
Committee Date:	23/07/2015	Application Number:	2015/04086/PA
Accepted:	08/06/2015	Application Type:	Full Planning
Target Date:	03/08/2015		
Ward:	Sutton Four Oaks		

Coppice Primary School, Trinity Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham, B75 6TJ

Installation of floodlights around existing all-weather pitch.

Applicant: Coppice Primary School
Trinity Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham, B75 6TJ
Agent:

Recommendation

Approve Subject To Conditions

1. Proposal

- 1.1. Planning permission is sought for the installation of 8 x 6 metre high lighting columns with 12 LED 120W floodlights around the all-weather sports pitch at Coppice Primary School.
- 1.2. The floodlighting would be used between 4pm and 9.30pm Monday to Friday to allow local sports clubs to train and play games.
- 1.3. The applicant has provided the manufacturer's lighting documents which details the project luminaries and 3D views of the proposed floodlighting.

1.4. [Link to Documents](#)

2. Site & Surroundings

- 2.1. The application site relates to a 50 metre by 29 metres all-weather sports pitch at Coppice Primary School. The all-weather pitch is located within the southwest corner of the school site, to the rear of the main school building and is bounded to the east and south by trees that form Cooper's Coppice woodland (which is covered by a tree preservation order 117).
- 2.2. Coppice Primary School has 420 children in classes from Reception to Year 6. The school buildings were redeveloped and the all-weather sports pitch was provided in 2008 when Coppice Infant and Junior School and the Langley Special Needs School amalgamated. The school has a large car parking area with approximately 82 car parking spaces to the front of the site, accessed from Trinity Road.
- 2.3. The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character. The nearest residential properties are located approximately 19 metres to the west on Dower Road and approximately 24 metres to the south in Mountford Drive. The site has

good accessibility by regular bus services on Birmingham Road. Four Oaks railway station and the nearest bus stop are approximately 120 metres from the site.

2.4. [Site Location](#)

2.5. [Street View](#)

3. [Planning History](#)

3.1. There have been numerous planning applications for the site, with the most relevant being:

3.2. 15 December 2006 - 2006/05733/PA - Planning permission granted for demolition of school and phased development of new school buildings and associated landscape, subject to conditions.

4. [Consultation/PP Responses](#)

4.1. Ward Councillors, Residents Association and nearby occupiers were notified.

4.2. 7 letters of objection received from nearby residents on the following grounds:

- Cause light pollution.
- Impact neighbouring resident's enjoyment/hobby of astronomy.
- Noise pollution and disturbance.
- Impact on wildlife and bat colony.
- Parking and traffic problems during the evenings and weekends.
- Exhaust pollution from additional traffic.
- Late night extension of the pitch would convert the school premises into a 24/7 community leisure facility.
- Floodlit all-weather pitches should be provided by local community leisure facilities or at local designated sports clubs which are planned, developed and operated specifically for either for multi-purpose or single sports use catering for wide ranging needs across diverse ages and interests. This application would set a precedent for all schools across Birmingham.
- A floodlighting proposal was withdrawn from the previous application to redevelop the school as residents objected.
- Income generating opportunity with little regard to its neighbours and local community.

4.3. Regulatory Services - No objection, subject to the following conditions: Require either a plan showing Lux levels (which includes nearby residential properties) or for a lighting scheme to be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the first use of the floodlighting; and a condition to restrict the hours of use to between the hours of 1600 and 2130 daily.

4.4. Transportation Development - No objection.

4.5. Education - No objection.

5. [Policy Context](#)

5.1. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012, Birmingham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2005, draft Birmingham Development Plan (BDP), Use of

Floodlighting of Sports Facilities, Car Parks and Secure Areas (Light Pollution), 2001 SPG, TPO 117 and Nature Conservation Strategy for Birmingham.

6. Planning Considerations

- 6.1. The main considerations are the impact on character of the area, on the amenities of existing residents and on parking demand and traffic generation.
- 6.2. Policy Context
- 6.3. National Planning Policy Framework 2005 contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development and seeks to promote healthy communities. It advises that sport and recreation facilities can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Also, that planning decisions should help to allow existing facilities to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and retained for the benefit of the community. Within the core planning principles it states that planning should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. Paragraph 125 notes that by encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.
- 6.4. Policy 3.8 of the UDP 2005 seeks to ensure the need to protect and enhance what is good in the City's environment, and to improve what is less good. Policy 3.10 advises that proposals which would have an adverse effect on the quality of the built environment would not normally be allowed. Policy 3.60 states that the quality of sports pitches is important and that the Council would continue to encourage improvements.
- 6.5. The Use of Floodlighting of Sports Facilities, Car Parks and Secure Areas (Light Pollution) SPG advises that the height and size of floodlighting columns and equipment should be kept to the minimum needed for operational purposes.
- 6.6. Background Information
- 6.7. The applicant has provided a supporting statement which states that "Coppice Primary School has always seen itself as a hub for the local community, providing an outstanding educational environment as well as offering a space for the community to provide services. Over the past few years our all-weather pitch has proved very popular with local providers offering sports training all year round. At their request, we have been using mobile floodlights over the last 18 months so that play can continue after 1600 hours. However this is not a long term solution as we have had two of the mobile lights fall and break due to strong winds, meaning we do not think that it is viable to continue to offer our pitch after dark if we cannot install lighting. We have had numerous requests to use the pitch if we had fixed lighting".
- 6.8. The application was submitted with 5 letters of support from Mere Green Football Club, Sutton Town Juniors Football Club, Total Football Premier Coaching, Four Oaks Boys Youth Club and Four Oaks Boys under 13 Club. It was expressed by the football clubs that floodlit pitches are limited in the community and that this proposed scheme would provide junior football clubs with somewhere to train all year round.
- 6.9. I am of the opinion that the proposed scheme would bring recreational benefits as it would allow the continued use of the school's sports pitch by local sports clubs

during the evening hours in the winter months and may help to increase the use, which is supported by policies within the adopted UDP and the NPPF.

6.10. Impact on Character of the Area

6.11. The proposed floodlights would be 6 metres high and would be positioned around the existing all weather sports pitch, which is located to the rear of the main school building and is not visible from the street scene. Immediately surrounding the sports pitch is a woodland, which would provide screening of the floodlights from the view of neighbouring residential properties. I therefore do not consider that the proposed floodlighting scheme would have a detrimental impact on the character of the area.

6.12. Impact on Residential Amenity

6.13. The floodlights would be located 29 metres away from the residential properties on Dower Road to the west of the site and 37 metres from the residential properties on Mountford Drive. The separation distance between the residential properties and the proposed floodlights complies with the minimum guidelines set out in the Use of Floodlighting of Sports Facilities, Car Parks and Secure Areas SPG which requires 12.5 metres between habitable room windows and proposed floodlighting in order to secure satisfactory outlook from residential properties.

6.14. I further note that the proposed floodlights would be well screened by the woodland that extends around the perimeter of the school boundary and is covered by Tree Preservation Order 117. The trees within the woodland are mainly Oak, Ash and Elm trees and I am of the view that the density of planting would provide sufficient screening of the proposed floodlights during the winter months.

6.15. Regulatory Services raises no objection to the proposed scheme subject to conditions requiring a Lux Level diagram to demonstrate that the floodlights would not illuminate nearby houses and gardens and to secure the proposed hours of use. Given the distance from nearby residential properties, the existing tree screening and the imposition of conditions to secure details (including design, orientation and illumination levels) and hours of use, I do not consider that the proposed floodlights would have a detrimental impact on the amenities of adjoining residents in terms of light pollution.

6.16. In terms of the potential for noise and disturbance, I acknowledge that the proposed floodlights would allow extended use of the all-weather sports pitch during the early evenings in the winter months. However, with the level of distance separation from the nearest dwellings in Dower Road and Mountford Drive as referred to above and controlling conditions, including use no later than 9.30pm, I do not consider that the impact on residential amenity would be significant. I don't consider that the increased use of the existing parking areas within the school grounds during the evening is likely to have a significant increased impact on residents within the wider area. I therefore consider that any additional evening use of the sports pitch is unlikely to have a detrimental impact on the amenities of nearby residents.

6.17. Impact on Ecology

6.18. Planning Practice Guidelines advise that the positioning, duration, type of light source and level of lighting are all factors that can affect the impact of light on wildlife. It is intended to use the proposed floodlighting between October and March when the impact on nocturnal species such as bats is limited.

- 6.19. The Ecologist raises no objection and has stated that the impact of the proposed floodlighting on bats feeding and commuting in the area can be mitigated by applying the following measures: restricting the overall height of the lighting columns to 6 metres (as applied for by the applicant); the fitting of cowls to the floodlights to provide directional lighting and to ensure minimal light spillage towards the woodland canopy; and to restrict the hours of use to avoid use between 15 and 30 minutes after sunset in the summer months when bats are starting to emerge.
- 6.20. I concur that the proposed floodlights would not have a significant adverse impact on bats and I have recommended a condition to secure the design of the floodlights to ensure minimal light spillage outside of the sports pitch.
- 6.21. Impact on Highway Safety
- 6.22. Transportation Development raises no objection to the proposed scheme. I concur with this view. The school currently provides community use of the sports pitch outside of the school hours and the site can accommodate any additional parking demand. I also note that the use would support the local community where people can walk and cycle to the site. Furthermore, the site is well served by public transport services. I therefore consider that any additional evening use of the sports pitch would not have a detrimental impact on highway safety.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. I conclude that the proposed floodlighting to the existing all-weather sports pitch is acceptable and would provide a recreational benefit to the local community. Subject to safeguarding conditions, I am satisfied that the proposed floodlights would not result in a detrimental impact on the amenities of adjoining residents, ecology or upon highway safety. I therefore consider that the proposed development would comply with policies outlined in the adopted UDP 2005, Light Pollution SPG and the NPPF.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1. I therefore recommend approval subject to the following conditions:

