



Design & Access Statement:
Proposed Playing Field Renovation
Works to Far Field Site

HIGHGATE

Prepared by Hemstock Design Ltd
on behalf of
Highgate School,
North Road, Highgate, London N6.

Project: HD1704 - Highgate School Far Field
Reference: 1704-FF-Design & Access Statement
Issued for: Planning
Date: January 2023
Email: david@hemstock.design

HD Hemstock Design





Document Information:

Design & Access Statement issued in respect of planning application for renovation of existing playing field on the Far Field site, comprising replacement of existing turf pitch area with new synthetic turf pitch area.

Application made by Highgate School, North Road, Highgate, London N6.

This document has been prepared on behalf of Highgate School by Hemstock Design Ltd, with input from Highgate School and the following consultant and consultees:

- Haringey Council SUDS department
- SJ Stephens Associates - Arboriculture
- Applied Ecology Ltd
- Compass Archaeology
- Corner Water Consulting
- Transport Planning Associates
- Bidwells LLP - Planning
- CLP Consultants
- Eight Versa Ltd

Document ref: 1704-FF-Design & Access Statement

Hemstock Design Ltd
Regd (UK): 03227098. Sorrento, High Street, Elkesley, Retford,
Nottinghamshire, DN22 8AJ.

www.hemstock.design

Contents

1. Introduction	6	3. Proposal	19	4. Proposal Merits & Conclusions	39
1.1. Proposal Outline	6	3.1. Design & Accessibility	19	5. Supporting Information	42
1.1.1. Summary	6	3.1.1. Existing and proposed area Schedule	19	5.1. Hydrology	42
1.1.2. The School	8	3.1.2. Design Principles	19	5.1.1. Haringey Council SUDS Requirement	42
1.2. Statement of Need	9	3.1.3. Proposed Scheme	19	5.1.2. Detailed Investigation into Site Outfall	42
1.2.1. Existing Facilities for Hockey, Netball and Tennis	9	3.1.3.1. Plans	20	5.2. Arboriculture Report & Drawings	42
1.2.1.1. Hockey	9	3.1.3.2. Sections	22	5.2.1. Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report	42
1.2.1.2. Tennis	9	3.1.3.3. 3D Views	25	5.2.2. Tree Root Protection Areas	42
1.2.1.3. Netball	9	3.1.3.4. Aesthetic Improvements to Changing Block	28	5.3. Ecological Reports	42
1.2.1.4. Longevity of the Existing Sand-Carpet Pitch	9	3.1.4. Site Accessibility	31	5.4. Lifecycle Assessment	42
1.2.1.5. Inherent Limitations of Natural Turf	10	3.1.4.1. Site Entrances	31	5.5. Archaeological Report	42
1.3. Planning Policy	10	3.1.4.2. Access Ramp	32	5.6. Flood Risk Assessment	42
2. Existing Site & Surroundings	12	3.1.4.3. Natural Grass Margins	32	5.7. Transport Statement of August 2021	42
2.1. Existing Situation & Access	12	3.1.5. Improving Ecology & Bio-diversity	33	5.8. Earthworks & Construction Methodology	43
2.1.1. Site Location Plan - Immediate Surroundings	14	3.1.5.1. Hedging	34	5.8.1. Stage 1 - Access and Drainage	43
2.2. Limitations	15	3.1.5.2. Planting	34	5.8.2. Stage 2 - Earthworks	43
2.2.1. Playability of the Pitch Area	15	3.1.5.3. Educational Value	34	5.8.3. Stage 3 - Drainage and STP Installation	43
2.2.2. Inclusive Accessibility	15	3.1.6. Light Pollution	34	5.8.4. Stage 4 - Supplementary works	43
2.2.3. Arboricultural Stewardship	15	3.1.7. Traffic & Parking	34	5.8.5. Stage 4 - Maintenance Aspects	43
2.2.4. Existing Changing Facilities & Fixtures	16	3.1.8. Improving Perimeter Boundary	34	Appendix A - Biodiversity Enhancements	
2.2.5. Existing Sports Field Drainage	16	3.1.9. Ground Conditions	35	Artist-generated views with impressions of the proposed	
		3.1.9.1. Earthworks	35	wild flora seeded areas and pavilion roof-top	44
		3.1.9.2. Drainage & Hydrology	36		
		3.1.10. The Synthetic Turf Pitch	38		

