

Proposed external play facility for College Park



Planning and Heritage Statement

PROPOSED EXTERNAL LEARNING FACILITY ON THE EXISTING HARD-SURFACED PLAYGROUND FOR COLLEGE PARK ASD PROVISION AT HALLFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL.

COLLEGE PARK AT HALLFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL, PORCHESTER GARDENS, LONDON, W2 6JJ

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 3BM Planning has been instructed by Westminster City Council (The Applicant), to submit a planning application for the proposed external learning facility on an existing hard-surfaced playground for College Park ASD Provision at Hallfield Primary School.
- 1.2 College Park forms part of the Federation of Westminster Special Schools. College Park at Hallfield Primary School is a SEN unit that caters to pupils between the ages of 4-19 with autism and complex learning difficulties. The SEN provision covers Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD) and Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD).
- 1.3 This statement demonstrates that:
- (i) The proposed development successfully balances the need to provide improved school facilities with the need to protect and enhance local amenity; and,
 - (ii) The proposal will not have any unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of the Grade II* Listed Hallfield Primary School, the immediate Grade II Listed Hallfield Estate and the surrounding character of Hallfield Estate Conservation Area.
- 1.4 **Section 2** describes the application site and surroundings including relevant planning designations and key site planning history, **Section 3** sets out the key aspects of the proposed development, **Section 4** identifies relevant planning policy, **Section 5** provides an assessment of the proposals against planning policy and **Section 6** is the summary and conclusions.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS (INC. PLANNING DESIGNATIONS AND SITE HISTORY)

The Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 College Park at Hallfield Primary School is an established education use (Use Class F1), located at Hallfield Primary School site, in Porchester Gardens, in the Royal Borough of Westminster City Council.
- 2.2 The application site (or Red Line Boundary) is comprised of land within the existing Hallfield Primary school site. College Park is situated in the north-western area of Hallfield Primary School.
- 2.3 To the north, the site is bounded by the Grade II Listed Hallfield Estate, which comprises of 14 residential blocks and laundry. The southern and eastern boundary is Hallfield Primary School and to the western boundary, the site is bounded by Inverness Terrace Road (B411) with further residential development.
- 2.4 Pedestrian access to College Park is via Terrace Road (B411) on the western boundary. There is no vehicular access to the site.
- 2.5 The site is well connected by all means of transportation. The A40 allows easy access by car, there are also several bus stops and routes serving the site in the immediate vicinity from the residential roads and the high street. The nearest underground stations are Bayswater and Queensway and there is also a national rail station from Paddington.

Planning Designations

- 2.6 According to the adopted Local Plan, the site is within Hallfield Estate Conservation Area.
- 2.7 According to the Historic England online search facility, the main building of Hallfield Primary School is a Grade II* Listed Building (List Entry Number: 1237491). The proposed development site does not feature within the listing description; however, it is regarded as part of the listing by association and its situation within the curtilage of the Grade II* Listed Building. The site is also within the vicinity of the Grade II Listed Hallfield Estate that comprises of 14 residential blocks and laundry (List Entry Number: 1402283)
- 2.8 The Environment Agency's online flood map facility confirms that the entire site falls within Flood Zone 1, which corresponds to a low risk of flooding.
- 2.9 It is understood that none of the trees within the application are covered by TPO.

Site Planning History

2.10 The wider site has an extensive planning history, the most notable cases are summarised below:

2.11 Planning permission was approved on 29.04.21 under ref 20/08237/COLBC for the *'Refurbishment and reconfiguration works to two classrooms, ancillary spaces and adjoining shared external learning environment; replacement doors, construction of fencing with pedestrian access gate; installation of air conditioning units at roof level, and associated works'* for College Park at Hallfield Primary School.

2.12 Planning permission was approved on 29.04.21 under ref 20/08236/COFUL for the *'Alterations to building and outside shared learning space to create self-contained school unit including replacement doors, construction of fencing with pedestrian access gate, installation of air conditioning units at roof level, and associated works. (Linked to 20/08237/COLBC)'* for College Park at Hallfield Primary School.

3. THE DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The development is detailed in the accompanying plans. Key aspects of the development are summarised here:

Proposed external play facility for College Park at Hallfield Primary School:

- (i) Renewal of surface finish (New Astroturf, soft pour surface, timber mulch and new playground markings)
- (ii) New climbing frame
- (iii) New canopy overhead
- (iv) New water play equipment
- (v) New trays
- (vi) 2no. of swings
- (vii) 2no. of trampolines
- (viii) New climbing trail equipment
- (ix) New fencing
- (x) Forest area with wooden seats

4. PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires all planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan in this case comprises of The London Plan (2021) and the City of Westminster City Plan 2019-2040 (Adopted 2021). Relevant policies from these documents are identified below.
- 4.2 In addition to the Development Plan, other policy documents such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) also represent material considerations in the assessment of proposals. Accordingly, relevant policies from non-development plan documents have also been identified below.

The Development Plan

City of Westminster City Plan 2019-2040 (Adopted 2021)

- 4.3 Policy 17 (Community infrastructure and facilities) states that the council will ensure that social and community uses are protected or enhanced and will support the provision of new facilities.
- 4.4 Policy 18 (Education and skills) states that the council will support the provision of new or expanded primary and secondary schools and further education facilities to meet the needs of a changing population and enhance education provision.
- 4.5 Policy 38 (Design Principles) seeks to ensure that all development achieve a high standard of design to meet several criteria, which include: i) responding to its local context; ii) being people-centred; iii) sustainable; and iv) promotes a contemporary design.
- 4.6 Policy 39 (Heritage) states that developments within the settings or affecting the views of listed buildings will take opportunities to enhance or better reveal their significance. Furthermore, developments situated within conservation areas should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area and protect the special architectural or historic interest of the area and its setting.

London Plan, 2021

- 4.7 Policy D4 (Design) seeks to ensure all development is of high-quality design and respects the character and townscape of the location.

- 4.8 Policy D5 (Inclusive Design) states that proposals should achieve the highest standards of accessible and promote inclusive design.
- 4.9 Policy HC1 (Heritage conservation and growth) seeks to protect London's historic environment and requires development proposals be sympathetic to the asset's significance and surroundings.
- 4.10 Policy S3 (Education) states that proposals should ensure that there is no net loss of education facilities.

Other 'Non-Development Plan' Policy and Background Documents

National Planning Policy Framework, 2023

- 4.11 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 12).
- 4.12 The Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities (paragraph 95).
- 4.13 Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and should contribute positively to making places better for people (paragraph 126).
- 4.14 Heritage assets should be conserved in line with their significance as they positively contribute to the quality of life (paragraph 189)
- 4.15 Local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. (paragraph 194).

5. PLANNING AND HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that decisions on planning applications *'must be made in accordance with the [development] plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise'*.
- 5.2 This section will assess the suitability of the proposed development against relevant planning policy identified in Section 5 of this statement. In order to assess the appropriateness of the development, a number of key planning issues have been identified.
- 5.3 The key planning issues that are considered relevant to the assessment of the enclosed development are as follows:
- A) Principle of Development
 - B) Design and Heritage Impact on Local Amenity
- 5.4 Each of the above considerations are addressed in turn below.

A) Principle of Development

- 5.5 As detailed in Section 4 of this Statement, great emphasis is placed within planning policy generally on the need to ensure adequate measures are made by local authorities to protect and enhance existing community facilities. In this instance, the NPPF contains planning objectives that seek to protect existing school sites and support the improvement of facilities where necessary, providing other planning objectives are not prejudiced.
- 5.6 As stated in WCC's Local Plan Policy 18 Education and Skills, WCC acknowledges the ever-changing demands of communities and the need for community facilities to be resilient to be able to meet these demands. In this instance, the proposed works are intended to improve the overall school's ASD facilities and positively influence the development of SEN pupils. External play space is vital for the development of SEN children since access to community playgrounds is very limited due to their complex needs, so having a good foundation at their school will allow them to access what their mainstream peers can access.
- 5.7 Furthermore, Policy 17 Community and Infrastructure and Facilities acknowledges the importance of community facilities in supporting people's everyday lives and acknowledges that they are vital resources to support successful places and communities. The proposed works will support The Federation of Westminster Special Schools and Bi Borough Inclusion Service with their aim to transform the lives of children and young people with SEND through the delivery of innovative specialist education.
- 5.8 Based on the above, it is considered that there is a clear need for the proposed external learning facility for College Park at Hallfield Primary School. As such, it is considered the proposal satisfies WCC's Local Plan Policies 17 and 19, as well as fundamental education objectives set out in National Policy.

B) Design and Heritage Impact on the local amenity

- 5.9 The project team's objective and overall design philosophy is to achieve an appropriate balance between i) the need to improve the SEN facilities to fulfill its function as a special unit for children with ASD, MLD and SLD, with ii) the need to carefully implement the external learning facility while simultaneously being sympathetic to the Grade II* Hallfield Primary School Building and its relationship to the Hallfield Estate Conservation Area.
- 5.10 The proposed works have been carefully considered, designed, and detailed to reinvigorate the existing hard-surfaced playground for College Park at Hallfield Primary School. This will result in a safer and more stimulating external play area for SEN pupils.
- 5.11 The proposed fencing will be similar to the existing fencing already erected on site. The proposed new fencing will implement zoning and will enable the school to regulate the pupils accessing the external play facility. This will enforce a clear structure for SEN pupils and will contribute to the school's safeguarding measures.
- 5.12 Measures through design are in place for the proposal to not have an unacceptable impact on the character, appearance or setting of the Grade II* Listed Building, the adjacent Grade II Listed Hallfield Estate and the Hallfield Estate Conservation Area.
- 5.13 In light of the above, it is considered the proposals satisfy Local Plan Policies 38 and 39, as well as fundamental education objectives set out in National Policy.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 This Planning and Heritage Statement in conjunction with the accompanying documentation collectively demonstrate the reasons why the development should be considered acceptable. These reasons are summarised below:
- (i) The principle of development is appropriate, given a) the need for the development and associated education benefits; b) the significant weight that should be afforded to such proposals in accordance with the London Plan, and the NPPF.
 - (ii) The proposal will not lead to any unacceptable harm to the setting, character or appearance of the site and surroundings including the Grade II* Listed Hallfield Primary School, the Grade II Listed Hallfield Estate and the Hallfield Estate Conservation Area. Any potential harm that may exist will be significantly outweighed by the public benefits that will be secured through this proposed development.
 - (iii) Overall, it is demonstrated that the proposal should be considered acceptable in principle and all other detailed aspects highlighted above.
- 6.2 Taking all the above into account, it is considered that the proposed development satisfies all relevant aspects of planning policy at national and local levels and should therefore be granted planning permission.