

Our Lady's Roman Catholic High School

Blackley, Manchester

New Artificial Grass Pitch &

Natural Grass Pitch Upgrading Project

Design & Access Statement

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Ref: OLRCHS_DAS_23-7-24 REV B

INDEX

1.0 INTRODUCTION

P3

2.0 Design & Access Statement

P7

3.0 Planning Statement

P18

4.0 Drawings & Accompanying Documentation

P32

Consultants:

- ❖ Hemstock Design Ltd – Design & Planning Consultants
- ❖ Corner Water Consulting – FRA & Drainage Strategy
- ❖ Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd – Ecology & BNG
- ❖ Geoenviro – Desktop/Pt II reports
- ❖ J English Ltd - Site Engineering, Surveying

Brought forward from application planning reference: 129587/FO/2021

- ❖ WML Consulting - Geo-Environmental Investigation & Assessment (2021)

1 Introduction

1.1 Proposal Outline

1.1.1 Non-Technical Summary

1) The School Outdoor Sports Facilities

- a) The following summary is provided as an overview for this planning proposal and should not be solely referred to in isolation from the main statements in the general documentation issued.

This document should be read in conjunction with the corresponding application drawings along with additional documents, which also form part of the planning application.

- b) Our Lady's Roman Catholic High School (OLRCHS) is relatively new, built in 2009 in the grounds of the original school. The 'Higher Blackley Education Village' site now accommodates OLRCHS, North Ridge SEN Special School, Meade Hill ESBD and the Our Lady's Sports Centre.
- c) The existing outdoor facilities have been unable to fulfil curriculum requirements. The grass pitches were constructed over compacted demolition fill material without full sports field drainage. The existing 3G pitch at the sports centre has suffered from problems including neighbour disturbance from players and floodlighting proximity. Neither surface, natural or the 3G synthetic grass, has been able to provide for the full use and range of sports that the school need to provide their pupils and those from visiting from other schools and the community.
- d) OLRCHS are proposing to install a new synthetic-carpeted multi-use Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) to an area of relatively little-used grassed land to the north-west of the existing school buildings due to increased pressures on the provision of adequate all-year round outdoor activities within the school grounds.
- e) The full scope of the proposals encompass:
 - *A new 100 x 64m plus 3-metre margin synthetic carpet finished AGP with fencing, **no floodlighting**. The range of sports offered will increase due to the alternative surface, with hockey and other court games being added to the current list. The AGP is to be constructed to Sport England SAPCA standards.*

- *The existing grass pitch will be made larger after removal of the spoil mound, to 90 x 50m plus 3-metre margin, upgraded with a deeper layer of topsoil and a new sports field drainage system of pipes and sand-slits, with sports turf grass reseed.*
 - *Landscaping elements included to achieve a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain. Existing spoil mound largely removed and the area planted with hedge and trees.*
 - *Drainage attenuation in addition to the original grass pitch tank is included in the detailed design.*
 - *A new maintenance access established using the existing dropped-kerb access point off Boothroyden Road.*
- f) This proposal offers an ideal opportunity to introduce a state-of-the-art AGP for the school pupils and extend the community groups using the complex for sports. OLRCHS intend to extend the existing links to local schools & sports groups.

The sports facility design is compatible and complimentary to an educational setting whilst being sensitive to visual and residential amenity and the surrounding environment as well as protecting local biodiversity, and this proposal has been prepared to ensure there is no unacceptable level of impact or harm to neighbours and the local environment by way of noise, light, flood risk or transport issues.

- g) Residential neighbours will not be adversely affected by this proposal since it represents a simple replacement of the existing outdoor sports surface with something more reliable for winter use. No floodlighting is intended as part of this application.

OLRCHS is committed to continue to manage and maintain the sports facilities as they have done in the past and will implement a use management plan to ensure the MUGA/AGP is correctly operated to minimise potential noise impacts to all neighbours.

- h) A variety of professional studies and technical assessments have been produced to support this proposal to inform the carefully considered sports facility design:
- Hemstock Design – Professionally-qualified Agronomist and Soil & Water Engineer David Hemstock has provided an agronomic technical assessment of the playing field site, with trial pit excavation by mini-digger. The proposed site for the new AGP has been filled in the past with demolition material from the old school, it is understood.
 - Corner Water Consulting, Hydrologists – FRA produced. A surface water drainage strategy is proposed to ensure the proposal would resist a critical storm event, minimising the risk of any offsite flooding. Supported by site survey confirmation of existing attenuation features.
 - Rachel Hacking Ecology – Carried out a full site assessment in 2021 as part of the new classroom building application and have now carried out an additional PEA and BNG assessment of the playing field area specifically.

- i) In summary, this project will deliver genuine benefits in terms of sports engagement for pupils and extend the scope of local groups to continue to enjoy the facilities after-school. The school has the funds in place for the AGP and associated work and is keen to target an early construction window during the better weather and ground conditions in early 2024.

A full specification to SAPCA Sport England guidelines for the AGP and grass pitch have been produced to allow the tendering process to take place.

1.1.2 Application Details

- 1) The original application made by OLRCHS for a new 3G AGP, Application number: 138336/FO/2023 was deemed invalid by MCC on 20/10/2023, and put on hold pending the forwarding of further information, specifically:
 - *A proposed site layout drawing is required.*
 - *Details of boundary treatment and external lighting is required.*
 - *Justification for the loss of playing field is required.*
 - *A surface water drainage strategy is required.*
 - *A desktop study relating to ground conditions is required.*
 - *An operational statement is required. This should include details of hours of use and who will use the pitch, as well as noise management. Will the pitch be open for public use also?*
- 2) **The application site is approximately 18,740 sq.m or 1.87 ha, (4.62 acres) in size, historically a school grass sports surface. See Fig. 1 below.**
 - **Location:** Our Lady's Roman Catholic High School, Alworth Road, Higher Blackley
Manchester, M9 0RP
 - Grid Ref: SD 853045; X (Easting) 385334; Y (Northing) 404604; site entrance point.
- 3) **Planning Agent:**

David Hemstock, Hemstock Design Ltd
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1.2 Description of the Proposal:

- 1) Planning Permission is sought for a multi-use games Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) with drainage layer construction, finished with a green coloured synthetic carpet. The AGP is to be fenced with a 4.2m high ball stop rebound fence, access gates and pathway from the adjacent school buildings. No floodlighting is intended.
- 2) An existing spoil mound formed during the recent new build classroom project is to be removed and excess topsoil from the formation of the AGP used to re-soil the spoil mound area and add depth to the grass pitch playing surface, which will then be drained and grassed to sports field standards.

