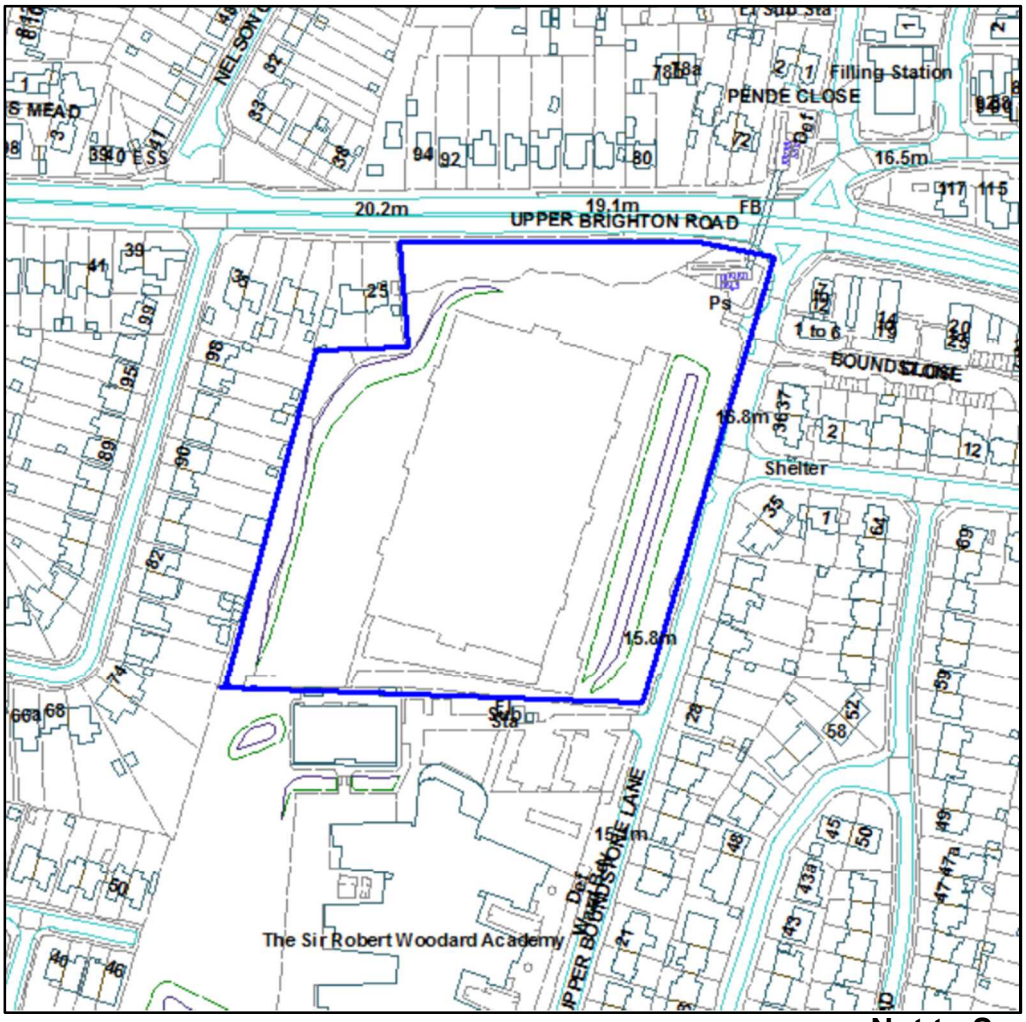
Application Number:	**AWDM/0338/22**	**Recommendation - Approve**
Site:	**Sir Robert Woodard Academy, 44 Upper Boundstone Lane, Sompting**	
Proposal:	**Construction of floodlit artificial Multi-Games pitch with sprint track and long jump pit and associated landscaping. Application to vary conditions 5 and 11 of AWDM/1883/15: to extend floodlight hours and hours of use to 9.10pm Monday to Friday.**	
Applicant:	Sir Robert Woodard Academy	Ward: Cokeham
Agent:	Mrs Stacey Bull	
Case Officer:	Peter Barnett	



Not to Scale

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Proposal, Site and Surroundings

Planning permission was granted in 2016 for the construction of a floodlit artificial Multi-Games pitch with sprint track and long jump pit the playing field to the north of the Sir Robert Woodard Academy(AWDM/1883/15).