List of Figures

Fig. 1: Annotated plan of proposed works	7
Fig. 2: Far Field circa 1920, one soccer pitch & wooded north-eastern corner	11
Fig. 3: Far Field in 1938, following re-levelling & drainage work in 1934. No change in total area or topography since then.	11
Fig. 4: Map showing Far Field in relation to the main Highgate School site.	12
Fig. 5: The main access gates off Courtenay Avenue	12
Fig. 6: Disused pedestrian access gate off Hampstead Lane	13
Fig. 7: Disused pedestrian access gate off Hampstead Lane	13
Fig. 8: Maintenance access gate off The Bishop's Avenue, allowing access to the embankment area only.	13
Fig. 9: Site location plan. Far Field site shown in context with surrounding residential areas.	14
Fig. 10: Flooding & slippery, muddy playing field surface recorded in January 2020	15
Fig. 11: The existing pavilion building	16
Fig. 12: New fencing installed in 2019 along Courtenay Avenue	16
Fig. 13: The remains of the stone-block lined ditch, later brick wall and concrete bed.	17
Fig. 14: One of the lateral pipe spillways into the ditch, blocked by tree roots	17
Fig. 15: The exposed outfall chamber cover with inflow land drainage pipes & outflow to the road system.	17
Fig. 16: Tracer dye from the field corner chamber appeared in the road system.	17
Fig. 17: Sketch of the general arrangement of pipes to the road surface water system.	18

Fig. 18: Existing Site Plan - Indicates recent pitch marking scheme, 3x soccer pitches. Contour lines demonstrate sloping topography of existing site.	20
Fig. 19: Proposed Site Plan - new synthetic turf pitch to be installed, with gentle site regrading to achieve an optimal playing surface. Temporary markings for two hockey pitches, and proposed spectator plateau indicated.	21
Fig. 20: 3D Aerial View - Proposed Synthetic Turf Pitch area, renovated pavilion, showing site regrading with proposed banking and spectator area towards the southern boundary (along Hampstead Lane).	25
Fig. 21: 3D Aerial View - Existing Site showing temporary line markings and sports equipment in-place.	25
Fig. 22: Proposed Synthetic Turf Pitch area with hedge & flora margins, renovated pavilion, temporary seasonal line markings and moveable goals for hockey.	25
Fig. 23: Existing view of playing area, from south-east corner towards north-west corner. Showing current arrangement of markings and sports equipment.	26
Fig. 24: Proposed view of playing area from the from south-east corner towards north-west corner. Showing STP with temporary seasonal markings, moveable equipment, and renovated pavilion.	26
Fig. 25: Existing view of playing area, from south-west corner towards north-east corner. Showing current arrangement of markings and sports equipment.	27
Fig. 26: Proposed view of playing area, from south-west corner towards north-east corner. Showing STP with temporary seasonal markings, moveable equipment, and wild flora margin	27
Fig. 27: Proposed aesthetic improvements to the existing changing block; building footprint and structure retained, with new timber facade cladding and canopy.	28

