

Design & Access Statement JC224

Project Number: JC224
Site: King David High School
Eaton Rd, Crumpsall, Manchester M8 5DY

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Site and Surroundings

The site lies within the King David High School campus. The northern boundary is formed by Eaton Road / Polygon Road with nearby houses and flats. To the east, a public footpath dissects the school campus. Anchor Court sheltered housing lies to the south. Yavneh Girls High School is located to the west within the campus, with a BT exchange beyond the campus boundary.

Existing mature tree belts provide substantial screening to the boundaries, including to all directly facing residential buildings.

Proposed Development Summary

The proposals consist of the installation of a replacement Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) surface over the existing hardstanding pitch, along with associated fencing and floodlighting.

An extension of the hours of operation is also proposed to facilitate managed community use outside of school hours. The proposed hours of operation will be extended until 22:30.

No increase in the hardstanding area is intended, and no new access points are proposed.

Community use will be ancillary to the school's primary function and will be regulated through a formal booking system.

Design

Design Principles

The design approach for the proposed Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) is driven by the principle of enhancing an existing school playground in a manner that is functional, robust, and sensitive to its urban context. The proposal does not introduce new built form or expand the developed footprint, but instead upgrades an existing hard-surfaced area to provide improved sports facilities for school and managed community use.

The design responds to nearby residential boundaries by avoiding new built form, retaining open mesh fencing, and relying on existing tree screening to limit visual and environmental effects.

Layout and Form

The MUGA is located entirely within the footprint of the existing macadam playground. The layout follows the established geometry of the site, avoiding any encroachment into landscaped areas or tree root protection zones. This ensures that the proposal maintains the current spatial arrangement of the school grounds and avoids unnecessary visual or physical disruption.

Associated fencing is limited to what is required for safe ball containment and user safety. Fence height and configuration are proportionate to the function of the facility and are consistent with typical school sports infrastructure.

Materials and Appearance

Materials have been selected for durability, safety, and low visual impact. The artificial sports surface replaces existing tarmac and improves usability without altering the visual character of the site when viewed from outside the school grounds.

The twin-bar mesh fencing is a standard, robust system commonly used in educational settings. Its open mesh design avoids the creation of visually solid barriers and allows views through the site, reducing visual mass and maintaining a sense of openness.

Lighting columns are slender and utilitarian in form, designed solely to facilitate safe evening use. The luminaires incorporate louvres and controlled aiming to minimise light spill and glare, ensuring the installation remains visually discreet and does not affect nearby residential properties.

Inclusive and Safe Design

The MUGA is designed to support safe and inclusive use by pupils and the wider community within the secured perimeter of the school. The layout provides clear sightlines, secure boundaries, and controlled access points. The design supports supervision and management, particularly during evening use, and aligns with best practice for school sports facilities.

Access

Vehicular Access and Parking

Community use of the MUGA is expected to involve small groups only. As such, the number of users is modest and vehicle trips generated are limited and comparable to existing evening activity associated with the school. No large group events, tournaments, or spectator uses are proposed.

To support both school use and managed community hire of the MUGA, car parking will be accommodated within existing parking areas across the wider school campus, supplemented by the use of a limited area of existing hardstanding to the north of the playground. This area will be formalised through painted bay markings only, with no change to surface materials, levels, drainage arrangements, or site permeability, and no increase in the extent of hardstanding.

Vehicular access to the site will continue to be taken via the existing vehicle gate on Eaton Road. No new vehicular access points are proposed, and there are no alterations to the public highway, kerb lines, visibility splays, or access geometry. The proposals therefore retain established access arrangements and should not give rise to any additional highway safety concerns.

The provision and management of on-site parking is intended to ensure that vehicles associated with evening community use are contained within the school grounds and do not displace parking onto surrounding residential streets.

Pedestrian Access

Pedestrian access to the MUGA will continue to be taken via existing circulation routes within the school grounds. These routes are already established, direct, and appropriate for the intended users. No new pedestrian access points are proposed, and the proposals do not introduce any barriers to movement. The public footpath that dissects the wider school campus is to be unaffected by the proposals and remain fully open and unobstructed at all times.

Inclusive Access

The MUGA is located on level ground within the existing playground, and all access routes are step-free. The proposals do not alter site levels or introduce features that would restrict access for users with mobility impairments. The facility therefore remains inclusive and accessible in accordance with inclusive design principles.

Servicing, Management and Safety

Servicing and operational access arrangements remain unchanged. Use of the MUGA outside school hours will be managed through a booking system, with controlled access to the site via the existing Eaton Road gate. Gates will be secured outside permitted hours to ensure appropriate management of the facility and to protect the amenity of neighbouring residential properties.

Policy Response

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

NPPF paragraph 93 states that planning decisions should “enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs” through the provision of sports and recreational facilities. The resurfacing and managed community use of the MUGA directly supports this objective.

Paragraph 98 further supports the retention and enhancement of existing sports facilities unless the development would result in a loss that cannot be replaced. In this instance, the proposal upgrades an existing playground facility and does not result in any loss of sports provision.

Paragraph 135(f) requires that development creates places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. Lighting and noise impacts have been specifically assessed and managed to ensure there is no unacceptable effect on neighbouring residential amenity.

Manchester Core Strategy (Adopted)

The proposal complies with Policy EN16 (Environmental Protection), which requires development to avoid significant noise and disturbance and to protect the amenity of surrounding occupiers. The managed nature of community use, absence of amplified sound, and separation to nearby dwellings ensure compliance with this policy.

Policy EN14 (Flood Risk Management) requires development to not increase surface water runoff or flood risk. The proposals retain the existing hardstanding footprint and incorporate increased infiltration through perforated macadam, ensuring no increase in runoff to the existing drainage system.

Policy T2 (Accessible Areas of Opportunity and Need) supports development that improves access to community facilities and services. The proposal enhances access to sports facilities for both pupils and the wider community while using existing access arrangements and parking within the school campus.

Manchester Guide to Development SPD

The scheme accords with the Design principles set out in Section 2 of the Guide to Development by retaining the existing site layout, minimising visual impact, and using materials appropriate to an educational setting.

Compliance with Design for Health (Section 9, Policies 9.1–9.11) is achieved by supporting physical activity while ensuring that the design and management of the facility avoids harm to residential amenity through controlled hours of use, lighting design, and supervision.

The lighting strategy complies with Legibility, Safety and Amenity (Section 2.17–2.22), supported by technical lighting calculations demonstrating zero lux spill at nearby residential properties.

The proposal also meets the requirements of Environmental Standards (Section 4.9 – Flooding and Drainage) by maintaining the existing impermeable area and improving surface water management through increased infiltration, without increasing flood risk.

Biodiversity and Environment Act 2021

In accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as inserted by the Environment Act 2021, mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain applies only where development results in loss or degradation of on-site habitat. As the site comprises existing hardstanding with no ecological value and no habitats are affected, the proposal is exempt from BNG requirements and is ecologically neutral.

Community Use of School Facilities

The proposal aligns with national and local policy support for dual-use school facilities, whereby educational infrastructure is made available for managed community use outside school hours. Such use is ancillary to the primary school function and is supported where impacts are controlled, as is the case here.

Drainage

Surface water from the existing hardstanding is currently managed via established drainage gullies and channels around the perimeter of the playground, which will remain in use and unaltered.

The proposals do not increase the area of impermeable surfacing, do not alter site levels, and do not change existing surface water flow routes. As a result, the development does not increase surface water runoff or flood risk.

The resurfacing method incorporates a passive SuDS measure by drilling 28–32 mm diameter infiltration holes through the macadam at 0.5 m centres to a minimum depth of 300 mm, backfilled with pea shingle. This approach increases infiltration into the underlying subgrade and reduces the volume and rate of surface water reaching the existing drainage system.

No new drainage connections, pipework, or attenuation infrastructure are proposed. The existing surface water drainage network will continue to operate as designed, with reduced peak flows due to increased infiltration across the surface.

The approach accords with Manchester Core Strategy Policy EN14 and the Manchester Guide to Development Environmental Standards (Section 4.9), which require development to avoid increasing flood risk and to incorporate sustainable drainage where appropriate. Routine inspection and maintenance of the surface and existing drainage gullies will ensure continued effective performance.

Ecology

The site comprises existing hardstanding within the school campus and includes areas where Tree Preservation Order (TPO) trees are present. However, all proposed works are confined to the existing macadam playground footprint and associated hardstanding and do not encroach into landscaped areas or Tree Root Protection Areas (RPAs).

No excavation, ground reduction, service runs, or construction activity is proposed within the RPAs of any retained trees. As such, the proposals will not result in damage to, or loss of, trees or tree root systems, and the long-term health and viability of the TPO trees will be unaffected.

No habitats will be lost, altered, or fragmented as a result of the proposals, and there is no potential for impact on protected or notable species. The works are limited to previously developed hardstanding and do not involve vegetation clearance or disturbance to ecological features. The development is therefore ecologically neutral.

Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain, as set out in Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021), applies only where development results in the loss or degradation of on-site habitat. As the proposals do not affect any habitats and are confined to hardstanding, the baseline biodiversity value remains unchanged and a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment or metric calculation is not required.

The proposed floodlighting has been designed to avoid indirect ecological effects. Lighting calculations demonstrate negligible spill beyond the site boundary, ensuring no disturbance to retained trees or potential nocturnal species.

The proposals therefore accord with national and local planning policy objectives to protect biodiversity and trees while enabling appropriate development on previously developed land, and no ecological mitigation or further assessment is required.

Noise and Residential Amenity

The use of the MUGA outside school hours, including evening use up to 22:30, has been assessed in relation to potential noise impacts on nearby residential properties.

Noise generated by the MUGA will be low-intensity and recreational in nature, comprising small-group sports use only. There will be no amplified sound, no public address systems, no music, no spectator events, and no competitive matches. Noise will therefore be limited to intermittent speech and occasional ball impact against standard twin-bar mesh fencing, which does not generate tonal, impulsive, or continuous noise characteristics.

The proposal does not introduce an industrial, mechanical, or persistent noise source and does not fall within the categories that typically require assessment under BS4142. In accordance with National Planning Practice Guidance (Noise), a proportionate approach is appropriate where noise is informal, transient, and comparable to existing background activity.

The nearest residential buildings are separated from the MUGA by distance and substantial existing tree belts, which provide effective acoustic and visual screening. The surrounding area has an urban evening noise environment associated with traffic, parking activity, and general movement, within which the proposed MUGA activity will not materially alter prevailing sound levels.

Noise impacts will be controlled through the following management measures:

1. use limited to 22:30
2. no amplified sound or PA systems at any time
3. supervised or advance-booked use only
4. no spectator events or competitive matches
5. secure closure of the facility outside permitted hours

Having regard to the nature of the activity, the physical separation and screening to nearby dwellings, and the proposed management controls, the use of the MUGA will not result in unacceptable noise impacts or harm to residential amenity.

The proposal therefore complies with NPPF paragraph 135(f), Manchester Core Strategy Policy EN16, and the Manchester Guide to Development policies relating to health, amenity, and community safety.

Lighting and Residential Amenity

The existing pitch has been served by floodlighting for many years, and the current proposals replace and rationalise this established lighting arrangement rather than introducing floodlighting for the first time.

The proposed floodlighting has been designed to facilitate safe evening use of the MUGA while protecting the amenity of nearby residential properties. Detailed lighting calculations and spill assessments have been prepared by specialist lighting designers and accompany this application.

The lighting reports demonstrate that light spill beyond the school boundary is very limited. Lux contour plots show that illuminance levels reduce rapidly away from the pitch, with predicted values of 1 lux or below at the nearest residential receptor.

The only residential property in close proximity to the MUGA is 11 Polygon Road. The lighting reports identify a predicted level of approximately 1 lux at this location. This value represents external horizontal illuminance at ground level and does not indicate light intrusion into internal spaces. The affected elevation is a gable wall containing two windows that do not serve primary habitable rooms, and there is no direct line of sight between the luminaires and habitable room windows. Existing separation distance and mature tree screening should further limit any potential effects.

The lighting design incorporates controlled aiming and louvres and achieves an Upward Light Ratio (ULR) of 0.0, ensuring that sky glow and glare are avoided. The predicted spill levels accord with the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light, which identify 1 lux as an acceptable threshold at residential boundaries in urban locations.

Given the low predicted spill levels, the orientation and limited fenestration of the nearest dwelling, and the additional screening provided by existing trees, the proposed floodlighting will not result in adverse effects on residential amenity. The lighting strategy therefore complies with NPPF paragraph 135(f), Manchester Core Strategy Policy EN16, and the amenity and design objectives of the Manchester Guide to Development.

Conclusion

The proposals involve the upgrade of an existing MUGA within the school campus, together with associated lighting and managed use outside school hours. The works are confined to existing hardstanding and do not introduce new built form, expand the developed footprint, or alter established access arrangements.

The design and layout respond to the surrounding context, including nearby residential properties, through a restrained approach and reliance on existing screening. Parking and access are managed within the school grounds, surface water drainage is not worsened and is improved through increased infiltration, and there is no impact on ecology or biodiversity.

The lighting reports demonstrate that residential amenity will be protected, including during evening use up to 22:30. Noise impacts have been considered on a proportionate basis, having regard to the low-intensity, unamplified nature of the use, the separation and screening to nearby dwellings, and the proposed management controls. The proposals therefore accord with national and local planning policy and are an acceptable form of development in this location.

Should any further information be required please do not hesitate to contact me,

Yours faithfully,

Joseph Chelms MCIAT

Director, JCD Architecture and Planning,

Monday 5th January 2026