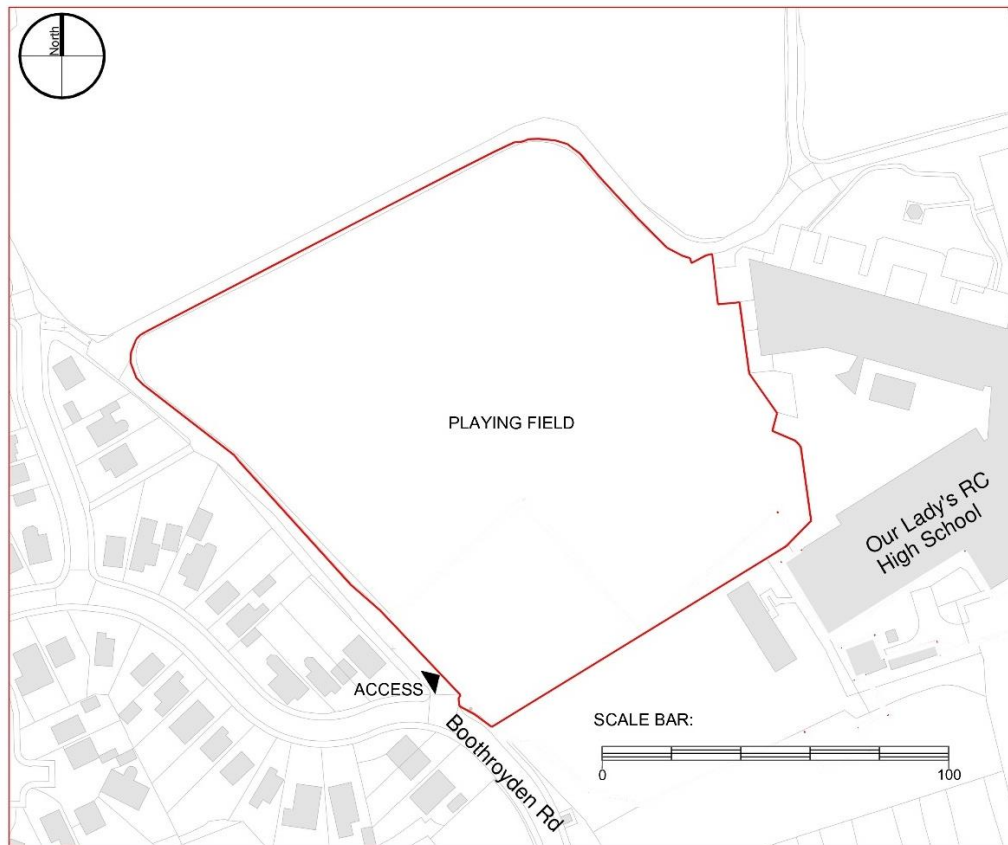
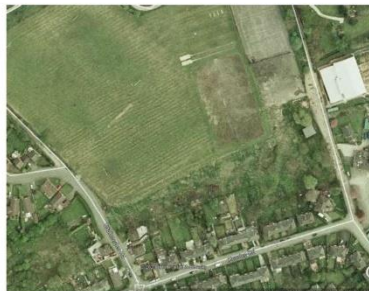


Fig. 1 - Existing site with red line boundary to the playing field area, existing MUGA and the school to the east (right).

2000 photo (no school on site)



2005 photo (no school on site)



2009 photo (school constructed in 2008, grounds incomplete)



2016 photo (main school building & grounds complete)



2017 photo (Alternative Provision Cabins under construction)



Present Day (AP unit in place, forest school in place)



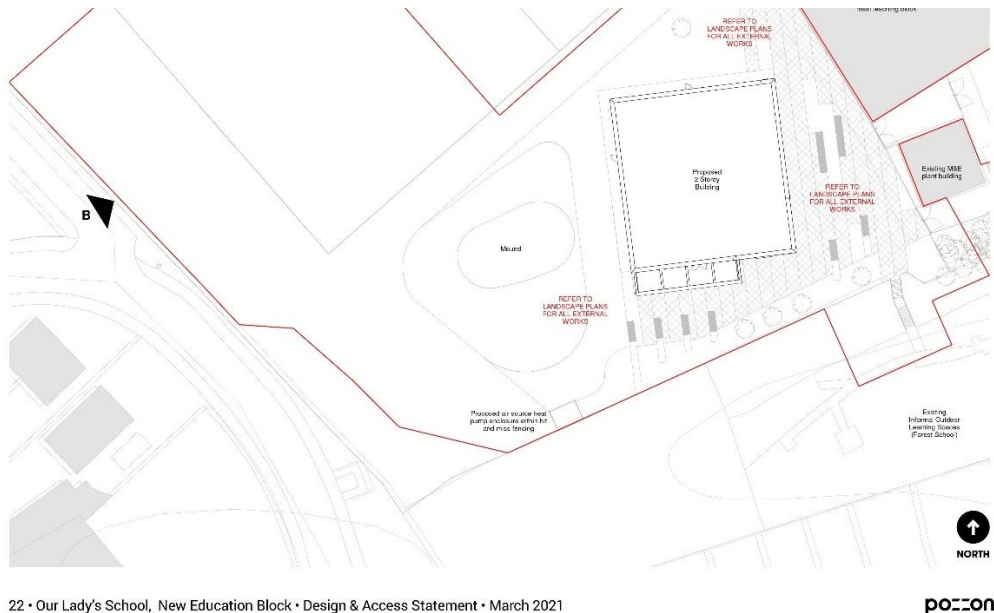


**Fig. 2 - Development of the site from 2000 to 2021 (Pozzoni Architects, new classroom building)
Showing playing field rubble filling stage in circa 2009, new building 2021**

2 Design & Access Statement

2.1 Contents of the DAS

1) This design and access statement (DAS) aims to present a concise explanation of appropriate design principles applied to the proposed development, supporting the need for the new facilities and methodology applied. This statement discusses design characteristics concerning the purpose, amount, layout, scale, landscaping and appearance of the proposal following planning policy recommendations and published technical guidance, we believe this proposal is based upon best design practices for external sports facility provision. The supporting information includes references to the application for the new classroom building which included a part of the playing field area; consent was granted in 2021.



***Fig. 3 – Access route for construction and the proposed future maintenance access;
previously constructed access for construction works.***

- 2) This DAS also refers to relevant documents forwarded under the OLRCHS previously obtained planning consent from Manchester City Council for a for the erection of a 2-storey educational building (1,245 sqm) to provide additional teaching space for the existing school (planning reference: 129587/FO/2021).

2.2 The Site Environment

2.2.1 Survey Information

- 1) The full area of the playing fields has been plotted via a topographic survey with CAD underlay of satellite imagery and supplementary scanned plans added.

The site is almost flat, falling from 103.0m AOD in the north-western corner to a low-point of 102.75m in the south-western corner (ignoring the spoil mound contours). The spoil mound volume as been calculated at 3,381 cu.m.

