

APCAR SMITH PLANNING

Chartered Town Planning Consultants

PLANNING STATEMENT

**EASTCOTE HOCKEY CLUB
KINGS COLLEGE ROAD
RUISLIP
HA4 7JZ**

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1.00 INTRODUCTION

1.01 The current application, which is for replacement luminaires on top of the existing 15m masts, was submitted to the Local Authority in November 2022. The Design and Access Statement submitted with the application specifically referred to the proposals replacing the 34 metal halide luminaires on the existing 6 masts with 24 LED luminaires, designed to produce the same 350 lux light output which would comply with the original planning conditions specified on a previous planning permission (which we comment on in Section 3). Details of the proposed luminaires were provided as was a plan showing the 2LX, 5LX, 10LX, 25LX and 50LX ISO lines.

1.02 This statement has been produced to address points raised in discussions with the planning officers and is submitted with the following additional documents produced by Midstream Lighting:

- Technical Report
- Lighting Simulation
- Plans with details of HMs Description and Isolines.

1.03 The former comments on the proposals in the context of the relevant British Standard and the relevant guidance from the Chartered Institute of British Services (CIBS) as well as relevant guidance produced by the Institute of Lighting Professionals.

1.04 The Club has been based at its current site for some 60 years with there having been floodlights around the existing artificial pitch since the 1970's. The Club is operated on a "not for profit" organisation. There is a diverse membership of local male and female players from the ages of 6 to 86 with the Club fielding seven men's and five ladies league sides, veterans' teams, a mixed team and six Colts League teams. In addition to Club members' the pitch is also used by the local community – by schools (during weekdays) and by local organisations. In addition to hockey it is used for football and other sports. It has been used by the NHS for rehabilitation classes, by the Local Authority for Borough events and for training by the Hillingdon Borough Hockey Teams prior to the Annual London Youth Games involving 40 sports all over London.

1.05 It should be noted that the proposals will not exceed lighting and light spillage levels previously permitted on the site; will not change or increase the height of the existing lighting columns; will introduce a dimming facility when the pitch is not being used for hockey matches or higher team training sessions; will result in smaller fittings to reduce visual impact during the day; and, and during

the hours when the floodlights are in use, will mean a tighter control over light spill when compared with the existing floodlights.

- 1.06 As is discussed and demonstrated in the Midstream Lighting documents the proposed replacement floodlights will have less of an impact on surrounding residents than would the replacement of the existing metal halide bulbs (which can be undertaken in perpetuity without the need for further planning permission). Likewise they will have no greater an impact on ecological interests and, at the same time, will offer considerable sustainability benefits in terms of reduced energy consumption and reduced CO₂ emissions.

2.00 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.01 The Club site forms part of the King's College playing fields. The astroturf pitch which is the subject of this current application is to the east of King's College Road, south of the River Pinn, to the north of Evelyn Avenue and west of Meadow Close. The clubhouse is situated to the north of the River Pinn adjacent to the grass pitches used by the Club. The current proposals do not relate to the grass pitches but solely to the astroturf pitch which already benefits from floodlighting and indeed has done so since the 1970's.

2.02 The pitch itself is surrounded by mesh fencing (some parts 2.5m and others 4m), primarily aimed at ensuring hockey balls remain within the confines of the pitch itself.

2.03 The pitch is set back from Kings College Road by between approximately 15m and 22m. Between the road and the northwestern corner of the pitch is a small car park accessed from King's College Road. Apart from this the astroturf pitch is surrounded by grass on all sides.

2.04 Fronting King's College Road to the south of the site is 30 Kings College Road. This is the residential property in closest proximity. The plot is some 10.5m from the south eastern corner of the pitch. The house itself is 14.9m from the pitch, separated by a single storey garage. There are no windows on the flank elevation of this property facing the pitch; windows are positioned on the front and rear elevations.

2.05 To the south are the rear gardens of houses fronting Evelyn Avenue. There is a grassed area of approximately 10.5m in depth between the edge of the pitch and the end of the Evelyn Avenue properties gardens. The gardens themselves are all in excess of 50m in length meaning that the pitch is set over 60m from the rear elevations (and windows) of the houses themselves.

2.06 To the east are the rear gardens of properties fronting Meadow Close. The pitch is approximately 50m from the rear garden boundaries of these properties and approximately 65m from the closest point of the closest house.

2.07 All surrounding roads benefit from normal street lights along their lengths.

2.08 There are a variety of trees, comprising a mix of deciduous and evergreens, around the site, within and adjacent to the boundaries with 30 King's College Road and the Evelyn Avenue properties as well as between the pitch and the rear boundaries with the Meadow Close properties. There are also a variety of

trees and shrubs along the River Pinn which runs to the north of the pitch. The distance of the river from the pitch varies from approximately 7m to some 30m.

