

Item No. 12

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/12/03455/FULL
LOCATION	Northhill Lower School, Bedford Road, Northhill, Biggleswade, SG18 9AH
PROPOSAL	Extend the perimeter fence of MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) by 1m in height
PARISH	Northhill
WARD	Northhill
WARD COUNCILLORS	Cllr Mrs Turner
CASE OFFICER	Samantha Boyd
DATE REGISTERED	27 September 2012
EXPIRY DATE	22 November 2012
APPLICANT	Northhill Lower School
AGENT	Landscape
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE	Objection from neighbour received
RECOMMENDED DECISION	Full Application - Granted

Site Location:

The application site is Northhill Lower School on Bedford Road in Northhill, opposite St Mary's Church on the north side of the road. The main school building is a single storey red brick building within the Northhill Conservation Area. There is a small car-park to the side (west) and the school play ground, Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) and playing field are to the rear (north), outside the conservation area but still within the Northhill Settlement Envelope.

The general area is residential in character. The cemetery is to the west of the school's site, to the north is open countryside and the eastern boundary of the school site is lined with residential dwellings.

The Application:

Planning permission is sought for a 1.5m extension to the height of the perimeter fence of the existing MUGA.

The existing MUGA is predominantly an all weather, fenced tennis court which can be used for a range of games including volleyball, football, basketball and tennis. It has a metal framed structure with 3metre chain link fencing enclosing it. The structure has a floor area of 665 sq. metres.

The extended part of the fence would be angled by approximately 50 degrees internally which would result in the overall height of the fencing being 4m.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Regional Spatial Strategy

East of England Plan (May 2008)

Core Strategy and Development Management Policies - North 2009

CS14, DM3 High Quality Development

CS15, DM13 Heritage

DM4 Development within and Beyond Settlement Envelopes

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Design in Central Bedfordshire 2010

Planning History

CB/11/02984/VOC	Variation of Condition: Formation of multi use games area with mesh fencing approved on planning permission MB/05/01313/FULL dated 20 October 2005. Application for removal of condition 4 for development to be used by pupils and staff of the school and variation of condition 5 for hours of use to 9am to 8.30pm Monday to Friday. The multi use games area shall only be used at weekends or public holidays following prior written agreement by the Local Planning Authority. Granted
CB/09/05330/FULL	Full: Erection of fitness trail on school playing field. Granted.
MB/08/02296/FULL	Full: Replacement of existing flat-roof bay windows with new pitched-roof bay windows. Granted.
MB/05/01313/FULL	Full: Formation of multi use games area with mesh fencing. Granted.
MB/05/00554/FULL	Full: Formation of all weather Surface multi-use games area with mesh fencing. Refused.
MB/04/01945/FULL	Full: Formation of all weather surface multi-use games area including mesh fencing and floodlighting. Refused.

Representations: (Parish & Neighbours)

Northhill Parish Council	No comments to make
Neighbours	One letter received - MUGA is unnecessary facility and

should not have been built in the first place. The MUGA is 1m from boundary and an extra 1m in height would create even more of an eyesore, inconvenience and distress caused by MUGA would be worsened by a 4m fence at the bottom of the garden visible from every room in the house.

Consultations/Publicity responses

Conservation Design	and	Being tucked away to the rear of the site, the proposed heightening of the perimeter fence to 4m has no impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area therefore no objection.
Sport England		Do not wish to comment on this particular application.
Public Protection		No comments

Determining Issues

The main considerations of the application are;

1. Background of application
2. The effect on the character and appearance of the area
3. The impact on neighbouring amenity

Considerations

1. Background of application

The application site lies within the village settlement envelope where Policy DM4 of the Core Strategy seeks to support schemes for community, education, health and sports and recreation uses or mixed community uses and advises that such development should make the best use of available land and lead to more sustainable communities.

This proposal relates to an existing MUGA which has been in use by the school for the last 6 years. Planning permission was granted in 2005 for the MUGA together with the 3m high fencing. Originally the MUGA was for use by Northill Lower School, at the Development Management Committee on 9 November 2011, Members granted planning permission to extend the use to the general public. A condition was imposed restricting the use of the MUGA to 0900 to 2030 Mondays to Saturdays and not at all on Sundays or Public holidays without prior written consent from the Local Planning Authority.

While considering the application in 2011, the Development Management Committee advised the applicant that they wished to see the fencing surrounding the MUGA increased in height in order to protect the amenities of the adjacent occupiers.

This application seeks to address the concerns raised by Members.

2. Impact on the character and appearance of the area

The MUGA structure in question has already been erected and this application relates solely to the increase in the fence height. The MUGA is to the rear of the school site and barely visible from the surrounding area. The additional fencing would not be to such a height that it would be visible above the school building and thus it is considered that the proposal would have no greater impact in terms of the character and appearance of the area, than there is at present.

3. The impact on neighbouring amenity

Whilst to the rear of the school site, the MUGA is located close to the rear boundaries of residential properties in Thorncote Road, to the east of the school.

Given the close proximity of the MUGA to the school boundary, the additional fencing is proposed to protect the amenities of the adjoining neighbours in terms of balls being thrown into the gardens causing a nuisance. However one letter has been received from an adjoining owner objecting to the increase in height of the fence. Concerns relate mainly to the visual impact of the additional height of the fence and an objection to location of the MUGA in general.

As stated earlier, this application relates solely to the increase in fence height, therefore the objection to the siting of MUGA itself cannot be considered. While it is acknowledged that the fence is visible from the garden of this property, the garden is however considerably large. There is over 30m between the rear elevation of the property and the eastern side of the MUGA fence, and mature trees and shrubs line the property boundary.

Overall it is considered that the proposed would be a benefit to all neighbouring properties that surround the MUGA site in that it is likely to result in less nuisance from the activities taking place. This is considered to outweigh the visual impact of the increased height of the fence.

The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission be granted subject to the following:

- 1 The development hereby approved shall be commenced within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which is designed to ensure that a planning permission does not continue in existence indefinitely if the development to which it relates is not carried out.

- 2 All external works hereby permitted shall be carried out in materials to match as closely as possible in colour, type and texture, those of the existing structure.

Reason: To safeguard the appearance of the completed development by ensuring that the development hereby permitted is finished externally with materials to match/complement the existing building(s) and the visual amenities of the locality.

- 3 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers CBC/001, CBC/002 .

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

Reasons for Granting

The proposed increase in fence height would not have a negative impact on the character of the conservation area or an adverse impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties therefore by reason of its size, design and location, the proposal is in conformity with Policies CS14, DM3, DM4, CS15 and DM13 of the Core Strategy and Management Policies, November 2009; and The National Planning Policy Framework, 2012.

Notes to Applicant

DECISION

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