- 2) Trial pits have been excavated to a depth of 1.5m around the application site, and a CCTV investigation of the main outfall drains to the south-eastern corner of the site has been cried out. Outfall points along the northern boundary of the whole playing field towards the brook were assessed where possible.
- 3) An assessment of the trees around the application site has been made, a record of positions and species/size made. No trees are affected by the proposals.

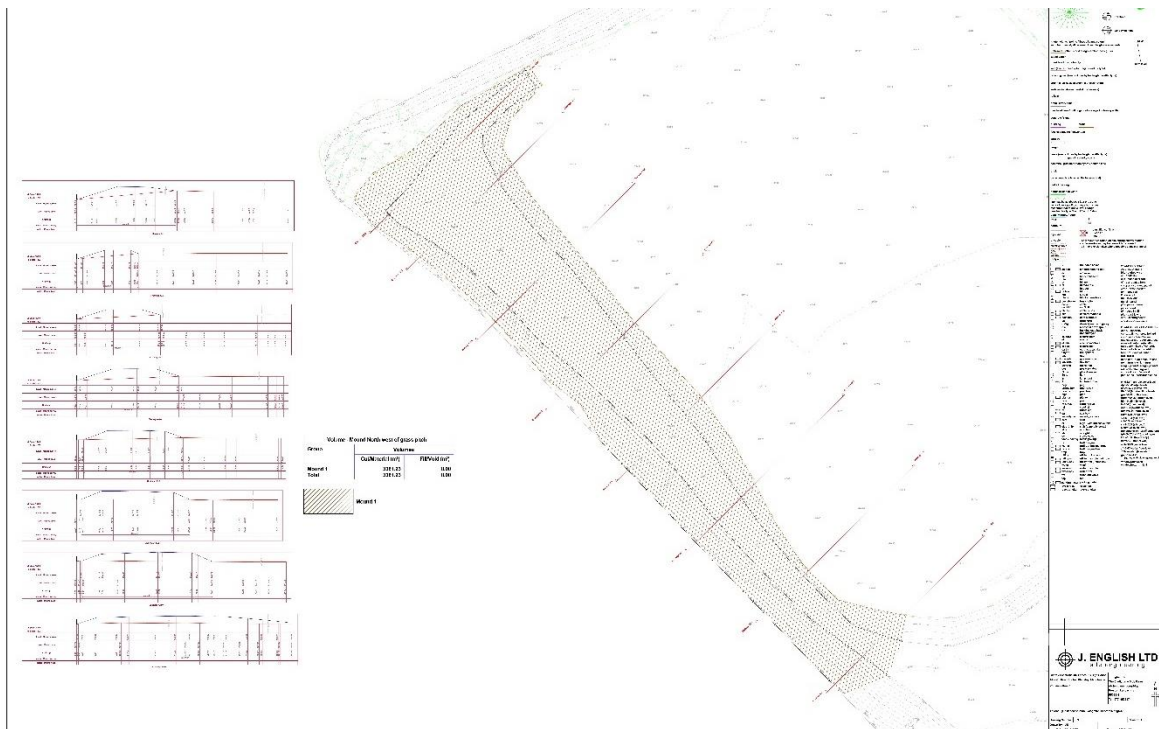


Fig. 4 – The surveyed spoil mound along the western side of the application site, formed from excavations for the new classroom block and dedicated attenuation tank, this material having been previously deposited as rubble fill from the original school demolition process.

2.2.2 Access and boundaries

- 1) The application site is accessed from Alworth Road, the main school access route, which becomes a bridleway running through the school, around the northern and western playing field boundaries and connecting to Boothroyden Road. There is a secondary access to the playing field off this bridleway to the north-east of the application site.
- 2) Construction access is proposed to be via the previously used temporary construction access on Boothroyden Road, which will then be renovated and retained as an access for maintenance equipment to avoid trafficking on the adjacent public bridleway which runs through the school and is heavily used (Fig. 3 above).
- 3) The playing field has a palisade security fence on the west and north sides, school buildings to the east and south. all sides. The eastern and southern boundaries of the application site are to have a Heras fence to allow access from the school to the temporary grass playing field but restrict and separate access for construction.
- 4) There are residential properties all along the western boundary of the playing field, these being between approximately 10 to 35m from building front to the boundary fence.

2.1.3 Playing Field Soil Profile

- 1) Trial pits and recent historical background revealed that the whole playing field area was built-up with demolition rubble in or around 2009. Fig. 5 below shows an aerial image of the topsoil being re-laid over this fill material, with drain trenches installed (the ends of each run can be seen between topsoil and fill).
- 2) The fill material is primarily of a clay loam subsoil with brickbats, stone, concrete and a range of other debris included.
- 3) The drainage system installed at the time was laid in the subsoil layer and topsoil laid over the top, this preventing adequate infiltration of runoff into the drains. The pitches have, as a result of the poor drainage system, never been fully usable through winter.
- 4) The topsoil layer sits on a very compact subsoil, resulting in a perched water table and waterlogged topsoil. The problem is particularly severe on the northern strip of playing area where there are no drains, these stopping short.
- 5) The remaining grass pitch will be back to full size with the removal of the spoil mound from the western section, and with the loosening of the subsoil, addition of more topsoil to screen debris, installation of new lateral drains that connect with the surface, and a secondary surface drainage system.





Fig. 5 – Above: Re-topsoiling after filling of the playing field, circa 2009.

Soil contaminated with debris of various types.

Lateral drain exposed, capped by 100mm soil material, no secondary drainage found

2.1.4 History of the Site

- 1) The school has occupied the site since the early 1970's. A convent was built on the site in the mid-19th century, with the playing field area apparently pastureland at that time.
- 2) Prior to the new school being constructed in 2009, Our Lady's Sports College, as was, occupied the whole of the playing field, part of which was used for the new build.
- 3) A new classroom building was constructed in 2021 on part of the playing field southern area. This effectively removed the

2.1.5 School Capacity

- 1) The existing school is already over-occupied compared to its 2009 'as-designed' pupil capacity, which puts great pressure on all facilities including outdoor play areas.
- 2) Demographic growth, as identified through the Greater Manchester area review, means that the school can reasonably expect moderate growth through the coming years.

However, the School is now, in the first half of the 2020's, at capacity and will find it extremely challenging according to the Head to accommodate additional students without increasing the built facilities and outdoor sports areas, particularly the ability to hold a range of sports reliably through winter, which the current and even improved grass pitches are considered likely to offer.

Manchester City Council has requested the school to accept additional pupils starting from the 2022 academic year; they have awarded 2.35 million funds to the school for the new education block, therefore facilitating this increase.

2.1.6 Current Layout of the Playing Field

- 1) The current layout of the site is shown in Fig. 6., with two grass pitches shortened in length by the spoil mound:
 - Pitch A – nominally taken as 82 x 48m from the position of goal sockets.
 - Pitch B – nominally taken as 82 x 48m from the position of goal sockets.
- 2) At the time of the agronomic assessment visit in December 2023, the pitches had not been used from early November and were not line-marked.
- 3) To the east of the school site is the sports centre with a small 3G pitch and floodlighting. However, due to the proximity of these lights to the residences to the east, they are not used.



Fig. 6 – Playing Field Layout 2023, with recently formed spoil mound in orange.



Fig. 7 – The full school area layout in 2023, with dark green 3G pitch to the east.

2.3 The Proposals

2.3.1 New MUGA requirement - Types of Sports

- 1) **At present**, the school has the capability to offer the following, However, almost no use is possible between November and April:

Grass Pitches:

- Football
- Gaelic Football
- Rugby
- Cricket
- Rounders
- Athletics – all events but track size limited

Sports Centre:

- Soccer 5 & 7-side
- Rugby training
- Plus MUGA-type uses

= 9 core sports/uses

- 2) **Future capacity** - The proposed AGP MUGA is to have a synthetic carpet finish, suitable for certain sports that cannot properly be played on either the grass pitches or the existing 3G and bitmac-surfaced MUGA. Installing a sand dressed carpet will allow additional sports to be played, such as hockey, at school coaching level and provide an all-weather surface for:

- Hockey
- Netball
- Tennis
- Badminton
- Cricket practice
- Rugby training
- Soccer
- Sprint track
- Pickleball, Korfball, etc.

In addition, the grass pitch specific sports can still be accommodated but on half the playing surface, with high quality sports field drainage installed as part of the scheme.

Grass Pitch 'B':

- Soccer
- Gaelic Football
- Rounders
- Rugby
- Cricket practice
- Athletics – sprint track only and field athletics

Sports Centre:

- Soccer 5 & 7-side
- Rugby training

= 17 core sports/uses

- 3) **Boggart Hole Athletics track** – this facility is only 1.3 miles from the school ‘as the crow flies’. The track is apparently underused. The school are assessing the option to use this high-quality facility for athletics and sports days
- 4) The overall aim of the AGP MUGA project is to engage as many pupils/people in physical activity as possible through the extension of playing surface types and weatherproofing. This project does support outdoor open space uses and the value of sport and opportunities for active lifestyles; whilst the sensitive AGP design minimises the impact on the surrounding environment.
- 5) This proposal will contribute to the significant improvement of sporting facilities for the school and community and will result in considerable benefit to school pupils and local community clubs and groups through the provision of an enhanced sports facility.
- 6) The school obviously has a significant indoor & outdoor sports asset in the Sports Centre, which is managed by OLRCHS. The school are exploring links with other potential users of the upgraded facilities. This project will initiate partnerships by working with local community groups and organisations to promote and encourage participation in all aspects of sport, leisure, and cultural activities.



Fig. 8 - Illustrative profile of the new MUGA AGP, with sand infill needle-punch carpet over a shock pad and porous bitmac layer, drainage layer aids attenuation of peak flows.

2.3.2 - The AGP Proposals

- 1) The proposed AGP has dimensions of 100 x 64m with 3-metre margins plus goal and storage recesses. An access path will connect the existing path system around the school to the AGP.
- 2) The proposed needle-punch type of sand-dressed carpet will cover the whole of the AGP area, to be fenced with 4.5m high mesh fencing.



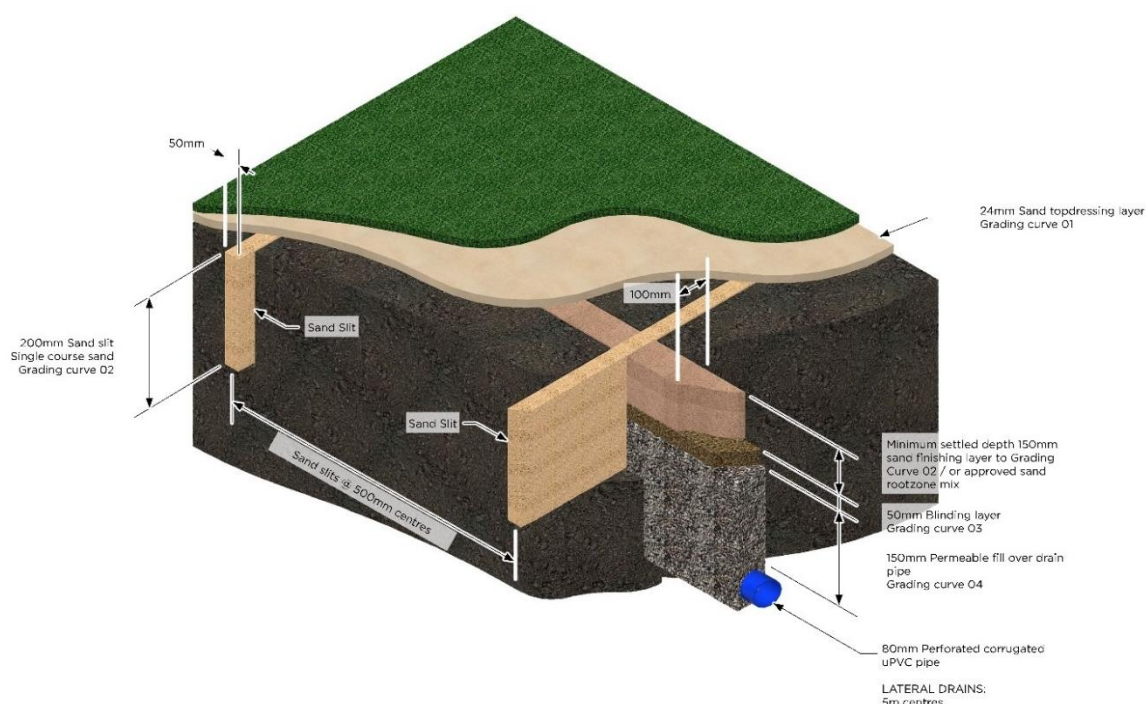


Fig. 10 – Grass pitch ‘B’ sports field drainage proposals, new pipes system with surface drainage; sand-slits and sand top layer.

2.3.3 Grass Pitch Upgrading

- 1) The grass pitches are very prone to waterlogging from November to April, particularly to the east, or school building-end of the playing field area. This has led to all pupils being affected by an inability to play sport and partake in physical exercise in both core PE lessons and free time (break and lunchtime) due to the inadequate facilities.