Fig. 28: Proposed view of changing block North (rear) and West elevations, with potential equipment storage lockers indicated to rear.	28	Fig. 38: Proposed site plan showing existing & proposed landscaping features	33
Fig. 29: Views of the pavilion proposal in-context, from south-east corner of the site adjacent to junction of Courtenay Ave, and Hampstead Lane.	28	Fig. 39: Existing replacement railings to the Eastern boundary of Far Field, along Courtenay Avenue.	34
Fig. 30: View of proposal in-context, from south-west corner of the site (adjacent to The Bishops Avenue and Hampstead Lane).	28	Fig. 40: Existing photo beside proposed visual showing new STP surface achieved by proposed earthworks.	35
Fig. 31: Elevations of proposed aesthetic improvements to existing changing block. The proposals retain the significant characteristics of the existing building - flat roof, brick pilasters, clerestory glazing - whilst sensitively modernising the appearance and renovating the deteriorating facades.	29	Fig. 41: Existing site drained area.	36
Fig. 32: Plans of proposed aesthetic improvements, and alterations to the internal layout, of the existing changing block. The existing staff WC in the south-east corner of the building is re-configured to create an accessible WC and shower room.		Fig. 42: Proposed site drained area.	36
The proposals include for a wild flower green roof system to further contribute to the bio-diversity strategy.	30	Fig. 43: Run-off onto Far Field from Hampstead Lane	36
Fig. 33: Plan view of the proposed access off The Bishops Avenue, comprising a double gate for vehicle access. Gate to be fitted with self-closing device and to have mechanical keypad-type combination locks.	31	Fig. 44: Sewer asset location drawing (compiled from ALS/ALS Standard/2014_2832379 - TQ2687NE, TQ2688SE, TQ2787SE, TQ2788SW).	37
Fig. 34: Elevation of proposed access gate off The Bishops Avenue. Appearance of gate to match the approved railing style used on the Highgate Estate.	31	Fig. 45: Typical synthetic pitch carpet (no permanent white-lining for Far Field)	38
Fig. 35: Pedestrian access route from Hampstead Lane re-graded to mitigate existing steep slope and abrupt change in level.	32	Fig. 46: 3D Cross-section of 3rd Generation Synthetic Turf Pitch; construction and drainage.	38
Fig. 36: Grass reinforcement proposed for existing entrance via Courtenay Avenue	32	Fig. 47: Far Field 'before and after' visuals; topographical survey based images of the existing pitches (left) and the proposed re-graded view (right).	39
Fig. 37: Synthetic turf surface to proposed new entrance via The Bishops Avenue.	32	Fig. 48: Photograph of existing Far Field taken from pavement level on Hampstead Lane, by the South East corner of the site.	40
		Fig. 49: Visualisation of replacement boundary railing, reinstated pedestrian access with gate, low-level hedgerow, and proposed works to pitch area.	41

1. Introduction

1.1. Proposal Outline

1.1.1. Summary

1. Highgate School is proposing to improve the existing grassed playing area known as 'Far Field', which lies off Hampstead Lane, Highgate, approximately half a mile from the main school buildings, with new drainage and synthetic turf pitch (STP). Far Field was a 1920's addition to the school site on Bishopswood Road, which has been occupied since the 1860's. Research into the past history of the Far Field site through the detailed school archives has revealed that the field has not been formally drained since the mid-1930's. The field suffers from very poor drainage through the winter months, becoming unusable for long periods of time during the academic year due to surface water and muddy conditions. Subsequently, pupils often have to be taken by bus to other rented pitches in the area and beyond.

The co-educational nature of the School also now requires a provision for a wider range of sports which has further increased the need to make this space more efficient and usable. The key driver for this project is to maintain the level of amenity for pupils and to ensure that the School can reliably offer the appropriate level of activities within the Sport and Exercise Department (SpEx) curriculum with a balanced provision for both boys and girls.

The School is looking to relieve the pressure on the limited playing field space, consisting of the main school site fields and Far Field. The proposal outlined in this statement is viewed as the optimal solution to the school's increasing playing field use requirements to fully meet the sports and exercise curriculum, maximising the ability to accommodate hockey and also provide the flexibility for netball and tennis to be able to be played through all seasons of the year, which is impossible on Far Field at the present time

2. This scheme has been designed by Hemstock Design, a firm specialising in outdoor sports facilities in coordination with the School, in particular the SpEx Department (Sports & Exercise). The scheme is based on the School's current needs and with future-proofing in mind, as the solution that achieves the most satisfactory balance between:
 - ▶ Accommodating the School's and current Sports & Exercise requirements to encourage outdoor activities
 - ▶ A sensitive approach following informal consultations with local residents
 - ▶ Preservation of the character of the Highgate Conservation Area (HCA)
 - ▶ Respect of the Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) preservation of open-space policy
 - ▶ Conforming to national sports area planning policies

