

6c 3/12/2161/FP – Relocation of a existing all weather pitch to allow construction of a new 5 court sports facility with climbing wall, 4 changing rooms, fitness room, social space and various storage and meeting rooms at Hockerill Anglo European College, Dunmow Road, Bishop’s Stortford, CM23 5HX for Hockerill Anglo European College

Date of Receipt: 11.01.2013

Type: Full – Major

Parish: BISHOP’S STORTFORD

Ward: BISHOP’S STORTFORD – ALL SAINTS

RECOMMENDATION:

That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. Three year time limit (1T12)
2. Levels (2E05)
3. Approved Plans (2E10)
4. Samples of Materials (2E12)
5. Tree/ hedge retention and protection (4P05)
6. Landscape design proposals (4P12) (insert – a, b, e, i, j, k, l)
7. Landscape works implementation (4P13)
8. Construction hours of working – plant and machinery (6N07)
9. The floodlighting to the all weather pitch shall be installed and retained in accordance with the Lighting Impact Study dated 7th December 2012 and plan ref. D21255/NJ, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area, and in accordance with policy ENV23 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

10. Prior to the commencement of the development, details of a scheme to make the sports hall hereby approved available for public and community use, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and the facilities shall thereafter be made available in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To ensure that dual use is made of educational facilities in

3/12/2161/FP

accordance with policy LRC2 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

11. The all-weather pitch hereby permitted shall not be used after 16.00 hours on a Sunday at any time during the year.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of residents of nearby properties, and in accordance with policy ENV1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

12. The floodlights shall be switched off no later than 22.00 hours Monday to Friday; 20.00 hours on a Saturday and not be used at all on a Sunday.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of residents of nearby properties, and in accordance with policy ENV23 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

13. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, a Construction Management Plan which sets out:

- a) Details of the construction access points;
- b) Details of types of delivery vehicles that will be used to bring materials to and from the site and the types of construction plant that will need to access the site to support the construction works;
- c) Details of construction vehicle routing and proposed signing;
- d) Details of the hours of operation of the construction vehicles accessing the site i.e. proposed hours in which vehicles would arrive and depart;
- e) Details of the proposed measures to prevent mud, debris and any other material associated with the construction work from being deposited on the highway;
- f) Details of the proposals for the storage of construction plant and construction materials;
- g) Details of parking and loading areas for construction vehicles;
- h) Details of any temporary TRO's or weight restrictions required e.g. to overcome existing limits;
- i) Details of any temporary or permanent alteration to the public highway required to enable construction to take place. If this is the case then the applicant needs to enter into a Section 278 Agreement of the Highways Act 1980 and consult the Highway Authority;
- j) Details of the construction programming;
- k) Details of any hoardings;

3/12/2161/FP

- l) Details of how pedestrian and cycle routes and users safety will be maintained.

shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and thereafter the approved Plan shall be adhered to throughout the construction period.

Reason: In the interests of highway and pedestrian safety

14. Prior to the commencement of development, detailed drawings and specifications of the proposed fencing to the all weather pitch including the colour of the fencing, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and thereafter implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the development in accordance with policy ENV1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

15. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved a surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydrogeological context of the development, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding in accordance with policy ENV19 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

16. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved the specification of the surface of the all weather pitch shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and thereafter the development shall accord with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the provision of appropriate sporting facilities on the site, in accordance with policy LRC1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

17. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved details of the phasing of the construction of the all weather pitch shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and thereafter the construction shall accord with the approved phasing.

3/12/2161/FP

Reason: To ensure the provision of sporting facilities on the site during the construction period, in accordance with policy LRC1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

Directives:

1. Other legislation (01OL)
2. Public Rights of Way (18FD)
3. Unsuspected Contamination (33UC)

Summary of Reasons for Decision

East Herts Council has considered the applicant's proposal in a positive and proactive manner with regard to the policies of the Hertfordshire County Structure Plan, Minerals Local Plan, Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD 2012 and the 'saved' policies of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007 and in particular policies SD2, TR7, ENV1, ENV2, ENV11, ENV19, ENV21, ENV23, ENV24, BH1, BH6, LRC1, LRC2); the National Planning Policy Framework and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No. 2) Order 2012. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies and the pre-app advice given is that permission should be granted.