The substantial issues regarding the school playing field area, which has got progressively worse in recent academic years, has led to the PE department having to adapt the curriculum and extracurricular opportunities to suit, leading to a narrowing of the curriculum for all students and increased costs to the school due to having to play school fixtures away from the school site.

- 2) The area of grass Pitch B, included in this application, currently fails the criteria range for the Sport England guidelines on turf quality and surface conditions. This area is to be re-drained and reseeded with a sports field Perennial Ryegrass.
- 3) However, even with a sports field drainage system including sand-slitting at 0.5m centres and sand topdressing, with of course the necessary annual topdressing, decompaction, overseeding and associated maintenance treatments, the expected hours of use of around 6 hours per week senior equivalent will fall far short of the overall ‘wear intensity’ expected from the whole school use of the grass, even with two such pitches at maximum maintainable capacity.
- 4) Nationally, schools are being rebuilt often within their original boundary. Local population increases, bigger schools, more pupils, potentially less grass area with a finite ability of grass to cope with wear inevitably means that grass alone cannot cope with the parameters imposed.

3 Planning Statement

3.1 Statement of Need

3.1.1 The School Outdoor Facilities

- 1) The school are currently failing to deliver the full range of sports in the curriculum through the full academic year. They are through the winter months reliant on the bitmac MUGA that they have, and the relatively restricted range of sports playable on the existing 3G AGP. The grass pitches are largely unusable if the weather is wet.
- 2) A statement from the school follows:

Need for The Facility - Due to the significant growth in the number of students on roll, from 680 to over 1000 in five-year period. the school are currently unable to meet the minimum expectations of the PE national curriculum due to the lack of facilities, all year-round in-particular soft surface outdoor spaces. Due to this, some of the curriculum areas that we currently cannot meet include outdoor adventurous activities, Gaelic football, rounders and cricket. The current grass pitch is unusable for the majority of the year due to waterlogging, furthermore the grass-surface isn't suited to a number of sports that the school would like to offer to students as part of the curriculum and extra-curricular offer.

The STP forms part of the governing body facilities strategy as adding this would significantly enhance the number of opportunities for students to be involved in that they currently do not have exposure to. The school serves an exceptionally deprived cohort and as per the Sport England Active Lives Children and Young People's Survey 2021/22 it shows a clear gap in activity levels, with a much higher proportion of children and young people from the most affluent families being active compared to those from mid-affluent families. The school believes the new AGP will significantly improve the accessibility for more children to be actively involved in a broader range of sports.

The school operates on a split-site with the current PE facilities across a public highway, which includes the current 3G pitch. Due to the increase in student numbers the social space at break and lunch time is insufficient for the number of students. Opening the current AGP causes an additional safeguarding concern as students need to cross the public highway to access it. The proposed AGP is on the main-site and would be easily accessible by the student body during social time, easing the over-crowded current social spaces.

The school is particularly strong at developing and succeeding at competitive sports and the extra-curricular uptake is exceptionally strong, however the school is currently struggling to meet the children's desires to be part of an extra-curricular team due to the limited useable outdoor space. The school is keen for students to be engaged in sports and clubs after school to promote students' health and wellbeing but also provide development opportunities that their cohort of students would not naturally be involved with due to their lower socio-economic status. The AGP would allow the

school to offer approximately fifteen sports which again broadens the exposure for the students.

The school are actively liaising with Manchester FA and England Athletics to further develop the curriculum, with the use of the new facility, to encourage students to progress into competitive clubs and competition in these areas. This would support the local hockey need and wider aspirations of England Hockey and their recommendations of AGP use.

The school have recently established a netball team but cannot host home games due to the lack of facilities, the new AGP will support in developing their approach to netball. The school is also liaising with a professional netball team to provide coaching to the newly established school team and the new facility would significantly support with this. The school would allow the local primaries to use the AGP for regular netball games and tournaments as this is a regular request as the local primaries struggle for space to host these types of events.

3.2.2 Community Availability

- 1) The school has several partner primary schools that would benefit from the new AGP. The schools would use the pitch for a multitude of different sports that their current sites do not allow for. As per the BB103 several of the partner schools do not have adequate soft outdoor PE requirements and this facility would allow them to meet this statutory obligation. The school also shares the building with North Ridge High School which is a special school who also do not meet the BB103 requirements, and this additional pitch would allow their students to have a more suitable offer for physical education. The school have letters from partner primary headteachers who justify the requirement for the pitch and state that it would significantly improve their offer for physical education and extra-curricular opportunities. The school has received written support from local schools including:
 - St Malachy's Primary
 - St Edmunds Primary
 - St Patrick's Primary
- 2) The school is part of the Manchester Active programme which is an organisation that supports children in the city to be healthier and more active. As a partner in the programme, the school site is often used at evenings and weekends to facilitate several sports. Currently this primarily takes place in the summer months due to the usability of the grass fields. The AGP would allow us to be a stronger partner in the

Manchester Active programme and offer the use of the AGP throughout the whole year.

- 3) The school have also agreed to let Middleton Lads & Girls Football Club use the AGP for their training and competitive games after school hours and at weekends. The club is currently thriving but is struggling to meet demand due to the lack of playing facilities.

3.2 Planning Policy Context

3.2.1 Planning History

- 1) **Recent** - Consent for the new classroom building was granted in the Decision Notice of 26/5/2021. The proposals did include an area of playing field now covered by this DAS:
 - **Proposal:** Erection of a 2-storey educational building (Use Class F1a) to provide additional teaching space for the existing school and associated hard and soft landscaping works.
 - **Application number:** 129587/FO/2021

This application was made with an extensive document set, covering:

- Surface water strategy
- Ground investigations
- Geo-environmental investigations
- Habitat and Biodiversity survey & report
- Landscaping, existing & proposed
- Tree survey of the playing field area
- Noise impact assessment
- Transport Statement

Several of these reports are applicable to this current application.

- 2) This DAS document addresses points made in MCC's rendering of the current application as invalid, and in addition includes detailed geotechnical assessment, a BNG analysis which came into force on after the application on 12/2/2024, and what is in effect a full Flood Risk Assessment.
- 3) Since the original application, there has been a liaison process between the school, agent and Sport England (**Sport England Reference:** 66735) under their 'pre-application' service, which has highlighted problems that SE identify with the proposals. The original information sent to SE mentioned a 3G pitch, which was then refined to a sand-dressed AGP by the school. The status of the existing 3G pitch remains as a school-only facility, used in the daytime due to problems with neighbours. The school have installed new LED floodlighting (2/2024) but are currently gauging the effects of this on use.

Sport England's policy is to oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or prejudice the use of:

- all or any part of a playing field, or
- land which has been used as a playing field land remains undeveloped, or
- land allocated for use as a playing field

unless, in the judgement of Sport England the development as a whole meets with one or more of five specific exceptions, namely 'Exception 5':

'The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor facility for sport, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss, or prejudice to the use, of the area of playing field.'

Factors taken into consideration include, with the school's response in block lettering are:

- The need for the facility – has this been identified in a local sport and recreation strategy, a governing body facility strategy or similar document?

This proposal is very much school-centric. The original school site from the 1970's had a large playing field associated with the buildings that now has been much reduced with the new school placed upon it. Since the new school was built, pupil numbers, naturally related to local population growth, have required an extended built facility; the new classroom block. This has taken away the option of an athletics track on the grass, but more importantly represents and intensification of the need for outdoor facilities to match the built environment, which even a high-specification grass surface cannot meet.

- Technical suitability – does the proposed facility meet the specifications set out in Sport England's Guidance Notes or a relevant National Governing Body of Sport's Guidance Notes?

The planning agent, David Hemstock of Hemstock Design Ltd is a qualified Agronomist and Soil & Water Engineer, a member of SAPCA and RIPTA with over 30 years' experience of grass and synthetic sports projects, 11 years of this with the STRI, many Sport England grant-funded projects completed as sports pitch designer and construction consultant. As such, the specification and technical worthiness of the grass and synthetic elements of the project are assured.

- Community availability – will the facility be available to the community and if so, will the terms of availability be clearly set out in a community use agreement?

The school have been in a process since the beginning of 2024 of developing existing links with neighbour schools and clubs already using the facilities at the complex. These links are local, actual and synergistic. The school have an extensive archive of those who use the facilities at the complex going back many years (the school once was a Sports Academy). For this application, it has been a case of the school reviewing the considerable community participation in sport to present it as a case, which they have done and continue to do.

- Sports development – will the facility be linked into the local sports development network?

SE to note the ‘Statement of Need’ points.

- Local level of pitch provision/ impact on the capability and flexibility of the playing field to provide for a range of sports.

This point is addressed in the DAS. The loss of certain grass-based sports, particularly a cricket outfield and full-sized athletics track, is far outweighed by the ‘missing link;’ that the new AGP and grass pitch upgrade provide, in extending the ability to play sports such as hockey, tennis, netball, cricket training, new court sports and so on.

- does the local area have a shortfall of playing pitches that would be exacerbated by the current proposal?

Again, this is an internal environment, a school-centric situation where the two grass pitches cannot provide the range and reliability required of a full annual sports programme.

- The physical location of the new facility – is it easily accessible by the community and schools?

Yes

- Improves the delivery of sport and physical education on school sites.

Yes. NB – this is a sand-dressed AGP, not a 3G pitch application.



Fig 11 - Proposed layout of the new school pitches, Plincke 2007.

The athletics track cannot be marked as shown due to the new classroom and attenuation tanks at the southern end.

4) Sports Body Liaison:

- England Hockey are in favour of an AGP, stating that currently, 'there is a shortfall of hockey compliant pitches to support the development of hockey in north Manchester. The proposed AGP would enable hockey to be offered as part of the school timetable, whilst supporting the geographical presence that hockey wants to achieve and retain in this part of the city. To support the wider aspiration of the school and support local hockey need, England Hockey would suggest a GEN2 carpet as part of the AGP build. The development would support Oldham HC to consolidate their hockey demand onto one site creating a future 'home' for the club'.
- England Netball (EN) commented that a sand dressed/Gen2 surface can be used for England Netball community programmes, Back to Netball initiatives and primary school netball. The facility is in an area of high demand for netball.
- It is accepted that the school proposals may possibly fall outside of the 'strategic need' scope for an AGP as identified in the Manchester Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS). For the reasons presented in this document, the school or of the opinion that this may not be specifically applicable to this new AGP proposed overall purposes.
- The Football Foundation (FF) acknowledges that the site does have an existing 11v11 3G pitch and the development of a second (3G) could lead the site to become a notable strategic significance in the north of the local authority, potentially creating greater opportunity for central venue play, as is typically the preferred format in the east of Greater Manchester across Manchester/Tameside/Stockport and parts of Bury. The FF note that the Manchester Grassroots Sunday FL operates central venue in the North/Oldham area and is looking for additional venues.

The school are liaising with the Manchester FA and are looking to develop all options for use of the new pitch, which includes soccer and also the link to the under-used 3G. The school have inherited a problematic neighbour-related situation with the latter, which they are in the process of addressing to the best of their abilities.

3.2.2 Requirement

- 1) This planning statement provides a concise explanation of how relevant planning policies have been considered and how any specific influences that might affect this proposal have been adequately addressed. We understand that development control decisions must be taken by Manchester City Council in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Local Plan policies including material planning considerations relevant to this proposal.
- 2) **It is apparent that the school has had to embark on a new school post-construction development plan to increase facility capacity building-wise. This effect naturally extends to the outdoor sports provision, which very simply cannot be satisfied by a restricted (and reduced) natural grass area alone.**

- 3) It is understood that the development of an AGP is possible within an educational playing field environment if the proposal is sensitively prepared and reduces impacts to within acceptable limits. This applies to both human and any ecological impact. This proposal satisfies both criteria however, there may be other policies the proposal must comply with which are addressed in this statement.

Having reviewed national and local validation checklists, relevant planning policy guidance and local development plans it is acknowledged that the following material planning considerations relevant to the proposal include:

- NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK FEBRUARY 2019
 - 2. Achieving sustainable development
 - 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities (open space and recreation)
 - 12. Achieving well-designed places
 - 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
 - 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- DISTRICT COUNCIL LEVEL
 - Compliance with relevant planning policy guidance, local development plans and policies
 - Design and impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
 - Adequate impact mitigation to residential neighbours (protecting visual amenity and residential amenity).
 - Preventing the loss or detriment to any local biodiversity
 - Evidence of strategic need and justification for intensification of the recreational use of the land through the introduction of an all-weather surface
 - Adequate on-site parking capacity and traffic management
 - Sustainable drainage assessment
 - Contamination assessment (site investigation)
 - Principle of development to enable Sport England's informed assessment of the proposed development of an outdoor facility for sport and benefit to the development of sport to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss, or prejudice to the use of the area of playing field (to satisfy exception policy E5 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance March 2018).

- 4) The National Planning Policy Framework introduced a presumption in favour of sustainable development set out as three dimensions – economic, social and

environmental objectives. This proposal aims to contribute to the above areas. In a sporting context, this proposal seeks to:

- Provide opportunities for school pupils and local community groups to participate in sport and physical activity for health improvement, enjoyment and development of their skills.
- Operate in line with the national agenda for sport considering nationally adopted strategies.
- Generate positive attitudes in sport and physical activity by children and young adults to help reduce the dropout rate in sports participation with age.
- Increase the number of people of all ages and abilities participating in sport and physical activity including people with disabilities.
- Use the facility to encourage the range, quality and number of sports club links and to stimulate competition that is inclusive of young people and adults.
- Provide affordable access to the facilities and to be as self-financing as possible in terms of community access.