The STP is urgently needed to consolidate improvements to the sports and outdoor activities on offer at the School. The provision of hockey facilities is particularly lacking. Hockey is a growth Sport at Highgate, with girls and more recently boys, playing from Y3-13. Building two hockey pitches on Far Field will provide the required facility to cater more effectively for the number of pupils playing hockey and support the growth of boys hockey alongside the existing girls programme. The requirements for hockey in particular show that the current grass surface at Far Field does not provide a suitable playing surface, or the durability and weather resistance, and these can only be met by the introduction of a STP. Separately from this application the full scope of the project offers the opportunity in the long term for the replacement of the existing sand-carpet pitch at the main school site on Junior Field with a 3G surface to accommodate the variety of sports activities in the curriculum.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the following drawings and figures:

Location plan and aerial photograph: Fig. 4 on page 12; Fig. 9 on page 14.

Existing sports pitch use: Fig. 18 on page 20.

Proposed sports pitch use: Fig. 19 on page 21.

3D Views: 3.1.3.3 on page 25.

Existing and as proposed cross-sections: 3.1.3.3 on page 25.

Pavilion renovation illustrations: 3.1.3.4 on page 28.

3. The existing grass Far Field sports pitch area is currently used for soccer primarily, with some junior cricket and athletics in summer, peak use is from April to November, with limited use through the winter due to substantial waterlogging. The proposed replacement STP area has been designed to maintain the openness of the MOL. Mitigating measures have been included, with local residents informed of the minimal visual effect of the proposal. The proposed synthetic surface will mimic natural grass very closely, and will be marked informally, as it is currently done by the grounds team, rather than with various permanent multi-coloured and overlapping 'inlaid' sports markings, common in most STPs.

The proposal is appropriately located within the MOL as it comprises an outdoor sports use that will not detract from the open character of the area.

Fig. 1: Annotated plan of proposed works



The proposals include a minor renovation of the existing changing pavilion comprising improvements to the external visual appearance sensitively to the amenity area and weatherproofing.

It is not considered that significant effect will be caused as the scheme has been sensitively designed to minimise or have no impact to the HCA. Moreover, it is envisaged that the carefully considered aesthetic improvements to the existing changing building and perimeter boundaries, as well as necessary arboricultural management and introduction of wild flora to the margin areas will benefit the HCA.

The proposal, when constructed, will improve very significantly the sports facilities at Highgate School in accordance with the sports and outdoor activities curriculum, offering the potential for its use to be extended to the wider community similarly to other sports facilities at the School. The scheme is therefore considered to comply with development plan policy, and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021; in terms of maximising the capacity, inclusivity, and efficient use of the School's facilities.

1.1.2. The School

Highgate School was established by Royal Charter in 1565 as a boy's school and has since developed into a thriving independent school providing education for c. 1940 pupils, with boys and girls from age 4 to 18. Extended to the Bishopswood Road site in the 1860's, there are three schools (Pre-Prep, Junior and Senior Schools) within a single Foundation supported by a sports centre (the Mallinson Sports Centre). In common with many schools, Highgate has evolved to meet various challenges over the years, the most significant of which was the decision to become co-educational in 2004 and in the region of a 50:50 gender ratio in 2015.

The Far Field site has been used by the School since 1922 on a leased basis. The school purchased the freehold of the site in 1969. With the school's natural growth and with no option to extend the school site into new land for additional playing fields, the only sustainable option for the School is to increase the playing capacity of the sports pitches they have, including Far Field, alongside the main Senior Field, Junior Field and two small grassed areas, The Orchard and Tatham's Fields; the latter three being at the main school site on Bishopswood Road. Far Field use through the year when available, weather permitting, is generally 6 days per week from early morning to late evening for sports and recreation.

The location plan (Fig. 4 on page 12) shows the relationship between the main school and the Far Field site.