_____(216112FP.SE)

1.0 Background:

- 1.1 The site is outlined on the attached OS extract. Hockerill Anglo European College is accessed from Dunmow Road, and form an extensive site which is used for educational purposes. The majority of the buildings on the College site are located to the south of the application site, and many of these buildings are listed. The main College site is within the Bishop's Stortford Conservation Area and the boundary of the Conservation Area runs along the northern boundary of the application site.
- 1.2 The land which forms the application site is located between the main group of College buildings and the northern and eastern boundary of the site with Stortford Hall Park. A watercourse runs along this northern boundary, and the boundary is also landscaped with mature trees and bushes. Adjacent to the western boundary of the site is a public footpath and beyond are residential properties in Foxley Drive. There

3/12/2161/FP

are also a number of mature trees located along this boundary. The southern boundary of the site is more open, and those properties in Elm Grove have a view over the existing playing fields.

- 1.3 The application site is currently used as sports playing fields by the College, and the site is therefore mainly laid to grass. In the south western corner of the site is an existing all weather pitch which benefits from fencing and floodlighting. The application site is designated in the Local Plan as existing playing fields (policy LRC1).
- 1.4 The application which is the subject of this report seeks permission for the relocation of the existing all weather pitch to allow for the construction of a new sports hall/facility for Hockerill Anglo European College. The development is proposed to be sited on existing sports pitches which, as already described, are located close to the northern edge of the College site and to the south of Stortford Hall Park.
- 1.5 As a result of a survey conducted for the College it was considered that indoor sports facilities at the College are underprovided in terms of quality and quantity. The current indoor sports facility is provided by the gym, which was built in the 1960's, and is considered to be wholly inadequate for a school of this size. The College is now seeking to address this deficiency in order to provide quality sporting facilities for the students.
- 1.6 The sports hall building is proposed to be some 53 metres in length and 35.5 metres in depth. The eaves height to the northern elevation is proposed to be predominantly 6.5 metres high and 8 metres high on the southern elevation. The form of the roof is curved and would reach a maximum height of 9.4 metres, with a large dormer protrusion within the north elevation. The eastern elevation is proposed to have a single storey lean-to protrusion measuring 24 metres in width, 6.5 metres in depth, 2.8 metres in height to the eaves and a maximum height of 3.8 metres. The western elevation is shown to have an open entrance canopy.
- 1.7 Internally, the sports hall would provide accommodation on two levels, with the main hall occupying a double height space and the remaining space offering ancillary accommodation on two floors. The sports hall is shown to be able to accommodate five badminton courts or a single basketball court. Wet and dry facilities are proposed to be provided on the ground floor. On the first floor a fitness suite is proposed, together with additional classroom space, a viewing gallery, and an area for sports presentations. A climbing wall is also proposed.

3/12/2161/FP

1.8 An all-weather pitch is proposed to be located to the north of the sports hall building. There is currently an all weather pitch on the College site, however the sports hall building is proposed to be sited on the existing pitch. Therefore permission is sought to relocate the all weather pitch some 30 metres further north. The submitted plans indicate that it is proposed to remain at the same proportions as the existing pitch and would meet the Hockey Associations standards in terms of size and construction. The all-weather pitch is proposed to be enclosed by green wire mesh fencing, and eight floodlighting columns extending to fifteen metres in height are also proposed. This is the same number and height as is currently in operation around the existing pitch.

2.0 Site History:

2.1 The relevant planning history for the site is as follows:

- 3/92/0090/FP – Formation of all-weather sports pitch with ancillary floodlighting (Refused)
- 3/92/1075/FP – Formation of all-weather sports pitch with ancillary floodlighting - amendment of app ref: 3/0090-92 (Approved)
- 3/92/1142/FP – Formation of all-weather sports pitch with ancillary floodlighting - amendment of app ref: 3/0090-92FP (Refused)
- 3/94/0231/FP - Relocation of boundary fence to all-weather sports pitch (Approved)

3.0 Consultation Responses:

3.1 Sport England have made the following comments. The sports hall would address the school's existing deficiencies in terms of indoor sports facility provision. At present, the school has a dated gym built in the 1960s which is only 260 square metres in size. In both quantitative and qualitative terms, the gym is considered inadequate for meeting the current and future needs of a school of this size. Most secondary schools would be expected to have an indoor sports space of at least twice this size. The limited size of the gym restricts the range of sports that can be played, limits the capacity of the facility in terms of the number of students that it can accommodate (a whole year group are unable to use the gym at the same time) and does not allow any sport to be played to competition standards. Due to the age of the gym, it was not designed to meet modern requirements and therefore has qualitative restrictions such as the ceiling height being too low for some sports and no changing facilities available for visiting teams. The new sports hall would address all of these deficiencies.

3/12/2161/FP

- 3.2 The sports hall would improve the delivery of the college's PE curriculum and extra curricular activities. The hall would be a 5 badminton court hall in size which would be suitable for accommodating the full range of indoor sports that would be expected to be offered on a school site. The design and layout of the facility is also considered to be of a high standard. This would widen the range of sports that students could participate in and allow the sports to be played to competition standards. The facility would also provide a significant extra-curricular facility for the college's boarders as sport plays a major part of the activities offered at weekends and evenings.
- 3.3 The sports hall would include several ancillary facilities which would help meet the school's sports needs and improve the range and quality of facilities offered. The ancillary hall would provide a space suitable for activities such as dance and martial arts while the fitness suite and climbing wall would widen the range of physical activities available to students. The provision of classrooms on the first floor would allow the academic elements of delivering the PE curriculum to be delivered in close proximity to the facilities. The provision of two sets of changing rooms on the ground floor is important as this provides flexibility for the sports hall to accommodate visiting teams, increases the number of students that can use the facilities at any one time and provides additional changing facilities for serving outdoor sports.
- 3.4 While the relocated artificial grass pitch (AGP) would be a replacement facility rather than a new facility, it would be necessary to provide a new carpet for the pitch surface and consequently the surface would be superior to the one that it would replace which would be beneficial for college users and Bishops Stortford Hockey Club which uses the AGP at weekends.
- 3.5 The sports hall would be made available for a limited amount of community use during the weekday evenings. This would be for use by sports clubs on a block booking basis so there would be control over the scale and nature of the use. While more significant levels of community use would have been desirable, it is accepted that the level and type of community use has to be restricted on this site due to the college's boarders having priority of use, child safeguarding and limited car parking. The College has agreed to complete a community use agreement to formalise community use arrangements.

Impact on Playing Field

- 3.6 In relation to the impact on the playing field, the sports hall would firstly necessitate the relocation of the floodlit AGP 30 metres north of its

current position which would require the AGP to be reconstructed. The replacement AGP would be of a similar size and layout to the existing facility and it is proposed that the detailed design specification would accord with England Hockey's (the governing body for hockey) guidance which is important as hockey is the principal sport played on the AGP and the pitch is extensively used by Bishops Stortford Hockey Club for meeting its match and training requirements. It is proposed that the hours of use of the relocated all weather pitch would be the same as that permitted by the planning permissions relating to the current AGP which is essential as it is necessary for existing college and hockey club use to be maintained. In terms of phasing, it is proposed that the replacement AGP be constructed outside of the hockey season to avoid continuity of use being affected. This is acceptable in principle although details of the construction programme would be required at a later date in order to confirm this. In addition, the hockey club have been consulted with and are understood to be supportive of the proposals for the replacement AGP.

- 3.7 Secondly, the relocated AGP would encroach onto the college's natural turf playing fields to the north of the existing AGP which are currently used for training grids and athletics (jump pit and throwing circle). While the area that would be lost is not large in size, it is significant in the context of the relatively small amount of playing field space the college has for meeting all of its outdoor sports needs which is exemplified by the high density winter and summer pitch layouts which result in the entire playing field being marked out for pitches and training grids i.e. limited space for run-off areas and for pitch rotation from season to season. The development would have the affect of displacing the training grids and throwing circle and necessitating the realignment of the rugby pitch and running track.
- 3.8 However, while the impact is relatively significant, it is proposed that this be mitigated by revising all of the pitch layouts across the playing field as shown on the submitted proposed pitch layout plan. This would involve extending the training grid area to the east of the playing field, providing a 6 lane 300m running track (rather than a 4 lane 800m running track), realigning the small rugby pitch and relocating the throwing circle next to the jump pit. While the revised pitch layout would result in some of the pitches being smaller in size than at present, all of the pitches would be retained and the impact on the delivery of the school's PE curriculum would not be considered to be significant although a reduced playing field area would further limit the flexibility to accommodate a range of different types and sizes of playing pitches to meet future needs.

Conclusion

- 3.9 On the basis of the above assessment, Sport England considers that the potential sports development benefits that the proposed development would offer would outweigh the detriment caused by the impact on the playing field. They therefore consider that the proposal would meet exception E5 of their playing fields policy. This being the case, Sport England does not wish to raise an objection to this application, subject to the planning conditions being attached to the decision notice relating to: a community use agreement for the sports hall to be submitted and approved by the local planning authority (in consultation with Sport England) prior to first occupation of the development in order to ensure that community access to the sports hall is secured in practice; details of the specification of the surface of the relocated artificial grass pitch to be submitted and approved prior to commencement of the new artificial grass pitch and for the approved details to be implemented and details of the phasing of the proposed artificial grass pitch to be submitted and approved and for the approved details to be subsequently implemented.
- 3.10 The Environmental Health Officer advises that any permission which the Planning Authority may give shall include conditions on construction hours of working; lighting details; and piling works.
- 3.11 The Historic Environment Unit at HCC has commented that since ground levels will be raised to enable the construction of the relocated pitch, and no foundations will be constructed 'below the established ground level', it appears that only limited ground disturbance will take place as a result of the construction of the sports pitch. In this instance therefore it is considered that the scheme is unlikely to have an impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest and the County Archaeologist has no specific comment to make upon it.
- 3.12 The Conservation Officer has described that much of the architectural and historic character of the Conservation Area surrounding Dunmow Road includes the historic core of Hockerill School a Grade II listed Tudor gothic style building. This building includes red brick with a diaper patten and stone dressed doors and windows, and a pitched tiled roof with large brick chimneys in the Hampton Court style. It has a quadrangular plan with the main elevation to the south as an early 20th Century addition, with late 19th Century additions to the north east of the quadrangle. The setting of the building is a collection of buildings of varied quality reflecting their various architectural styles and ages, predominantly located to the east and west of the principal listed building. To the north is a recreation or sport ground which presents a

more open landscape with mature vegetation, the character of which is subject to this application. In assessing the proposal the college is provided relief from the mass and scale of the sports hall, which is located on the south boundary of the grounds addressing the north elevation of the college, through a boundary of mature trees. The design is contemporary and reflective of its use and the wider character of the setting of the school in terms of new buildings having been introduced in a style typical of their period and function. In summary, the proposed sports hall is considered to have little or no impact on the architectural and or historic character and appearance of the listed building, and the immediate and wider conservation area.

- 3.13 Thames Water has advised that with regard to sewerage infrastructure there is no objection to this proposal. With regard to surface water drainage, it is noted that it is the responsibility of the developer to make proper provision for drainage to ground, watercourses or a sewer.
- 3.14 The Spatial and Land Use Planning Minerals and Waste Team at HCC have commented that should the District Council be mindful of permitting this application, a number of detailed matters should be given careful consideration. The County Council seeks to promote the sustainable management of waste in the County and encourages Districts and Boroughs to have regard to the potential for minimising waste generated by development. This includes encouraging re-use of unavoidable waste where possible and the use of recycled materials where appropriate to the construction. In particular the District Council is referred to policies of the adopted Hertfordshire County Council; Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document 2012.
- 3.15 The Council's Engineer has offered the following comments. The Environment Agency response of 12 March 2013 contains observations and recommendations that relate to their regional perspective on the development especially as regards to the impacts that the development may make to fluvial (river) flooding risk and Surface water flooding. EHDC Engineers respond to the planning applications with more detail about the local flooding records and the potential impact of the development on pluvial (surface water) flooding with local detail on fluvial flooding situation. The Engineer has commented that the adjoining downstream residential areas have records of 9 separate flooding incidents associated with the main river water course that this development is proposing to discharge to (as detailed in the SFRA). The Engineer therefore expects that the consulting engineers will take this previous flood history into account when designing adequate SuDS for the development. The Engineer has commented that the SuDS

design for the development as contained in the February 2013 document produced by Richard Jackson Ltd would not provide a suitable level of flood risk reduction for this site. The current design is over reliant on buried/ underground systems with attenuation and storage provided by a crate system that would be expensive and difficult to maintain. It is therefore likely that the crate system and associated hydro brake would not be maintained adequately and could then fail creating a surcharge event to spill over into main river watercourse and the residential areas of Stortford Hall Park.

- 3.16 In order to improve the design (as the option of a green roof is not available for various reasons) it is recommended that the underground SuDS elements be re designed to increase the amount of green infrastructure for the development. It should be possible to incorporate a longitudinal swale which would provide water quality improvement and amenity / biodiversity requirements. Similarly if the underground crate/ tank system was replaced by a detention basin this would also provide much needed water quality and amenity / biodiversity enhancements as well as being easier and cheaper to maintain.
- 3.17 Ideally, the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) should be resubmitted after detailed soil surveys are completed at the site and reference to the results of the soil survey should enable Richard Jackson Ltd to refine their FRA. If, as is recommended the design is altered to incorporate additional green infrastructure it is likely that the EA will need to approve the new design. No detailed site investigations appear to have been arranged prior to the FRA being produced. The FRA should contain details of soil surveys etc that have been arranged at the site (not in nearby areas) in order to inform the FRA and subsequent drainage design. The FRA in section 4.4 Surface Water Flooding states that “surface deposits are known to have a high clay content” but as detailed in 2.6 “past site investigations carried out close to the site “ seems to show that no such site specific information is available to make this conclusion. The FRA states in section 3.5 “The topographical survey indicates that there are surface water manholes on the site, indicating that there are existing soakaways on the site, although the specifications of these are not known.
- 3.18 Until the detail of the extent, condition and effectiveness of the existing drains are known, the FRA should not attempt to make final conclusions about which sorts of drainage systems would be suitable for the site. As the FRA does not appear to have been based on recent soil survey information they would suggest that before the condition can be discharged, a thorough soil survey will need to be completed.

3/12/2161/FP

- 3.19 In order to consider the scheme as sustainable construction as defined in the NPPF, the SuDS design should contain components that improve water quality, quantity and amenity/ biodiversity. Currently the design only has elements that address the water quantity aspect and no amenity biodiversity benefits are identified. Furthermore very little quality treatment is being offered. Additionally as identified above, the over reliance on underground systems will in their opinion ultimately result in increasing flood risk to the highway and properties in Stortford Hall Park.
- 3.20 The Environment Agency initially objected to this application due to the absence of a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). Following the submission of a FRA, the Environment Agency recommended approval subject to a condition requiring details of the surface water drainage system described in the FRA being approved in writing by the LPA. Following a discussion with the Council's Engineer, the Environment Agency withdrew these previous comments and stated that the condition that they previously proposed appeared to accept the principle to the tank system, which was not their intention. The Environment Agency are pleased that the applicant has committed to achieving a green field run off rate which will provide a local betterment in surface water management, but it is expected that this is achieved by the most sustainable drainage options possible. This could include the use of a green roof, which is possible on sloped and curved roofs as long as they are not too steep, and above ground water storage such as ponds and swales. Even small areas of these features will be beneficial for biodiversity and reduce the need for below ground storage which is not a sustainable option. The Environment Agency therefore recommend that permission is granted subject to a condition stating that development shall not begin until a surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and the hydrogeological context of the development, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- 3.21 County Highways does not wish to restrict the grant of permission subject to a condition requesting the submission of a Construction Management Plan. County Highways have also commented that the proposed development will not result in significant detrimental impacts on the local highway network. No changes are proposed to the existing access arrangements. No increase in parking demand will occur as a result of the proposals. A slight increase in visits from other schools is envisaged however these will mostly take place outside of the peak hours on the road network. The most significant impacts of the development on the highway network are associated with the

construction process itself, hence the recommendation that consent is granted subject to the recommended condition.

4.0 Town Council Representations:

4.1 Bishop's Stortford Town Council has raised no objections to this proposal.

5.0 Other Representations:

5.1 The application has been advertised by way of press notice, site notice and neighbour notification.

5.2 Four letters of representation have been received which can be summarised as follows:

- Concern with regard to noise and light pollution;
- Concern with regard to the hours of use of the facilities (evening use);
- Highway safety due to increase of traffic;
- Support the proposals;
- Consideration should be given to community use of the facilities.

6.0 Policy:

6.1 The relevant 'saved' Local Plan policies in this application include the following:

SD2	Settlement Hierarchy
TR7	Car Parking Standards
ENV1	Design and Environmental Quality
ENV2	Landscaping
ENV11	Protection of Existing Hedgerows and Trees
ENV19	Development in Areas Liable to Flood
ENV21	Surface Water Drainage
ENV23	Light Pollution and Floodlighting
ENV24	Noise Generating Development
BH1	Archaeology and New Development
BH6	New Developments in Conservation Areas
LRC1	Sport and Recreation Facilities
LRC2	Joint Provision and Dual Use

6.2 The National Planning Policy Framework is also of relevance to the consideration of the application.

7.0 Considerations:

7.1 The application site lies within the built-up area of Bishop's Stortford wherein in accordance with policy SD2 of the Local Plan there is no objection in principle to the proposed development. The determining issues in relation to the consideration of this application are:

- The impact on existing school playing pitches;
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area and heritage assets;
- Impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties;
- Impact on risk of flooding and surface water drainage;
- Parking and access.

The impact on existing school playing pitches

7.2 Policy LRC1 of the Local Plan states that proposals which will result in the loss of public or private, indoor or outdoor, sports, recreation and open space facilities, or sports playing fields, will be refused unless:

- (a) Suitable alternative facilities are provided on site or in the locality, which are at least equivalent in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility to the ones that would be lost: or
- (b) It can be demonstrated that the facility is no longer needed and that there is no demand for an alternative facility.