In an environmental context, this proposal seeks to:

- Ensure that maintenance of the AGP is managed by the school's grounds team on a daily and weekly routine with contractors used as necessary to perform specialist maintenance on a periodic basis.
- Collect a sinking fund to replace the artificial carpet at the end of its functional life, along with further necessary refurbishment works.

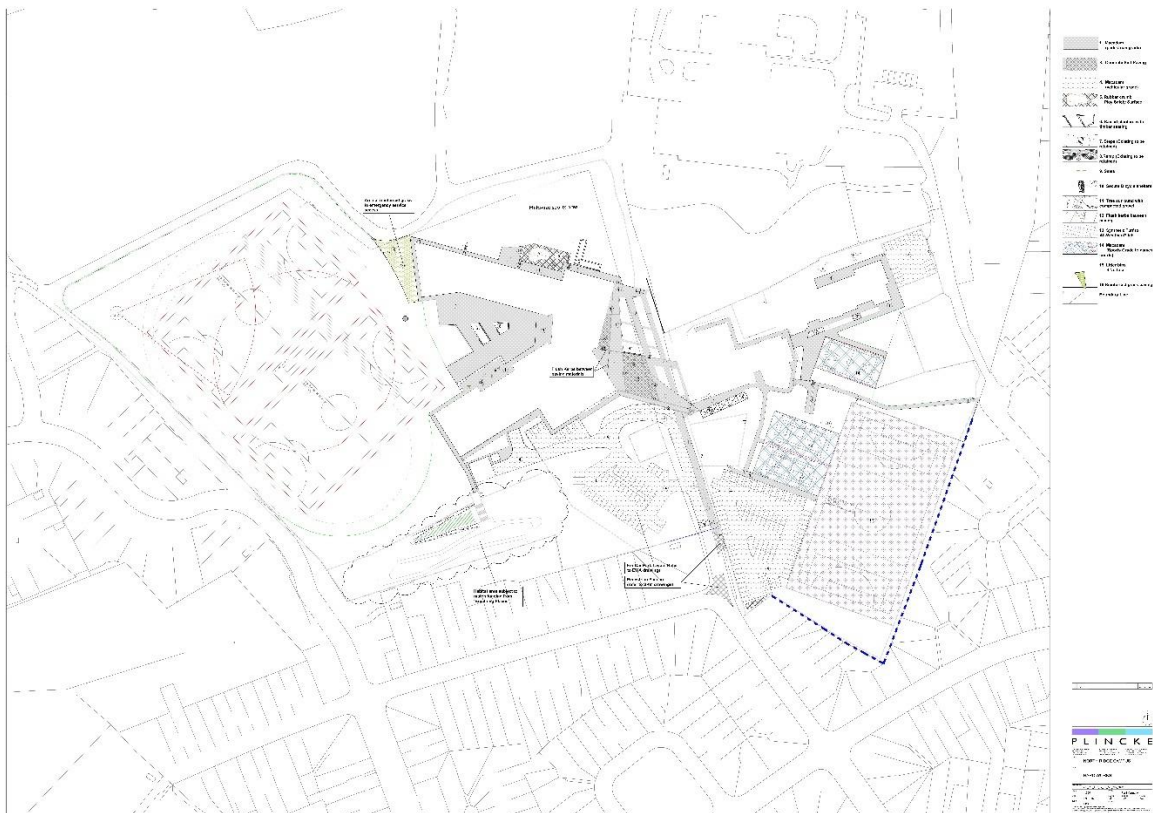
In conclusion, the proposed AGP will replace part of an existing grassed playing field with:

- Better quality provision
- In a suitable location
- Supported by effective and appropriate management arrangements
- Implemented with best practice construction techniques to minimise waste.

- 5) Promoting Healthy Communities - The planning system encourages and promotes the retention of existing and the provision of additional, outdoor sports facilities, both public and private. Specifically, paragraph 97 (concerning open space and recreation) of National Planning Policy Framework February 2019 recommends that:

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or***
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.***



Fig, 12 – Original layout of playing field and 3G AGP. The school have inherited a playing field which now cannot accommodate a full-sized athletics track, disadvantaged grass pitches, and a 3G AGP too close to neighbours to be operated fully at present.

3.3 Design Context

3.3.1 Design Principles

- 1) **These proposals** are based on extensive technical supporting information and have been planned with sensitivity to the neighbouring residences and minimising the landscape effect in mind.
- 2) The AGP is to be constructed to SE's Guidance Note 'Artificial Surfaces for Outdoor Sport' and the SAPCA 'Code of Practice for Construction of Outdoor Multi Use Games Areas'.
https://sapca.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/CoP_for_muga_ed_1-3.pdf
- 3) The outline specification items, as shown on the Bills of Quantities extract below, follow the SAPCA guidelines:

<u>Earthworks & Enabling</u>		Unit	Amount
1	Allow for all preliminaries associated with the outlined works, including full working area safety fencing, haul road, services and attenuation tank protection, further geotechnical assessment and testing costs.	Item	1
2	Form a temporary access off Boothroyden Road in the position of the previous new building works access, with kerbing, stone base, bitmac finish to minimum 10m into the site. Protect cables/drains	Item	1
3	Strip topsoil from the position of the AGP pitch + working margin and mound for storage on the south-western half of grass Pitch B	cu.m	1500
4	Excavate and cart spoil mound material to spread over the AGP base, form a retaining bund and 1-metre access margin, compact and level. Estimated finished subgrade 103.3m. Shape remaining mound & topsoil.	cu.m	3880
5	Allow for cleaning the spoil material by removal of deleterious debris; wood, macadam, plastic	Item	1
6	Install a retaining wall to the north-east corner of the subgrade, estimated length 25m, max. height 2.5m	Item	1
Sub-total:			