The remainder of this report is set out as follows:

- ▶ Statement of Need (p. 9)
- ▶ Planning Policy (p. 10)
- ▶ Existing Site & Surroundings (p. 12)
- ▶ Existing Situation & Access (p. 12)
- ▶ Proposal (p. 19)
- ▶ Proposal Merits & Conclusions (p. 39)
- ▶ Supporting Information (p. 42)

1.2. Statement of Need

The introduction of co-education status and the changing nature of sports in schools has necessitated a fundamental reassessment of the sports offered by the School. The introduction of a suitable surface for hockey for girls and boys is essential as well as providing the flexibility for netball and tennis. For safety reasons and in accordance with the Hockey England and international hockey federation requirements hockey in competitive sports environments must be played on a smooth synthetic surface, rather than a potentially 'bobbly' natural grass surface, there being risks associated with the ball moving rapidly and unpredictably over the rough and uneven surfaces.

Hockey, tennis, and netball currently use the same space/surface in rotation, using the existing synthetic sand carpet pitch area at the main school site, marked-out as one senior hockey pitch or two junior hockey pitches, or as 12 tennis courts. This is unsatisfactory since it significantly reduces the season for each sport. The natural grass of Senior Field is used for soccer and cricket primarily, but with use limited by weather and ground conditions during long periods of the academic year.

For sports education to work properly at Highgate School in all respects, the STP is fundamentally important to the delivery of the sports and outdoor activities curriculum. All of Highgate School's pupils participate in sport including PE, swimming, general sports clubs, team practices and block fixtures in many different sports. Girls team and representative sport cannot continue to be catered for satisfactorily without access to some extended form of STP in the immediate future. Transporting pupils daily by bus to the nearest available STP is not viable in terms of time, expense, programming problems or environmentally, transporting pupils around the city adding to traffic, fuel consumption and pollution. Each year-group of pupils, boys and girls, requires access to a good reliable synthetic surface three or four times a week in order to develop the necessary skills in a range of different disciplines.

1.2.1. Existing Facilities for Hockey, Netball and Tennis

For the School to provide proper future provision for tennis, netball and hockey the calculations for requirements have been made by the School's SpEx department based on need justification assessment:

1.2.1.1. Hockey

Hockey is played on the existing sand-carpet pitch area as one senior 11-a-side or two half-sized pitches. The senior hockey games of 22 pupils tie-up the all-weather pitch considerably, subsequently making the efficient use of the existing pitch very complex. Hockey is played almost 9 to 5pm, non-stop. On Saturday there are hockey fixtures. On Sundays the pitch is hired-out to the

public for tennis and other activities all year round.

1.2.1.2. Tennis

There are no courts solely dedicated to tennis within the school grounds. The current 12 courts in the Junior Field are seasonally marked-out on the existing sand-carpet pitch, constructed in 2009 and 3 courts are in the multi-sport court in the back lands off Bishopswood Road but this provision is now struggling to cope with the required use, especially since tennis has to be rotated with other sports on the same pitches.

The maximum number of pupils that can play tennis at any one time is therefore 60 as doubles. The switch-over to tennis involves dividing the area into two with ball-stop netting. Timetabling cannot help here as the courts are already in use every afternoon, plus Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings.

The limited number of courts and the short period during which the area is marked out for tennis means that the school runs only a skeletal fixture list with very limited numbers in the squads (6 – 8).

1.2.1.3. Netball

The size of a netball court is similar, though slightly smaller than the full tennis court with run-back and side-run margins, giving 12 courts on the existing sand carpet pitch. Again, netball use has to double-up with tennis and hockey. These 12 courts are sufficient for 7 v 7 a-side games; thus the 12 courts can occupy 168 pupils at a time. As demand has risen, many pupils who should be playing are waiting on the side-lines at any one time. Significant increases in girls participating numbers mean that management through time-tabling is no longer adequate without making better use of the existing pitches in Far Field. Additionally, as the number of participating girls increases so does the need for A and B teams in all year groups to ensure equal opportunities for play. Thus, there is increasing pressure on existing spaces.

In addition to the seasonal outdoor courts, there is one practice court marked in the indoor sports hall. The use of the indoor facility for netball practice, however, hinders the possibility to offer a range of other sports that can only be played indoors. Thus badminton, volleyball, basketball etc. cannot currently be offered satisfactorily as a games option to either boys or girls.

1.2.1.4. Longevity of the Existing Sand-Carpet Pitch

The intense use of the existing all-weather pitch affects the maintenance and longevity of the carpet. Intensely used synthetic pitches demand a very high level of maintenance; cleaning, brushing, sand fill renovation, etc, to achieve a reasonably good and sustainable lifespan. After a commendable

maintenance effort of well over 12 years, the existing surface is now worn-out and needs replacing. Replacement of the surface without affecting pressure of use constitutes a major problem. In addition, the School can expect to pay a premium for such replacement works. This is due to an increase in demand for this type of work during holiday periods, during which most schools and other sports facilities also strive to undertake.

Having an additional STP surface to allow rotation during maintenance and carpet replacement would be another strategic advantage for the School in its overall management of playing surfaces and sports facilities.

1.2.1.5. Inherent Limitations of Natural Turf

Use of the school’s grass pitches for all sports is limited by the difficulties of maintaining natural grass on a London Clay soil type, drainage and compaction problems limit winter use in particular. This particular soil type reaches a saturated ‘field capacity’ condition from mid-November to early April, on average, limiting play when water-logged, and also severely limiting the quality of play when the surface turns pitted and ‘poached’, or muddled. In addition to the drainage problems, the wear and tear on the grass and the limited re-growth in the colder months results in periods when the grass pitches cannot be used, the School sport is forced to send pupils by coach to alternative hired facilities as well as having to switch to indoor sport. This in turn, displaces indoor sports activities. The introduction of an STP would result in sport only being cancelled when the area is snow-covered or when the weather is too harsh to play in, unlike the current situation where variable ground conditions result in regular cancellations.

The existing Far Field grass playing field area is marked-out as three large junior-sized soccer pitches, with one cricket practice area, giving a capacity of 3 x 22 players or 66 at any one time. It has not been properly renovated since pre-WW2, when the first full land drainage system was installed. It appears that the pitches have not been capable of a reasonably good level of winter use for at least 25 years due to the now complete failure of the existing drainage system.

The current Head Groundsman working at the school for nearly 35 years confirmed that no major drainage work has been carried out in this period. He also confirms that the field is mostly unusable from the end of October to the end of February, and then primarily for training only, with very few Saturday fixtures being possible. From March to September it is used for 1 fixture game per week on Saturdays with the opposing team bussed-in, and also training on Tuesday and Thursday. In summer, athletics and under-14 girls cricket are played. No rugby is currently being played at the school.

1.3. Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was adopted in 2021 and is a significant material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The Far Field site is in the London Borough of Haringey and within the Highgate Conservation Area and Neighbourhood Forum Area. It is designated as Metropolitan Open Land (MOL). The development plan relevant to this application includes:

- ▶ *The London Plan (adopted in March 2021);*
- ▶ *The London Borough of Haringey’s Local Plan Strategic Policies Development Plan Document (2013 with modifications 2017);*
- ▶ *The Development Management Development Plan Document (2017);*
- ▶ *The Haringey MBC Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2017);*
- ▶ *The Highgate Neighbourhood Plan (2017).*

The Haringey Local Plan identifies Highgate School as Site Allocation SA41 in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document. The London Borough of Haringey adopted the Highgate School SPD in March 2021.

Consultees will include Sport England, through the “PLAYING FIELDS POLICY AND GUIDANCE: Sport England’s policy and associated guidance on planning applications affecting playing fields”, August 2018. As stated in this document, a proposal for a new artificial grass pitch on an existing area of playing field which forms part of, or is capable of forming part of, a playing pitch would not meet with Exception 4 and would be assessed under 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”.

Exception 5

76. Artificial grass pitches or multi-use games areas may be able to sustain more intensive use than natural grass playing pitches. However, they will not be preferred in relation to Exception 5 purely for this reason. This is because a proposed artificial grass pitch or multi-use games area may be unsuitable to accommodate some grass pitch sports or the standards of play or grades of competition required for some sports. Also, they may not be sufficiently flexible to readily accommodate changes in demand for playing pitch types

& sizes compared to the current area of playing field.

77. Sport England will therefore assess the benefit to sport of a proposal, alongside the impact on those sports that need natural grass pitches, when assessing whether proposals for artificial grass pitches or multiuse games areas meet with this exception. This assessment will include reviewing local information and advice provided by the national governing bodies of sport.