To the north, the site is bounded by the A27 Upper Brighton Road; to the east lies Upper Boundstone Lane with bungalows on the east side facing the site; the school building lies to the south with dwellings in Berriedale Drive to the west. There are several dwellings adjacent to the north west corner of the site which front the A27.

The site was formerly the location of the original school buildings prior to their demolition in 2012.

The permission is subject to a number of conditions and a Community Use Agreement (CUA), enabling local sports groups, organisations and individuals to hire the pitch out of school hours.

Condition 5 states:

"The football pitch floodlighting hereby approved shall only be switched on between the hours of 9.00am and 8.30pm Mondays to Saturdays and between 10.00am and 6.00pm on Sundays and Bank/Public Holidays."

Condition 11 states;

"The pitch hereby approved shall not be used other than between the hours of 09.00am and 8.30pm Mondays to Saturdays and between 10am and 6.00pm on Sundays and Public/Bank Holidays."

The Academy wishes to extend the hours slightly to allow for use of the pitches up to 9.10pm Mondays to Fridays. The supporting statement submitted with the application explains:

"*Our community hire booking system allows for the booking of community use facilities by the half hour. We are currently unable to hire out the facility until 8.30pm, as the team/s need 10 minutes to pack up their equipment and use of the floodlights to do so. This means that currently bookings have to cease at 8pm in the winter months.*

We have seen a significant increase in demand for sporting facilities since the lifting of many post pandemic restrictions, and an extension to the current permitted times would allow us to support many more local clubs with their requests for facilities for community sports.

Our first request would be an extension to 9.10pm, to allow a further full hour of community hire, Monday to Friday. However, if you do not feel that this is acceptable, then we would like to request a shorter extension to 8.40pm, to allow us to hire out the facility until 8.30pm with a 10 minute packing up time.

Our academy is currently open until 10pm, so this request would fit within our community use strategy."

Relevant Planning History

AWDM/1883/15 - Construction of floodlit artificial Multi-Games pitch with sprint track and long jump pit and associated landscaping.

Consultations

West Sussex County Council: No objection. Conditions 5 and 11 were secured for resident amenity reasons. The Local Highways Authority is also mindful that the extended hours of use, will allow for the use of the site at times where the wider highway network is not at its peak use. As such the Local Highways Authority does not anticipate that the proposed revised hours would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 111), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

Adur & Worthing Councils: The ***Environmental Health*** officer has no objection

National Highways: No objection

Sport England: No objection

Sompting Parish Council: The Council has no objection to the shorter option to extend the floodlight hours and hours of use to 8.40pm but it does object to the longer option of 9.10pm. This is taking into account the valid representations from local residents.

Representations

11 objections received:

- Residents already suffer from noise, shouting, cheering, swearing
- There is shouting from the moment the school day ends right through the evening and all weekend. There is no respite.
- Pitch already being used beyond permitted hours (*NB this representation misunderstood the permitted hours and thought the time limit was 8pm, rather than 8.30pm*)
- Trees, fencing and bund do not work as noise barrier
- No planting on the bund at all
- Can no longer enjoy peaceful garden
- Spectators make matters worse - we were assured there would be no spectators
- Lights are very bright and illuminate neighbouring gardens
- Pitches are badly managed
- Where is the evidence of the increased demand? Booking system indicates lots of free slots on the calendar
- Suggest a compromise of extending hours until 8.40pm only during winter months, so that residents can continue to enjoy their gardens in the summer

- SRWA should not be allowed to seek any further increases in usage.
- SRWA will settle for 8.40pm so that should be the limit
- Unfair to penalize residents further

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adur Local Plan 2017 policies 32, 33, 34
National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

Relevant Legislation

The Committee should consider the planning application in accordance with:

Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provides that the application may be granted either unconditionally or subject to relevant conditions, or refused. Regard shall be given to relevant development plan policies, any relevant local finance considerations, and other material considerations; and

Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that requires the decision to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Planning Assessment

There were a number of issues to be considered at the time of the original application. These related predominantly to the impact of the use of the pitch on local residents through increased traffic, parking, noise and light impacts from the floodlights. A number of conditions were imposed to control each of these matters and the use has operated since 2016/17 with no reported complaints.

This application has generated a number of objections which refer to noise disturbance and light spillage from the floodlights and which questions whether there is really a demand for use of the pitches later in the evening.