7.3 By reason of the proposed siting of the relocated all weather pitch, the proposed development will impact on the provision of existing outdoor sports facilities at the College, in particular the layout of the pitches on the existing sports fields. The application proposes however to amend the pitch layouts across the playing fields so that the necessary pitches and training areas can all be provided on the site.

7.4 In commenting on the application, Sport England have stated that the potential sports development benefits that the proposed development would offer outweighs the detriment caused by the impact on the playing field, and they go on to state that whilst the revised pitch layout would result in some of the pitches being smaller in size than at present, the impact on the delivery of the school's PE curriculum would not be considered to be significant.

7.5 The submitted Design and Access Statement (DAS) states that there are significant benefits of the proposed sports hall, meeting a specific long-term deficiency in the College's provision for its students. The

statement continues by stating that the new sports hall will provide an exceptional facility for indoor sport, enabling the College to fully meet the curriculum requirements, and provide its students with all year round sports facilities. Secondly, the area of playing pitch which will be lost as a result of the encroachment of the all-weather pitch further north, is a practice area which does not form part of the pitch layout of run-off area. The DAS considers that these changes will enable the college to continue to provide a full range of outdoor sporting activities, which are benefits that outweighs the loss of a small part of the playing fields.

- 7.6 Officers concur with the view that there is a need for the improvement of indoor sport facilities within the College. The current gym is dated and does not meet the standards required for a school of this size. Whilst the siting of the proposed sports hall building and the all weather pitch will impact upon the layout of the existing outdoor pitches and training areas, the resultant facility would be an improvement in terms of the amount and quality of usable indoor sports space and its siting would not have a harmful impact on the provision of outdoor pitches. For these reasons, and having regard to the comments from Sport England, Officers consider that this proposal accords with policy LRC1 of the Local Plan.

Impact on the character and appearance of the area and heritage assets

- 7.7 It is acknowledged that the proposed sports hall building, by its nature, is a large building. The building has to meet the requirements of the College and those of Sport England in respect of court size, including run-offs, changing facilities and provision for those with disabilities. The submitted DAS notes that the rest of the College's campus is tightly constrained and there are limited opportunities for additional built floor space within the hub of the site. The College therefore needs to maximise the potential of the sports hall building by creating a facility that will meet its current and future sporting requirements. The DAS considers that the apparent scale of the sports hall is reduced by the design approach, which is based on a varied palette of materials at lower and upper levels, together with windows of varying size and distribution, adding interest.
- 7.8 Officers concur with the comments made in the DAS that whilst this is a large building, the accommodation provided within the building would meet the needs of the College. The proposed design features, together with the curved roof profile, create a contemporary, well articulated building. The main consideration is therefore whether the size, scale,

3/12/2161/FP

siting and design of this building, combined with the movement of the all-weather pitch would have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area.

- 7.9 Whilst the sports field in which the building and pitch are to be sited is bound to the north, east and west by mature landscaping (trees and bushes), this landscaping is sparse in places and the proposed sports hall and hockey pitch will be visible from Stortford Hall Park to the north/east, Elm Grove to the south east and the public footpath and dwellings to the west. The proposed sports hall building will become the prominent built form on the site (currently views are afforded across the site to the existing College buildings). However, it is the view of Officers that the current characteristic of the locality are the historic roof form of the college buildings set behind open playing fields, and whilst the size, scale, siting and design of the sports hall building would be a departure from this, it would not be harmful to the immediate and wider character and appearance of the area.
- 7.10 With regard to the proposed re-siting of the all-weather pitch, it is noted that due to the gradient of the land, the northern end of the pitch would be raised to allow for a level pitch to be achieved. This would result in a change in appearance of the site when viewed from Stortford Hall Park, with the raised edging of the pitch being more apparent, together with the surrounding fencing and the flood lighting. It is the view of Officers that whilst this will result in a change in the appearance of this part of the grounds, it would not be out of character with the setting of a school sports field. For this reason it is recommended that this element of the proposal would not be harmful.
- 7.11 The Conservation Officer has raised no objections to the application. They have commented that the design of the sports hall is contemporary and reflective of its use and the wider character of the setting of the school in terms of new buildings having been introduced in a style typical of their period and function. Officers therefore consider that the proposed sports hall is considered to have little or no impact on the architectural and/or historic character and appearance of the listed building, or the immediate and wider Conservation Area.
- 7.12 Whilst the application site is located within an Area of Archaeological Significance, the Historic Environment Unit at HCC has raised no objections to the proposal.

Impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties

- 7.13 With regard to the development of the sports hall building, no objections

3/12/2161/FP

have been received from local residents with regard to the impact of this building on their amenity. It is the opinion of Officers that whilst the building proposed is large, it will be located a significant distance from the majority of dwellings in the area surrounding the site, and would be approximately 40 metres from the closest dwellings, Foxley Cottage in Foxley Drive and no. 47 Elm Grove. Having regard therefore to the distance that is retained to the residential properties that surround the site, it is considered that there would not be any unacceptable impact on amenities in terms of overbearing, loss of light, outlook, etc. With regard to loss of privacy issues, it is noted that the north facing elevation is proposed to have large windows that would allow for viewing of the all-weather pitch. However, having regard to the distance to nearby properties, it is considered that the degree of overlooking from these windows would not result in any significant harm to neighbour amenity.

7.14 With regard to the re-siting of the all weather pitch, concerns have been raised by some occupants of Stortford Hall Park in respect of noise and light pollution. Concern has been raised that currently there is noise disturbance from the use of the pitch, which sometimes continues until 22:00 hours. The neighbours are concerned that the movement of the pitch 30 metres closer to these properties would result in an exacerbation of this noise issue, which would be to the detriment of the enjoyment of these properties. The occupants of these dwellings are also concerned that the movement of the flood lighting will increase the light pollution already experienced.

7.15 Officers agree that the movement of the pitch closer to properties in Stortford Hall Park will have some impact on the level of noise currently experienced by the occupants of these neighbouring properties. It is noted however that the hours of use of the existing pitch is not restricted by condition apart from on Sundays when its use must cease by 16.00. The use of the floodlights surrounding the existing pitch is restricted by condition to no later than 22.00 hours Monday to Friday; 20.00 hours on Saturday and not to be used at all on Sunday. It must therefore be considered whether the movement of the pitch some 30 metres to the north will result in any significant change to the impact that the existing all weather pitch currently has.

7.16 The Council's Environmental Health Officer (EHO) has not raised any objection to the proposal. Whilst the Officer raised no comments with regard to noise nuisance caused by the resultant re-siting of the all-weather pitch, a condition with regard to the external lighting has been recommended stating that this should accord with the recommendations submitted from Kingfisher Exterior Lighting. It should

3/12/2161/FP

be noted that the light spillage plan submitted as part of the Lighting Assessment indicates that the light spillage from the floodlighting will be predominantly contained within the site, and only a very limited and low level of light will spill onto the garden areas of the properties in Foxley Drive.

- 7.17 In considering the comments made by the EHO, it would be reasonable to include the same restrictive conditions to those placed on the previous approval for the all-weather pitch (app ref: 3/94/0231/FP), together with the condition as requested by the EHO. Whilst the pitch will be relocated 30 metres to the north and therefore closer to the residents of Stortford Hall Park, it will still be sited some 45 metres from these residential properties. The application site is separated from these properties by an area of soft landscaping, which would provide a partial barrier to both noise and light pollution at certain times during the year.
- 7.18 In considering the above, Officers recommend that that the degree of harm caused to the occupants of the neighbouring dwellings in Stortford Hall Park beyond that currently experienced would not be to such a degree that would warrant refusal of planning permission.
- 7.19 It is also noted that the proposed all weather pitch would be closer to properties in Foxley Drive than the current pitch. As with the considerations above in relation to the impact of the pitch on properties in Stortford Hall Park, it is considered that whilst the pitch would be closer to the properties in Foxley Drive than those in Stortford Hall Park, the noise associated with the use of the pitch and light spillage from the floodlights would not result in significant harm to the amenities of the occupiers of these properties.

Impact on risk of flooding and surface water drainage

- 7.20 The Foul and Surface Water Drainage Assessment submitted in the DAS, which was replicated as a Flood Risk Assessment concludes that due to the topography of the land and the clay soil all surface water ultimately drains into the Stortford Hall Park watercourse. This watercourse is a designated main river, and as such is managed by the Environment Agency. The Assessment as submitted refers to pre application consultation with the Environment Agency, resulting in the advice that SuDS systems should be used, and that the applicant should consider using ditches or cascading swales to transport the run off, which are cheaper and easier to maintain than traditional piped systems with a restricted discharge rate. However notwithstanding the early advice of the Environment Agency, the proposed system is the

construction of a crate storage area under the impermeable surface of the all weather pitch, controlled by a hydro brake system.

- 7.21 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that development should give “priority to the use of sustainable drainage systems” (Paragraph 103); and that “Developers and local authorities should seek opportunities to reduce the overall level of flood risk in the area and beyond through ...the appropriate application of sustainable drainage systems” (Table 1, Technical Guidance). It is also noted that the NPPF considers that net gains in biodiversity should be sought where possible (Paragraph 109), and opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged (Paragraph 118). Coinciding with the National Framework, local policy guidance in the Local Plan ensures that development proposals protect and enhance the natural and built environment (policy ENV1) whilst considering the advice for surface water drainage as advocated by the Environment Agency (policy ENV21) and promote habitat creation (policy ENV1).
- 7.22 With this in mind, Officers concur with the Environment Agency that permission should be granted subject to a condition stating that development shall not begin until a surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydrogeological context of the development, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed. The reason for this condition is to prevent the increased risk of flooding, to improve and protect water quality and to improve habitat on site. Officers agree that due to the constraints of the size of the site and the demands of Sport England to provide both outdoor and indoor sport facilities, it is likely that a hybrid of the proposed tank system and a SuDS system, as suggested by the Environment Agency, could be achieved to meet the requirements of both national and local policy.
- 7.23 Subject to the approval of a SuDS system, as requested by condition, Officers recommend that this proposal accords with policies ENV1 and ENV21 of the Local Plan.

Parking and access

- 7.24 It is noted that no additional parking has been proposed for this development. The Transport Assessment submitted with the application states that there are currently approximately 95 off-road

spaces available at the college. It is the opinion of Officers that the existing parking provision within the site would remain adequate for the use of the site as a whole, and that any dual use of the building will take place outside of normal school times when the demand for parking within the site will be reduced.

- 7.25 County Highways did not wish to restrict the grant of permission subject to a condition requesting a Construction Management Plan, since the most significant impacts of the development on the highway network are associated with the construction process itself. It is noted that no changes are proposed to the existing access arrangements and there would be a slight increase in visits from other schools however these will mostly take place outside the peak hours on the road network.
- 7.26 For the above reasons Officers recommend that this proposal accords with policy TR7 and Appendix II of the Local Plan.

Other matters

- 7.27 Policy LRC2 states that the District Council will in appropriate locations continue to promote the joint provision and dual use of educational and other leisure facilities; and encourage the use of multi-purpose buildings for leisure activities.
- 7.28 Whilst the originally submitted DAS stated that due to the operation of the College, a dual use would not be possible, following the initial consultation response from Sport England the College has decided to offer a limited degree of dual use of the facilities. The College already allows a degree of community use of its existing facilities with Bishop's Stortford Hockey Club using the all-weather pitch on Wednesday evenings, Saturdays between 10:00 and 18:30 and Sunday mornings (and sometimes afternoon matches) equating to approximately 12 – 15 hours per week; and Junior Football is held in the gym on Friday evenings between 17:00 and 18:30, which is open to local children. Following the completion of the sports hall, the College considers that the following community use parameters could be considered:
- The arrangements outlined above in respect of Bishop's Stortford Hockey Club and Junior Football would continue, with the changing facilities within the sports hall being available to the Hockey Club;
 - The sports hall is to be available for community use 2 nights per week, between agreed time slots;
 - Selected clubs only. No general public use;
 - A management committee is to be formed including

representatives from the college, Sport England and the Hertfordshire Sports Partnership, to agree the terms and conditions of use by the community.

- The Terms and Conditions are to be reviewed annually;
- The college is to indicate requirements for charging in order to cover costs for maintenance and cleaning;
- The college is under no obligation to provide storage facilities for community groups.

7.29 In having regard to the proposed dual use of the facilities, Officers consider that the level of use proposed is less than the Council would normally wish to see. However, in this case the existing operational requirements of the school must be considered, such as the number of students that board and will therefore continue to use the sporting facilities outside of normal school hours. Sport England have commented that whilst more significant levels of community use would have been desirable, it is accepted that the level and type of community use has to be restricted on this site due to the College's boarders having priority of use, child safeguarding and limited car parking. Having regard to the particular circumstances in this case, Officers therefore consider that the level of dual use proposed is acceptable subject to a condition requiring a community use agreement to be submitted to formalise community use arrangements. Subject to such an agreement, this proposal would accord with policy LRC2 of the Local Plan.

8.0 Conclusion:

8.1 In accordance with policy SD2 of the Local Plan there is no objection in principle to the proposed development. It is considered that the development would not have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the area; heritage assets; the amenities of neighbouring properties or parking and highway matters. Whilst it is acknowledged that the development would lead to an increase in surface water run off, it is considered that this matter can be adequately addressed by agreeing a sustainable drainage scheme through a condition. Therefore having regard to all of the above considerations; the consultation responses received and all other representations, it is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the conditions set out at the head of this report.