

Supporting statement associated with Planning Application Reference P/2018/0301 - Gwersyllt Primary School

With regards to the above application, we have reviewed the proposed hard standing multi use games area (MUGA) and the concerns raised by the Ecology and Biodiversity Officer (received by email 11 May). This raised a principal concern over the location and impact that the new MUGA will have on the outdoor space available to the pupils of Gwersyllt Primary School.

A meeting was arranged on site to discuss these in detail and was attended by members of the Design Team and both the tree and ecology officers.

The Applicant has requested we submit this statement to support the proposed location of the MUGA, which after further review, is being considered as the only suitable location. A supporting site plan has been prepared to accompany this statement (17070 ST06).

The project consists of a substantial extension and full refurbishment of the existing primary School and has been designed using guidance provided by the Building Bulletins published by the Department of Education as a benchmark for best practice.

The additional hard standing play area is integral to this development and is a fundamental requirement of the school to expand their current provision which may be considered as insufficient under the above guidelines.

Responding to this need, the size of the proposed MUGA follows the guidelines set out within BB103 - Area Guidelines for Mainstream Schools, Part B Section 2, which states that:

*'In new schools, the total area of hard surfaced outdoor PE (zone X - W) should include:
... a multi-use games area (MUGA), ... with critical dimensions of 22m x 33m plus margins for primary schools'*

for existing schools, BB103 further denotes that:

'a similar amount of hard surfaced area should be laid out for games.'

Whilst the width of acceptable margins is not defined, referencing Sport England and the FA a 3m run off is recommended for general safety.

Adopting this as best practice, the Proposed MUGA has been designed with these critical dimensions in mind resulting in an overall footprint size of 39m x 28m. Reducing this footprint would render the MUGA under sized and none compliant with current guidance.

It is worth noting that the existing MUGA located on Dodd's lane is significantly undersized (30.2m x 19.9m) and is a considerable distance away from the school.

Further comments have been raised regarding the location of the MUGA as proposed within the application. Locating the MUGA elsewhere would be unacceptable to the school on the grounds of general

access and safeguarding. Discussions have been had regarding the grassed area currently outside of the curtilage of the application however, this is deemed to be unsuitable based on:

1. It being a substantial distance from the school building
2. There would be unsuitable access from the school building. Users would be required to cross through the neighbouring property which is currently being used as a nursery. This would either be across the road entrance into the car park, or through a new and segregated fence running through the nursery play area.

The proposed position is the only suitable solution within the curtilage of the application that meets the needs of the school. Deviating from the application 'red line' would pose a risk to the wider planning application resulting in a financial risk to the Applicant and further risk the viability of the project going forward.

Referencing the proposed site and location plans, the MUGA is shown encroaching on a small wooded / dense scrubland area which is currently fenced off from the nursery playground. This will require modifying to suit the new arrangement. Whilst moving the MUGA outside of this zone has been further considered by the Applicant, the impact and loss of playground space to the nursery and resulting proximity to the existing building (whose elevation nearest the MUGA contains windows) would be unacceptable.

The applicant can also confirm that the ownership as identified within the application is true and correct and that this includes the overgrown area in question.

The position of the proposed MUGA has been located in its current position so as to minimise the impact on the trees currently within this zone whilst maintaining the hard-standing play area currently provided for the nursery. As identified within the application, this results in the loss of some planting and re configuration of the palisade fence.

It is also noted that the tree currently within the grassed play area and small area of sapling trees planted by the school will be lost. Every effort and care will be taken to carefully remove the sapling trees and if possible, re plant them within the soft landscaping area proposed adjacent to the new car park.

This new area of greenspace is being offered to supplement the soft landscaping being lost by the MUGA. This is land that is currently hardstanding and built upon which is currently inaccessible to the school and measures approximately 880m². The new green space offers the opportunity for the school to access and use as a forest school which may be timetabled into the curriculum. The Applicant is keen to introduce this area as an external learning space/habitat area following the issues that have been Identified by the Ecologist and Tree Officer and it is hoped that the area will be used by the school for activities.

Whilst being described as a MUGA (Multi Use Games Area), it may be prudent to clarify that the design of this will consist of a tarmac playing surface with segregation fencing to the adjacent nursery building. It will not require fencing of 1800mm or higher, nor will it require flood lighting.