	<u>AGP Pitch Works</u>	m²	7420
7	Supply and install 150mm pre-cast concrete edgings bedded and haunched in concrete to the perimeter of the construction.	lin.m	400
8	Supply and install geotextile membrane	m ²	7420
9	Supply and install drainage system of lateral pipes, main pipe to the pitch corner and approx. 75 lin.m sealed outfall main to the south-west corner of the site	m ²	7420
10	Supply and install 300mm depth of Type 1 X stone sub-base to include drainage system backfilling	m ²	7420
11	Supply and install 40mm depth of reduced fines dynamic layer	m ²	7420
12	Supply and install shockpad	m ²	7420
13	Supply and install a tested and approved AGP synthetic grass carpet with sand infill, to be agreed with the client.	m ²	7420
14	Supply and install reconditioned 20' long x 8' wide x 8' 6" high shipping container	Nr.	1
15	Install line markings for a soccer main, two cross pitches & hockey layouts. To be agreed with the client.	Nr.	1
16	Supply & install a 200mm high infill retention board to the perimeter of the pitch and margin	Item	1
17	Install a two-stage microfibre filter to the outfall point, south-west corner of the pitch beyond the pitch fence	Nr.	1
	<u>Sports Rebound Fencing</u>		
18	Supply and install 4.5m high sports rebound fencing (5m high acoustic fence behind western-end goal)	lin.m	400
19	Supply and install single pedestrian gate	Nr.	2
20	Supply and install double equipment gate	Nr.	1
21	Supply and install recess goals (football)	Nr.	2
	<u>Grass Pitch & Other</u>		
25	Respread topsoil to the area of the removed spoil mound to a settled depth of 200mm	cu.m	1500

26	Cultivate and sow a Sports Field Perennial Ryegrass mix to the Pitch B area and margins with Triple 15 fertiliser	m ²	2500
27	Cultivate and sow a wild flora seed mix to the remaining topsoil areas	m ²	2500
28	Install 600mm deep 80mm diameter lateral pipes at 5-metre spacing.	lin.m	1250
29	Install 300mm deep sand slits at a 1-metre spacing using a digging-wheel type of trencher	m ²	5300
30	Provide overseeding and mowing until full sward cover is achieved; 3 months period	Item	1
31	Install a macadam access path to the pitch edge from the existing school path	m ²	400
32	Reinstatement - remove access point tidy site and reseed affected areas	Item	1
33	Testing of surfaces, AGP and Grass	PC Sum	1

- 4) **Pitch B** - When completed the pitch will be considerably larger than the one it replaces. It will have a full drained and slit finish to the playing area and 3-metre surround.
- 5) New jump pits and shot-putt circles are to be installed, with line markings for a 200m oval 6-lane running track.

3.3.2 Design Elements

- 1) **Floodlighting is not included**, but the school are installing ducting and bases for a potential addition of lighting in future.
- 2) **A 4.5m ball-retaining fence** is planned for the AGP MUGA perimeter. Fence elevations will consist of a weld mesh design comprising see-through steel mesh (polyester powder coated RAL6005 Moss Green) as is commonly installed around artificial sports pitches. It is discreet against a rural background and permits light and views throughout, reducing the visual impact of the fencing.
- 3) **The AGP surface** is to be a mid-green coloured synthetic carpet, with line markings. The visual appearance of the pitch surface will be similar to a very fine sports turf and complimentary to a playing field environment.

3.3.3 Drainage Strategy

- 1) The Environment Agency Flood Risk Maps show that the application site is outside of a flood risk zone. A Surface Water Management Plan has been produced for the proposals.
- 2) Extensive assessment work has been carried out recently on the drainage and outfall arrangements around the existing buildings and application site. The primary outfall for the application site has been identified as a manhole chamber to the southwest of the site, which has the existing playing field attenuation tank and new classroom building attenuation tank connected to it.
- 3) The new AGP is to have an inbuilt attenuation capacity through the storage within the 300mm stone drainage layer, with a porous surface and profile capable of at least 100mm/hour infiltration rate leading down into the drainage layer and 5-metre spaced lateral pipe drainage system below.
- 4) Pitch B will also have inbuilt attenuation capacity within the surcharging effect of the 5-metre spaced lateral pipe and sand slit system. Suitably-sized hydrobrakes are to be installed in the outfall chambers of both pitches, as advised by the Hydrologist. The Grass Pitch B will also have a grassed bund of maximum 0.5m height around the low sides to retain the peak 100-year plus 40% runoff, which is calculated to be stored for around 2 hours before infiltrating through the drainage system.
- 5) The drainage strategy report by Corner Water Consulting Ltd is submitted with this DAS.

3.2.5 Landscape & Ecology

- 1) OLRCHS have commissioned a professionally calculated Biodiversity Net Gain % through Ecologists Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd. Their report ***RHE.3055 PEA and BNG Assessment at Our Ladys RC High School, Blackley 2024*** is submitted with this DAS. RHE also carried out an 'EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY' in 2021 including the playing field area as part of the new school building application.
- 2) In summary, the Biodiversity Net Gain calculations gave:
 - *Baseline habitats score 4.51 habitat units and 0.51 hedgerow units.*
 - *Post-development habitats score 5.13 habitat units (13.78% gain) and 1.35 hedgerow units (60.59% gain).*
- 3) The appropriate mitigation measures include wildflower grassland creation to the western side of the pitches where the spoil mound was located and tree and hedge planting along

the north and western boundaries, as well as bird and bat box integration as recommended within the report.

- 4) Landscaping proposals include planting of trees and understory between the playing surfaces and boundary fence. To include:
 - Specimen trees – Oak, Ash, Rowan, Field Maple, Beech.
 - Understorey planting – of Guelder Rose, Holly, Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Bramble, etc. as recommended by the Ecologist.
 - Wild flora seeding suitable for an understorey and clay soil.
 - New hedgerow sections to the northern and eastern boundaries.

3.3.6 Other Aspects

- 1) **Engagement of local community, neighbours** – extensive neighbourhood consultation, awareness programme and liaison was initiated for the recent new classroom construction process. OLRCHS are in a process to update the local residents with a continuous information issuing strategy.
- 2) **Noise Impact Assessment & Use** – Considered to be not required at this point. The AGP is to be used during daylight hours only.
- 3) **Inclusive Accessibility** - Access for all is at the core of the school's philosophy. Existing pathways from the school to the outdoor sports facilities are to be extended.
- 4) **Traffic Implications** - There will be no increased traffic movements due to the new AGP. The previously used temporary access for the new classroom building construction is to be retained for maintenance equipment to avoid trafficking on the public bridleway.
- 5) **Contamination** - The site has been reviewed through historical records, trial pit excavation & geotechnical assessments. There are no indications of contaminated material being present. Laying of the demolition fill under the area was closely monitored during the previous operations for the new build and new classroom block construction. However, a monitoring and treatment methodology is in place for the management of any suspected contamination that arises through the construction process.

4 Drawings & Documents:

This statement should be read in conjunction with the following drawings & documents:

- ❖ Application site boundary, red-line scaled A4 1:1250
- ❖ Site Block Plan, existing site location & layout plan 1:500
- ❖ Proposal plan (Revision B)
- ❖ Cross-section, proposed pitches

- ❖ RHE - PEA & BNG Calculations Report
- ❖ Corner Water Consulting - Drainage Strategy Report
- ❖ Hemstock Design - Agronomic Technical Assessment Report
- ❖ Geotechnical Reports - Geoenviro, WSL, WACS analysis



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