

DOLPHIN SCHOOL

DESIGN AND ACCESS / PLANNING STATEMENT

THE RETENTION OF 4NO. FLOOD LIGHT COLUMNS WITH LED LUMINAIRES, AND REPLACEMENT OF THE EXISTING FACILITY SURFACE, ASSOCIATED WITH THE EXISTING MULTI-USE GAMES AREA (RETROSPECTIVE)

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CONTENTS:

1.	INTRODUCTION.....	2
2.	SITE AND SURROUNDINGS	3
3.	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	4
4.	MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS	6
5.	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	7

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Notts Sport Ltd were appointed by Dolphin School to develop a full planning application for the retention of 4no. floodlight columns with LED luminaires, and the replacement of the existing facility surface, associated with the existing multi-use games area (MUGA) at the subject site.

1.2 Document Schedule

The following table lists all supporting documents at the time of producing this statement:

Document Type	Author	Document No	Document Title/Description
Planning Application Form	Notts Sport Ltd	-	-
Plans/Drawings	Notts Sport Ltd	NSDSL001A	Location Plan
	Notts Sport Ltd	NSDSL002A	Existing Site Plan
	Notts Sport Ltd	NSDSL003A	Proposed Site Plan
Statements and Reports	Halliday Lighting	HLS4244	Lighting Plan – vertical
	Halliday Lighting	HLS4244	Lighting Plan – horizontal
	Halliday Lighting	-	Light impact assessment
	Halliday Lighting	-	Column Detail
	Siteco	-	FL11 Data Sheet
	ILP	GN01:2020	Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light

1.3 Statement Purpose and Structure

This statement addresses design and access issues in relation to the proposals; use, amount, layout, appearance, scale, landscaping, and access. The remaining statement structure is as follows:

- **Section 2** – Describes the site, its surroundings, and any pertinent local permissions;
- **Section 3** – Details the proposed materials and associated access considerations;
- **Section 4** – Lists the material considerations based on the scale and type of development; and
- **Section 5** – Provides a statement summary and sets out the conclusions.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1 Site Description

The subject site is Dolphin School due North of Hurst, serving the educational needs of the community from the ages of 3 to 13. In addition to the educational buildings, the site boasts moderate playing fields and a multi-use games area (MUGA) with mesh fencing around its perimeter. The site itself is secured by dense vegetation and mesh fencing.

'Dolphin School was founded in 1970 by Dr Ophelia Follett, an educational visionary. The ethos was simple: Dolphin School was a place for children to be happy, independent and experience a very broad and stimulating education.'

The school began as a Montessori nursery, initially opening its doors to 25 children. The numbers attending the school gradually increased, and now several thousand children have passed through the school gates, benefiting from the unique educational experience on offer.

Today, the founding principles continue to guide and shape our work. 'Freedom to Learn' is the central tenet and Dolphin School's unique cross-curricular field trip and pioneering walking trip programmes, remain staples of an education that has been copied and widely embraced throughout England.'

Dolphin School (2025) *History of Dolphin*. Available at: <https://www.dolphinschool.com/580/history-of-dolphin> (Accessed: 19/05/25).

2.2 Planning History

Listed below are examples of applications which received planning permission at the subject site:

Reference	Decision	Development Description
241495	Permitted 23/07/2024	Full application for proposed demolition of the existing single storey classroom building
241318	Permitted 08/07/2024	Full application for the proposed erection of a single storey classroom building
210805	Permitted 10/06/2021	Full application for the proposed erection of a two storey building to create additional classrooms, toilets and library facilities, with associated roof terrace.
212191	Permitted 12/08/2021	Application for submission of details to comply with the following conditions of planning consent 210805 dated 10/06/2021. Condition 5 relates to Protection of Trees, and Condition 6 relates to Landscape and Trees Management Plan.

2.3 Similar Applications

Listed below are examples of similar applications which received planning permission in the local area:

Reference	Decision	Development Description
223372	Permitted 13/01/2023	Full application for the proposed erection of an additional tennis court with fencing, new floodlights system to block of 3 courts & rebound fences to single court and erection of bund.
130103	Permitted 31/01/2014	Proposed construction of a 3G Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP) with perimeter fencing, spectator area, macadam path, storage container and floodlights.

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Description

The development included an artificial turf surface and mid-hinged columns, for ease of maintenance, with energy efficient LED luminaires atop.

3.2 Purpose and Use

The existing sports facility (MUGA) and associated informal lighting have benefitted the pupils and local community since their installation pre-2000. In 2022, the school identified an opportunity to improve the benefits of the existing facility.

The development was designed to meet salient standards/ guidance for tennis and netball play, as well as the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) guidance for obtrusive light. Further, the porosity of the artificial turf was not deemed to compromise the attenuation potential of the existing sports facility.

