

Submitted by: Jason Williams

Dear Planning,

I am writing to formally object to planning application 261695. My objections are based on the following concerns regarding the proposed development and, in particular, the potential impact on the amenity, safety and enjoyment of neighbouring residential properties.

1. Ball trajectory, safety and proposed netting

The proposed 6.5m high netting appears to relate only to rugby use and does not appear to address the risk posed by cricket balls, which can travel on significantly higher trajectories.

How does the school propose to protect neighbouring homeowners, their properties and members of the public from high-trajectory cricket balls? The potential for property damage and personal injury is a serious concern and would directly compromise residents' quiet enjoyment and safe use of their private amenity spaces.

I also note that no specialist ball trajectory risk assessment appears to have been submitted in accordance with relevant Sport England design guidance. In the absence of such an assessment (despite Sport England consultation), there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the proposed netting is appropriately designed, positioned or of adequate height to mitigate the risks associated with the proposed sporting activities.

2. Visual impact and proximity to neighbouring properties

The proposed 3.5m acoustic fence, located approximately 6m from the residential boundary, together with 6.5m high tensile boundary netting, would result in a substantial visual intrusion for neighbouring homeowners.

The proposed planting of trees and hedgerow within the intervening space does not adequately address this concern, particularly given the height and scale of the proposed structures and the time it would take for any planting to mature.

There appears to have been insufficient consideration of alternative configurations that could minimise the impact on neighbouring properties. For example, consideration should be given to an alternative orientation involving a single rugby pitch positioned vertically, rather than the configuration currently proposed.

Irrespective of the final orientation, as a minimum measure to reduce the impact on neighbouring residents, any netting should be temporary and removed at the end of each game or session, rather than being permanently erected.

This would also help mitigate the potential risk of bird and bat entanglement. The adjacent tree line is rich in wildlife, as evidenced by the Bat Survey prepared by Arbtech Consulting Ltd in connection with planning application 190673 (MUGA). The introduction of substantial permanent netting immediately adjacent to this habitat raises legitimate ecological concerns which do not appear to have been adequately addressed in the ecological report provided. In particular, the report was written without the knowledge of the proposal for new trees and hedge row within the gap (clause 8.3.5).

3. Noise and loss of residential amenity

Cricket matches can continue for up to six hours, and the repetitive noise associated with the sport, particularly the sound of bat striking ball, will cause a significant and prolonged disturbance given the close proximity of the proposed facility to residential properties.

The resulting noise would be unreasonable, intense and potentially unpredictable, causing a significant loss of residential amenity for neighbouring residents.

A 3.5m acoustic fence is unlikely to adequately mitigate this impact, particularly given the nature, duration and frequency of the noise generated by cricket.

In light of the restrictions previously imposed in relation to the MUGA, where approval was granted on the basis that hockey would not be permitted for community use due to concerns regarding acute noise pollution, it is reasonable to require similar consideration in relation to cricket. At a minimum, cricket should be restricted to school use only and should not be permitted for community use.

Furthermore, given the proximity of the cricket field to residential properties and the duration and nature of the associated noise, any school use for cricket should be restricted to reasonable and considerate hours, with particular regard to neighbouring families and residents.

4. Liability and protection against property and personal damage

Given the acknowledged risk of sporting activity causing damage to neighbouring properties or injury to residents, it is concerning that the application does not appear to propose any form of indemnity or financial protection for neighbouring homeowners in the event that damage occurs.

This is wholly unacceptable given the proximity of the proposed facilities to residential properties.

At a minimum, an appropriate planning condition should require the school to put in place and maintain adequate insurance or other appropriate financial security to cover any damage caused by balls or other sporting activity associated with the proposed facility.

5. Restriction on the use of whistles

As was included within the planning approval restrictions imposed in relation to the MUGA, the use of whistles should also be expressly restricted as part of any permission granted for these proposed facilities.

This is a relatively straightforward measure which would help reduce unnecessary noise and disturbance to neighbouring residents.

6. Permanent access track

The application appears to indicate that there will be no change to the school's parking provision and that the proposal will not increase the capacity of the school in a manner that would generate a requirement for additional parking.

If that is the case, it is unclear why a permanent permeable access track is necessary.

The applicant should be required to clearly explain the purpose and necessity of this access track, including the frequency and nature of its proposed use and whether a less intrusive alternative could achieve the same objective.

7. Lack of evidence regarding management and supervision

The application states that the school will provide a “high degree of supervision and management that is possible on such a facility”. However, this assertion appears to be unsubstantiated, as neither detailed management responsibilities nor an appropriate noise management scheme appear to have been provided.

This is particularly concerning given the school's existing track record in relation to the management and use of the MUGA and compliance with planning conditions and management procedures.

There is substantial correspondence documenting concerns regarding the school's management of the MUGA, as well as previous formal planning enforcement requests. Most recently, written communication from the school in July 2026 confirmed that during school holiday periods there is very limited staffing on site. This appears to directly contradict the statement in the Planning & Design Statement that:

“Such use would similarly be closely regulated and managed to ensure no disturbance.”

The discrepancy between these statements raises significant concerns about whether the proposed community use could realistically be supervised and managed in the manner claimed by the applicant, and therefore on this basis it would be reckless of the planning committee to permit any community use of the proposed facilities.

8. Inaccuracies and inconsistencies within the application

There also appear to be inconsistencies within the application form which should be clarified.

Firstly, the Existing Use of the site is described as “dormant field”, while the applicant has simultaneously answered “No” to the question of whether the site is currently vacant.

If the field is genuinely dormant and not being actively used, it would appear reasonable to regard the site as vacant or unoccupied. The applicant should clarify the basis for these seemingly contradictory responses.

Secondly, Hours of Opening has been marked as “not relevant”. This does not appear to be correct given that the proposal expressly includes community use outside normal school hours.

These matters may individually appear minor, but they raise legitimate questions regarding the accuracy and completeness of the information provided within the application. The Planning Authority should therefore satisfy itself that all relevant information concerning the proposed use, management, hours of operation and existing site conditions has been accurately disclosed.