3.00 PLANNING HISTORY

3.01 There are a variety of planning applications relating to the hockey club showing on the Council's website, these dating back to 1979. The following are relevant to the current application.

3.02 In August 1996 planning permission was granted for the replacement of the redgra sports pitch with a sand filled synthetic grass sports pitch, enclosure of the pitch with a part 2.75m/part 4m high fence, formation of footpath from and car park to the sports pitch (Ref 2314W/96/523). Relevant to the current application is Condition 5 which referred to the approved pitch being used only between the hours of 09:00 and 21:30 Mondays to Saturdays and 09:00 to 18:00 hours on Sundays.

3.03 In November 1996 planning permission was granted for the existing flood lighting. The description of development refers to "removal of existing columns and erection of 6 x 15m high columns with lighting units to give 350 Lux" (Ref 2414X/96/524). Condition 2 of the planning permission limited the use of the floodlights to the same hours as were imposed on the artificial pitch permission. Also of relevance to the current proposals are the following conditions:

3 - The maximum maintained lighting level should not exceed 350 Lux average when the lights are in use between the hours of 09:00 – 20:00 hours Mondays to Saturdays and 09:00 – 18:00 hours on Sundays and the maximum maintained lighting level shall not exceed 175 Lux average when the lights are in use between the hours of 20:00 – 21:30 hours Mondays to Saturdays

5 - The intensity of light spillage from the proposed floodlights into any windows of No 30 King's College Road should not exceed 6.5 Lux at any time.

6 - The intensity of light spillage from the proposed floodlights measured at a distance of 50m from the pitch in any direction shall not exceed 5 lux at any time.

3.04 The reason for Condition 3 referred to protecting residential amenity of adjoining houses and also to avoid disturbance to the surrounding area and avoid negative ecological effects upon the River Pinn. The reason for the imposition of Condition 5 referred to protecting the residential amenity of 30 Kings College Road with the reason for Conditions 6 referring to protecting residential amenity of neighbouring houses generally.

4.00 PLANNING APPRAISAL

4.01 Within this Section of the Statement we consider the current proposals in the context of the following issues and comment on these matters in the context of relevant planning policies (as contained in the National Planning Policy Framework 2023, the London Plan 2021 and the London Borough of Hillingdon's Local Plan Strategic Policies 2012 and Development Management Policies 2020):

- Impact on residential amenities.
- Impact on ecological interests.
- Sustainability issues.
- Material fall-back position.

Impact on Residential Amenities

4.02 The additional documentation prepared by Midstream Lighting demonstrates conclusively that all the conditions in respect of lighting levels and light spillage on the 1996 planning permission will continue to be complied with it being anticipated that these same conditions would also be applied to the current proposals on the grant of planning permission. There is no reason why "tighter" conditions would be necessary with the replacement luminaires. This has been agreed in discussion with planning officers. We were therefore asked to demonstrate that there would be no increased impact.

4.03 The isolines have been prepared on the basis of there being no trees or shrubs separating the pitch and the floodlight columns from the surrounding residential properties. In reality there are many trees and shrubs, including evergreen trees, which will limit light spillage. These submitted isolines, showing the extent of horizontal spill, are therefore very much a worst case scenario and assume all trees and other planting does not exist. In reality the light spill will be significantly less to both 30 Kings College Road and the Evelyn Avenue houses as a result of these trees

4.04 With all lights in use Sheet 2/4 shows that the 5 lux line does not exceed a distance of 50m from the pitch in any direction, so complying with Condition 6 of the 1996 placement light permission. It also shows that the 6.5 lux line is, at its closest, in excess of 5m away from all habitable room windows of 30 King's College Road. This therefore demonstrates quite clearly that there will be no worsening of light spillage when compared with the light spillage that there would have been with the existing lights when first installed – and as would be the case if the existing lights were to be replaced like for like. At present with some six bulbs within the floodlights having blown and all other lights having

dimmed over time since their last installation (about six years ago) the current lighting is not to its full extent. However, as is discussed further below in connection with the material fall-back position, the existing floodlights can be replaced with the same specification floodlights as approved in 1996.

- 4.05 The current proposals also enable the pitch to only be lit half at a time when the full pitch would not be in use. The existing floodlights do not enable this.
- 4.06 It should also be borne in mind that the existing metal halide floodlights are omnidirectional, as a result of which they emit light in 360 degrees. With metal halide floodlights a large percentage of the light produced needs to be reflected and redirected back to the target area. This is much harder to control and increases the risk of light spill. However the proposed LED lights are fully directional, emitting light at just 180 degrees, which can then be further shaped and directed by shields and shutters.
- 4.07 The Midstream Technical Report explains matters in respect of Condition 3 of the 1996 permission. There is reference to the Federation of International Hockey requiring an average maintained illuminance of 350 lux; with the reference to “maintained” being explained as meaning the minimum average value required across the whole surface during its lifetime and incorporating a maintenance factor to allow for depreciation due to ageing etc. They explain that the proposals will continue to comply with the Federation's requirements and that lighting levels will not increase when compared with what was permitted in 1996.
- 4.08 The proposed lighting will also reduce waste light and skyglow.
- 4.09 It should be noted that Policy S5 of the London Plan 2021 specifically supports the provision of sports lighting within reasonable hours, where there is an identified need for sports facilities and lighting is required to increase its potential usage, unless the lighting gives rise to demonstrable harm to the local community or biodiversity. We refer to matters in respect of biodiversity in the following subsection. It is evident from the comments above in respect of residential amenity that the proposed replacement lighting will not give rise to any demonstrable harm to the local community. Indeed it will not give rise to any harm at all given the existing lights and their potential like-for-like replacement. With the popularity of the Club and the demand for use of its astroturf floodlit pitch not having diminished, there is a clear need for both the retention of the facility itself and the replacement of the lighting as it is no longer complying with the Federation of International Hockey's requirements. Furthermore the policy resists the loss of existing sports facilities. Without floodlights use of the existing sports facility would be very greatly reduced and

therefore replacement floodlighting are necessary so as to ensure that this aspect of the policy can be complied with.

Impact on Ecological Interests

- 4.10 As the documentation demonstrates that light spillage, in all directions (and therefore including in the direction of the River Pinn corridor), will be no worse than has previously been found to be acceptable by the grant of the 1996 planning permission, and indeed with the reduced skyglow as a result of the proposed lights (unlike the existing metal halide lights) being fully directional, there is no risk of increased light spillage that could affect ecological interests.
- 4.11 For these reasons the proposals comply with the relevant aspects of Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) protecting the landscape and biodiversity interests as required by Para 174(a); and conserving habitats and ecological networks in accordance with Para 179(b).
- 4.12 It is noted that the Local Plan Proposals Map identifies the application site (and the rest of the King George's Playing Fields generally), as being an area of Metropolitan Open Land and, the River Pinn itself, as being a Nature Conservation Site of Metropolitan or Borough Grade I importance.
- 4.13 London Plan Policy G1, relating to green infrastructure, is therefore of relevance. Part A of the policy requires green infrastructure to be planned, designed and managed in an integrated way to achieve multiple benefits. Policy G3 relates specifically to Metropolitan Open Land requiring that it generally be protected from inappropriate development. Part B(2) requires such areas to include open air facilities, especially for leisure, recreation and sport. The principle of the use of the site for sports purposes is therefore clearly appropriate as a matter of principle.
- 4.14 Matters in respect of biodiversity are covered by Policy G6 which is therefore relevant. This requires that Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation be protected, including reference to the protection and conservation of priority species and habitats that sit outside the SINC network. Given that the proposals will not give rise to any increase in light spillage, and in fact will reduce both light spillage and skyglow as a result of the proposed floodlights (unlike the existing metal halide lights) being directional, the proposals will not result in any harm to any priority species or habitats, or biodiversity in general.
- 4.15 For the same reasons the proposals comply with Part A of Local Plan Policy DMHB 14, not harming landscaping, trees, biodiversity or other natural features of merit.

- 4.16 Part B of policy DMEI 7 is also of relevance, this referring to applicants submitting appropriate surveys and assessments to demonstrate that a proposed development will not have unacceptable effects on biodiversity. However, as there will be no worsening of light spillage, and indeed the design of the replacement lights allows light spillage to be reduced and skyglow reduced, the proposed replacement floodlights will not have any adverse impact on any feature of ecological or biodiversity value, including protected species. Therefore, as the existing floodlights can be replaced without requiring planning permission on a like for like basis, it would be unreasonable of the Local Authority to insist on an ecological survey and assessment in this instance given that the impact of the proposed replacement lights the subject of this application will actually result in a benefit which is of ecological value.
- 4.17 Policy DMEI 8 relates specifically to waterside development. Relevant to Part A(ii) is the fact that the application site is not within 5m of any part of the River Pinn. Indeed, even if it were, given the existing lawful floodlights, the replacement with less intrusive floodlights should not be unacceptable.

Sustainability Issues

- 4.18 LED floodlights, as proposed, are significantly more energy efficient when compared with metal halide lighting (as are existing with the benefit of the 1996 planning permission and with the potential to simply replace the existing lighting on a like for like basis without needing planning permission - discussed in the following subsection).
- 4.19 This increased energy efficiency is due to the fact that LEDs produce light using diodes which require less energy than metal halide lights. In turn the reduced electricity usage decreases the carbon emissions produced by the burning of fossil fuels. Indeed as Midstream Lighting refer, the proposed LED lighting system will result in more than a 50% reduction in CO₂ emissions.
- 4.20 In addition metal halide lights utilise filaments which generate a large amount of heat wastage as a byproduct when they are producing light.
- 4.21 This reduction in pollution levels and heat wastage has a long term benefit for both the environment and human health.
- 4.22 Another environmental consequence of metal halide lights is that they become hazardous waste when disposed of. This is because the gases and mercury they contain need to undergo special disposal procedures to avoid environmental

contamination. This is of particular relevance given that the shelf life of the metal halide floodlights is only about six years.

- 4.23 The proposals therefore comply with the relevant aspects of Section 14 of the NPPF by helping in moving towards a low carbon future, contributing to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and supporting low carbon energy.
- 4.24 As regards the London Plan the proposals comply with Policy SI 2 in respect of minimising greenhouse gas emissions. The detailed aspects of this policy are not of relevance given that the proposals are not for a major development or residential development. However the proposals clearly comply with the general principles.
- 4.25 Turning to Local Plan policies, similarly the proposals comply with Policy DME1 2 as a result of the reduced carbon emissions.

Material Fall-back Position

- 4.26 The fact that the Applicants are entitled, in perpetuity, to replace the existing metal halide floodlights, on a like for like basis (provided that the conditions on the 1996 planning permission continue to be complied with) is an important and relevant material fall-back which the Local Authority should take into consideration in their determination of the current application.
- 4.27 The status of fall-back development as material consideration in a planning decision has been considered by the courts. The judgement in the Court of Appeal in *Mansell v Tonbridge and Malling BC* (2019) considers the need to demonstrate a “real prospect” of the fall-back being implemented. The relevant law as to the “real prospect” of a fall-back development being implemented was referred to in the case of *Samuel Smith Old Brewery*. This referred to the basic principle being that “... for a prospect to be a real prospect, it does not have to be probable or likely; a possibility will suffice”. In the case of *Eastcote Hockey Club* there is an extremely high threshold of a “real prospect” of the fall-back being carried out. It is not merely theoretical. The Club makes good use of this artificial pitch, including during the hours when the floodlights are used. They would not want to have to reduce their hours of use so as to only be able to play and train during hours of daylight. There is no reason why they should reduce those hours and indeed to do so would be a loss of a sports and community facility much appreciated by the community.
- 4.28 It has been demonstrated that the proposed floodlights have less of an impact on residential amenities, visual amenities and local ecology than the metal halide floodlights which can be replaced in perpetuity in accordance with the

1996 permission. The application to which this Statement relates provides the Council with an opportunity to grant planning permission for a development (the new LSD floodlights) that will not only be beneficial in terms of these matters but that would also be preferable in terms of sustainability.

5.00 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.01 The proposal, to replace the existing metal halide floodlights with LED floodlights, will not give rise to any intensification of the existing use of the site since the Applicant is happy to accept an hours of use condition identical to that included on the 1996 planning permission. Similarly there will be no increase in terms of numbers of persons on the site as a result of the proposed change to the floodlights. Therefore activity associated with the use of the pitch is not a consideration relevant to the determination of this application. This is particularly the case given the material fall-back position being simply the replacement of the existing metal halide floodlights, for which planning permission is not required, in perpetuity.
- 5.02 It has been demonstrated that the proposals will not give rise to any increase in light spillage. Indeed as a result of LED lights being fully directional, whereas metal halide lights are not, the proposals enable the floodlighting to be better focused on to the pitch itself, so reducing horizontal light spillage and sky glow.
- 5.03 As a result the proposed change to the floodlights will not give rise to any harm to amenities of nearby residents and indeed there should be a benefit to all. Similarly there will be no harm to any protected species or any aspect of local ecological value.
- 5.04 The number of floodlights will be reduced from 36 to 24. These will be placed on the existing columns which will stay at their existing height. Light fittings will also be smaller than those existing. Due to the reduction in number and size the visual impact during the day will be reduced.
- 5.05 The proposals also bring with them sustainability benefits as a result of reduced energy usage and reduced CO2 emissions.
- 5.06 All relevant planning policies at national, strategic and local level are complied with.