has been designed to limit the impact on the adjacent residential property. The scheme utilises 11 x 15 m high masts which according to the applicant meets lighting levels for all sporting activities. This view is not agreed with by the Council's Leisure Development Officer who objects to the scheme on this basis. The proposal indicates a back shield behind mast 11 to limit the amount of light overspill to the adjacent bungalow. The Council's own lighting consultant however considers the proposal will still have a major impact on the properties in Gypsy Lane, particularly No.10. While a boundary mounted light proof fence would limit light ingress to living room windows this would not be considered acceptable in terms of its amenity impact on the property. The impact of the light on the adjoining carriageway has yet to be fully assessed by the Highway Authority. However on the grounds of the impact on the amenity of adjacent residential properties alone the application is considered wholly unacceptable.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Permission be REFUSED for reason of detrimental impact and loss of amenity on the nearby residential properties contrary to Taunton Deane Local Plan Policy S1.

**In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.**

**CONTACT OFFICER: 356398 MR G CLIFFORD**

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