These matters were put to the applicant who has responded as follows:

"The floodlights have never been changed since they were installed and are therefore at exactly the same specification as was agreed at the planning stages.

The Noise Management Plan is still adhered to and the neighbours may contact the school at any time if they have concerns. We employ someone who works solely for the purposes of the lettings, Monday to Friday 4pm-10pm, and at weekends. They are always on site when lettings are on. My office actually faces the 3G pitch and is far closer to the venue than any of the neighbouring properties, and I can never hear anything.

I would add that we run a strict policy of prioritising hire of the pitch to youth groups in the first instance. Due to the popularity of the pitch with youth groups, we have still not extended any hire to men's 6-a-side leagues, although they contact us all the time. I'm sure you can appreciate that men's teams would likely be noisier than youth teams, although we would still invoke the Noise Management Plan, should we hire to these

groups in the future.

I am in a constant battle with hirers at the moment, with several football youth clubs wanting the full pitch on whole evenings, and we just can't accommodate them all. If we are able to extend the timing of the floodlights, then I will be able to move some of the smaller groups to different days, hence freeing up the whole evening for the full pitch for other larger groups. The three main hirers that I am in touch with at the moment are Ace Football Academy, Elite Soccer Coaching, and Matchfit Football who all want Monday-Friday bookings. I am also in touch with Lancing FC Youth, who are looking to block book a year on a Sunday. I cannot stress to you enough how much need there is for local youth groups in the area."

It would appear to be evident that there is demand for the use of the pitch in the evenings and that a short increase in the hours would enable a more efficient use of the facility. An extension of the hours until 9.10pm Monday to Friday only would enable the pitch to be used up until 9pm, with 10 minutes clearing away time. At the moment the pitch is being used up until 8pm, plus 10 minutes clearing away time. The school has said that it would accept an increase until 8.40pm to enable use of the pitch until 8.30pm, plus clearing away time, if Members considered that an extension until 9.10pm was too late.

However, there has been no objection to the later time from the Environmental Health Officer. A Noise Management Plan has been agreed which requires users to sign a Noise Control Agreement with warnings issued to those who are found to be in breach of the Agreement, leading ultimately to expulsion. A mechanism to enable residents to report noise concerns is also in place. The site also has acoustic fencing and bunding to help reduce noise impacts.

It is considered that it would be reasonable to allow an extension until 9.10pm Monday to Friday in these circumstances. At weekends the use of the pitch would cease by 8.30pm (effectively 8pm) on Saturdays and 6pm (effectively 5.50pm) on Sundays (although a check of the pitch online booking system suggests that the pitch is not in use after 5pm on Saturdays and 4pm on Sundays).

Condition 7 of the original planning permission will also have to be amended if this application is approved as it currently allows for pathway lighting to be illuminated between the hours of 9.00am and 9.00pm Mondays to Saturdays and between 09.30am and 6.30pm on Sundays and Bank/Public Holidays. This will need to be changed to allow lighting until 9.30pm, to allow users to leave the pitch safely.

Recommendation

Approve

Subject to conditions:-

1. Approved Plans
2. The development shall not be used at any time other than in strict compliance with the approved details of community use.
3. The football pitch floodlighting hereby approved shall only be switched on between the hours of 9.00am and 9.10pm Mondays to Fridays, 9.30am and

8.30pm on Saturdays and between 10.00am and 6.00pm on Sundays and Bank/Public Holidays.

4. Floodlighting to be installed in accordance with lighting impact assessment document
5. The pathway lighting hereby approved shall only be switched on between the hours of 9.00am and 9.30pm Mondays to Fridays, between 9.00am and 9.00pm on Saturdays and between 09.30am and 6.30pm on Sundays and Bank/Public Holidays.
6. The approved Noise Management Plan shall be adhered to at all times.
7. The pitch hereby approved shall not be used other than between the hours of 09.00am and 9.10pm Mondays to Fridays, 9am and 8.30pm on Saturdays and between 10am and 6.00pm on Sundays and Public/Bank Holidays.
8. The approved car parking spaces in the northernmost car park shall be retained at all times for their designated use while the pitch is in use by the community.
9. There shall be no use of the 3G pitch hereby permitted at the same time as other specified community use/activities of the Academy buildings or other facilities on the site which are likely to generate a significant parking demand, in accordance with details to be submitted annually to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority.