

Committee date	11 January 2022
Application reference Site address	21/01493/FUL – Cassiobury Junior School, Bellmount Wood Avenue, WD17 3PD
Proposal	Erection of new build small multi use activity area for children's well being
Applicant	Mr Keith Anderson
Agent	N/A
Type of Application	Full Planning Permission
Reason for committee Item	Number of Objections
Target decision date	14 January 2022
Statutory publicity	Neighbour letters
Case officer	Sam Oguz, sam.oguz@watford.gov.uk
Ward	Park

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 That planning permission be granted subject to conditions, as set out in section 8 of this report.

2. Site and surroundings

- 2.1 The application site comprises Cassiobury Junior School, it is approximately 1.0 hectare and located at the western part of the Park Ward. The school was built, along with most of the Cassiobury Estate, in the 1950s. It has been expanded on over recent years and contains various ancillary facilities. These include, netball courts, playgrounds and a playing field. The main entrance to the school is off Bellmount Wood Avenue, with another entrance available on Capelvere Walk. To both the south and east of the site are a number of larger detached and semi-detached properties on Bellmount Wood Avenue, Langley Way and Capelvere Walk. To the north and west are Cassiobury Infant School, Fullerians Rugby Club and Sun Postal Football Ground. These were built around the same time and have retained their respective uses. The proposal will be situated in between the existing netball court and playing field within the school site.
- 2.2 The site is not in a conservation area nor does it affect the setting of a listed building.

3. Summary of the proposal

3.1 Proposal

This proposal is for the erection of a multi-use games area (MUGA), located within the school grounds. The area will measure 37m x 18.5m and will be contained within a 3.0m high metal fence. This will be used by children attending the school and by existing clubs that are already associated with the school (Beavers, Cubs, after school clubs, etc).

3.2 Conclusion

The proposal is deemed to be an ancillary use to the existing school and would provide an enhancement of the current facilities. It is unlikely to significantly increase the noise pollution from the site as it is a significant distance from residential properties. It would not give rise to an increase of people on the site so is unlikely to be a contributor to any additional parking related issues.

4. Relevant policies

- 4.1 Members should refer to the background papers attached to the agenda. These highlight the policy framework under which this application is determined. Specific policy considerations with regard to this particular application are detailed in section 6 below.

5. Relevant site history/background information

- 5.1 The school has had various permissions over the past decades in relation to both extensions and the addition of new class rooms. The site of the proposal was previously a swimming pool (75/00140/CC), this has since been filled in and the area remains underutilised.

6. Main considerations

- 6.1 The main issues to be considered in the determination of this application are:

- (a) Principle of development
- (b) Scale, design and impact on the character and appearance of the area
- (c) Impact on neighbour amenity
- (d) Traffic, highways and parking impacts.

- 6.2 (a) Principle of the development

The current use of the site is as a school (Use Class F.1). It has always been a school and this will remain unchanged as a result of this proposal. The addition of a MUGA is an ancillary use of the school and would be an enhancement of the existing facilities. The current space is not fully utilised by the school and the addition of this facility is justified as an enhancement to the school facilities.

- 6.3 It is considered that that the principle of the proposed MUGA on a school site is acceptable.

- 6.4 (b) Scale, design and impact on the character and appearance of the area

The proposed MUGA will be 37m x 18.5m with a 3.0m tall green metal fence. The school itself is a complex of existing single storey buildings and at 3.0m high this proposal would not appear as visually intrusive. It will be set back from the highway (Bellmount Wood Avenue) by around 50m and have little impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The views of the proposal will also be restricted as there is a large hedgerow on the boundary of the school and as the school land slopes away from Bellmount Wood Avenue its height and size would further mitigate views.

- 6.5 In terms of scale, the proposal is not excessively large and is of a justifiable size for the size of the school grounds and surrounding area. It is in keeping with the type of development seen at other schools and sports facilities.

- 6.6 (c) Impact on neighbour amenity

Despite several neighbour objections against this application, the MUGA is set back far enough from the street that it would not give rise to any additional impact on neighbours. Whilst there are concerns about additional noise, there is an existing sports pitch that is in between the proposal and the nearest properties which would already produce some noise.

6.7 The MUGA will cause no loss of light and no loss of outlook to neighbouring residents given the scale of the proposal and the separation distance to boundaries. No artificial lighting is proposed limiting the likely hours of operation to daylight hours. This would also ensure no light spillage would occur.

6.8 (d) Traffic, highways and parking impacts.
The current traffic, highways and parking impacts would be unchanged. The site retains the same level of private parking and the surrounding area is not covered by a CPZ which restricts the hours of on-street parking. Despite neighbour concerns, this development is unlikely to have any impact on parking associated issues as the use of the site will be ancillary to the school and it will not result in more cars attending the site.

7. Consultation responses received

7.1 Statutory consultees and other organisations

None.

7.2 Interested parties

Letters were sent to 48 properties in the surrounding area. Individual responses have been received from 2 nearby addresses. Additionally, there has been a petition signed by 17 individuals (14 households) objecting to this application.

The main comments are summarised below, the full letters are available to view online:

Comments	Officer response
Additional parking and traffic considerations	See paragraph 6.8 of this report.
Noise pollution from the proposal	The site will already give rise to some noise due to its use as a school and the addition of this MUGA is unlikely to result in harmful noise disturbance.
Use of the site as a commercial venture for the school	The school has confirmed that the proposal would enhance existing facilities for use of the school and existing clubs and is not intended to attract additional users to the site.

8.0 Recommendation

8.1 That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

1. The development to which this permission relates shall be begun within a period of three years commencing on the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The following drawings are hereby approved:

- Drawing Number: CASSIOBURY JUNIOR SCHOOL MUGA POSTER A3
- Drawing Number: CASSIOBURY_MUGA_DWG001-ISO A1(1)
- Drawing Number: Site Location Plan
- Drawing Number: Site Plan Satellite

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and the interests of proper planning.