The former informal lighting system and the replacement LED system have both operated between the hours of 0800-2000 on weekdays and 0900-1700 on weekends. The subject application does not seek to change these hours but rather to formalise them.

3.3 Layout



Figure 1. Google Earth image with the development outlined in red and the site owned boundary in blue

The existing MUGA and associated lights are situated central to the site. A lighting assessment, or rather a lighting plan, was undertaken to establish site constraints and to develop a robust solution accordingly. It was deemed that the LED lighting design met the environmental zone requirements without adversely impacting the site surroundings.

3.4 Amount

The development involved the installation of artificial turf over the existing hard standing surface, and four new floodlight columns with LED lights atop. The columns are considered slender in diameter, merely 0.30m in diameter at their widest point.

3.5 Scale

Artificial lighting is typically recommended on outdoor sports facilities to support safe use over evenings and winter months where daylight hours otherwise restrict use – thereby maximising the benefits to its users through increased availability. Lighting columns should also be galvanized to prevent corrosion.

The installed floodlight columns were all galvanized as standard, measuring 10m in height and with a mid-hinge feature to allow for improved maintenance.

3.6 Landscaping

Given the nature of the proposals, no landscape features or reinstatement works were necessary.

3.7 Appearance

The proposals have been designed to minimise their visual impacts when viewed from beyond the site, and to consider the existing site character. The MUGA and wider site is largely screened from onlookers due to the great trees and vegetation which surround it. The surface is green in colour to resemble natural grass, and the lights have a galvanized finish applied to provide a neutral appearance.

3.8 Pedestrian and Vehicular Access

Pedestrian and vehicular access is provided via the main site entrance off Waltham Rd/B3018.

3.9 Inclusive Access

Inclusivity was carefully considered throughout the design process and applied wherever possible. The intention was to provide a smooth transition to/from the development area, for people of all ages and abilities. It was deemed that the LED lighting system would enhance the function of the existing MUGA to benefit the pupils and the local community, without compromising any existing means of access.

4. MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Key Material Considerations

Based on a review of planning policies, relevant in the determination of the subject application, we find that the key material considerations are the principle of development, light, and heritage/character.

4.2 Principle of Development

The MUGA has long served for sports and recreational purposes, and the change in surface type is not considered to present adverse impacts. The MUGA has also benefitted from artificial lighting systems, be they formal or informal. The application recognises the existing use and seeks to enhance it with no change of use; the principle of the development is therefore appropriate.

4.3 Light

Specialist lighting engineers were consulted to design a suitable lighting solution for the proposals. The supporting lighting documents demonstrate the appropriateness of the design, which provides the recommended lighting levels as specified by the respective National Governing Bodies (NGBs), whilst avoiding any adverse impacts upon the surrounding site features.

The design complies with the Institution of Lighting Professionals 'Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light 2021' with appropriate illuminance levels, directional light, and light spill. To confirm, the luminaires are angled down towards the playing surface to minimize unwanted light spill, hence the installation of 10m high columns. Accordingly, the lighting design is considered to be appropriate.

4.4 Heritage and Character

The scale and appearance of the lighting system was designed to minimize visual impacts upon the local character and heritage assets. The lighting columns were galvanized as they are considered to provide a neutral appearance against most British landscapes. Further, the existing trees and vegetation which surround the site assist in screening the columns and artificial lighting from onlookers.

Within 100m of the development area there are Listed assets, namely Hinton House and an associated wall due Northeast. Based on the supporting lighting documents, the spill will have no material impact on the concerning assets as the illuminance levels greatly decrease beyond the MUGA footprint.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Applicant Statement

'In addition to providing students with a first-class outdoor learning environment, Dolphin School want to be at the very heart of the community with great sporting facilities that provide both students and the community with access to a wide range of activities. The retention of the artificial turf surface and the floodlight columns with LED lights is key to this aim.'

5.2 Statement Summary and Conclusions

Based on a review of relevant planning policy and the physical context of the site, it is considered that the development is appropriate for the following reasons:

- **Planning Policy** – The development accords with policies at national and local levels, supporting the enhancement of sports & recreation facilities of this kind;
- **Good Design** – The supporting documents demonstrate that the development should not adversely impact existing amenities, whilst also meeting the lighting requirements for the identified sports;
- **Sustainability** – The LED luminaires are more energy efficient than alternative technologies and the mid-hinged columns allow for routine maintenance which will maintain their efficiency.

With regards to the information contained in the supporting documents and herein, it is considered that the development is fundamentally sound in principle and representative of an appropriate and policy compliant scheme which sought to improve the sports provisions at Dolphin School.

Jason Palmer, Design and Planning Manager

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