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| 1 | Prior to the installation of the floodlighting hereby approved, details of the lighting design, illumination levels and orientation shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The floodlighting shall be installed in accordance with the approved details and maintained thereafter. |
| 2 | Restricts the hours of use of the floodlights to between 16:00 - 21:30 Monday to Friday |
| 3 | Requires the scheme to be in accordance with the listed approved plans |
| 4 | Limits the approval to 3 years (Full) |
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Case Officer: Helen Hawkes

Photo(s)

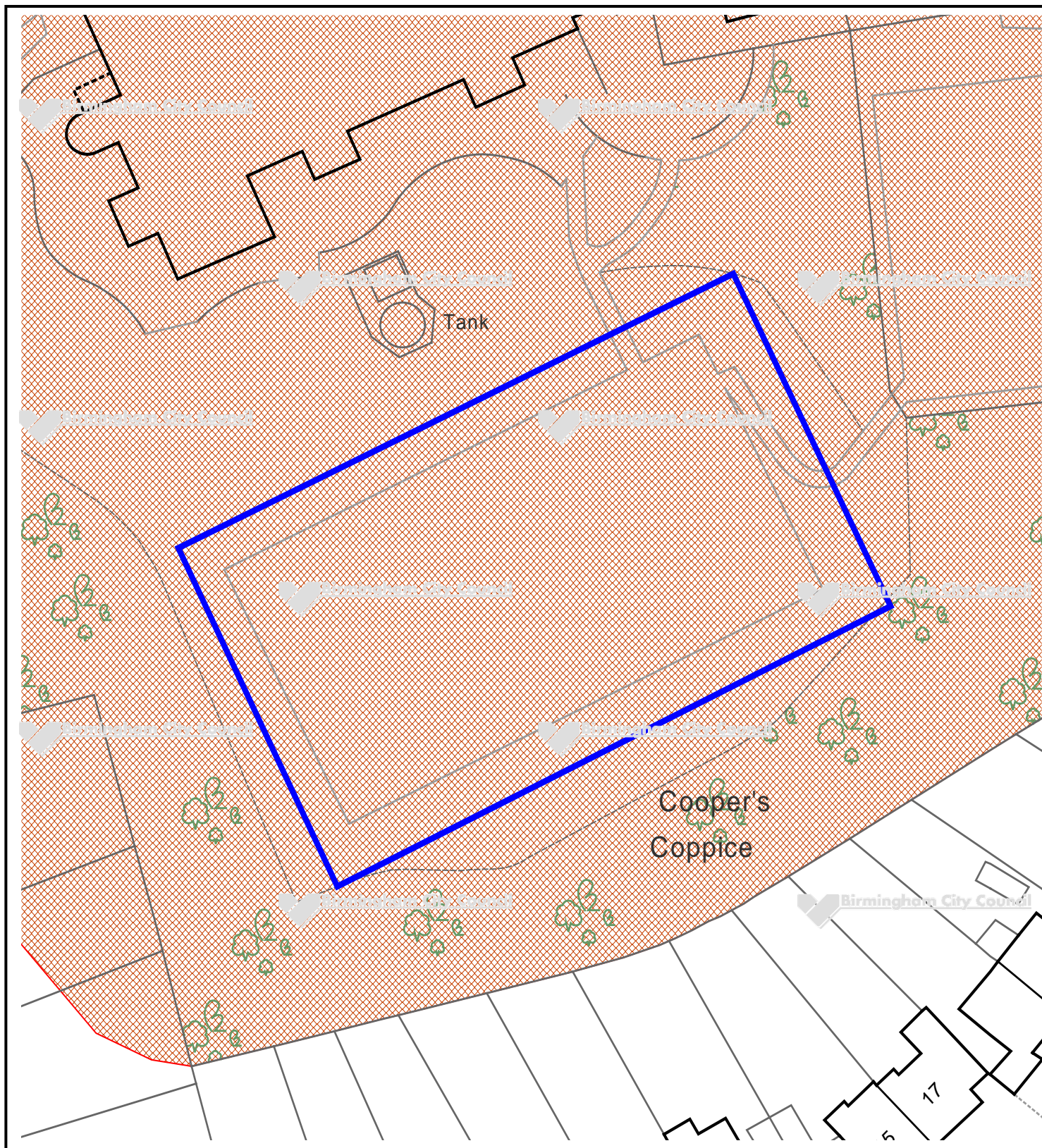


Application site



Application site

Location Plan



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