78. Sport England will normally expect community use of any sports facility as part of the benefits that may enable it to meet with Exception 5.

In the long term, the proposed resurfacing of the Junior Field existing all-weather sand carpet pitch to a 3G synthetic grass fibre and sand/crumb infill will be suited to soccer and also for potential rugby practice and potentially netball. This resurfaced pitch will accommodate more soccer play per year than that achieved by the current 3 x natural grass pitches on Far Field. The proposed Far Field sand carpet hockey STP will be also suitable for netball and tennis, with other sports and activities possible as well. Cricket can also be played on it with the roll-out 'Flicx Pitch' for coaching purposes. The various sports pitches and courts setting out points will be marked only with small marker points or 'carrots' for the grounds team to mark lines temporarily for each sport.

The new Far Field STP will allow the following increase in use (a 60% increase overall):

- ▶ Tennis - 20 x 4 players = 80 pupils at any one time (was 48)
- ▶ Netball - 20 x 14 players = 280 pupils at any one time (was 168)
- ▶ Hockey - 2 x 22 players = 44 senior pupils at any one time (was 22).

Similarly, there is a doubling in capacity if the new senior pitches are divided each into two junior pitches.

Regarding use of the field for soccer, Far Field is estimated to currently support the equivalent of around 32 weeks x 4.5 hours per week senior equivalent use (undrained natural grass surface) x 3 pitches, or 432 hours of use per year (with very little use November to April, 20 weeks). The replacement 3G soccer surface at the sports fields on the Bishopswood Road sites is expected to support 8 hours use over at least 300 days per year, or 2,400 hours of use per year, an estimated increase of around 1,968 hours per year.



Fig. 2: Far Field circa 1920, one soccer pitch & wooded north-eastern corner



Fig. 3: Far Field in 1938, following re-levelling & drainage work in 1934. No change in total area or topography since then.

2. Existing Site & Surroundings

2.1. Existing Situation & Access

1. The Far Field playing field is situated along the northern side of Hampstead Lane, adjacent to Courtenay Avenue to the east, and The Bishops Avenue to the west. To the east, south and west, the site is bounded by Courtenay Avenue, Hampstead Lane, and The Bishops Avenue respectively. The northern boundary of the site abuts residential plots; Buxmead to the north-west, and High Birches in Courtenay Avenue to the north-east. Total area of the site with the key surface areas are:

Total Site Area (Ownership Boundary)	22,337 sq.m
Playing Surface (Proposed STP)	13,940 sq.m
Embankments	2,812 sq.m
Plateau	19,494 sq.m
Non-STP Margin	5,585 sq.m

The existing, levelled plateau area will consist of the STP carpet and the margin of natural grass, 5,585 sq.m. The embankments are proposed to be planted with wild flora and plants beneficial to local wildlife and to introduce biodiversity to the existing sports field.

2. Location details - Far Field:

Central point OS Grid Ref: **TQ269876 (E 526930 - N 187641)**
Access Gate (Courtenay Avenue) nearest post-code: **N6 4LP**
Height AOD: **112m (centre point)**

3. The boundary of Far Field is demarcated by fencing. Along the northern boundary there is a new palisade fence along the western half at the top of the embankment, and a wooden panel fence to the boundary with High Birches, eastern half. To the eastern boundary with Courtenay Avenue there is a new ornamental iron railing fence with the main access gates. To the south with Hampstead Lane there is an old iron railing fence with ball stop netting sections, and to the western boundary with The Bishop’s Avenue a combination of iron railings, concrete post fence with angle-iron and chain-link/netting ball-stop fencing. The old boundary railings along Hampstead Lane and The Bishops Avenue were replaced recently with new railings between August and October 2022.
4. Primary access to the playing field is currently gained via the main entrance off Courtenay Avenue, which is suitable for maintenance vehicles also. On route to this entrance is a manned security gate at the junction of Courtenay Avenue and Hampstead Lane. The secondary existing pedestrian access off Hampstead Lane would avoid passing through the security barrier, however, to enter the

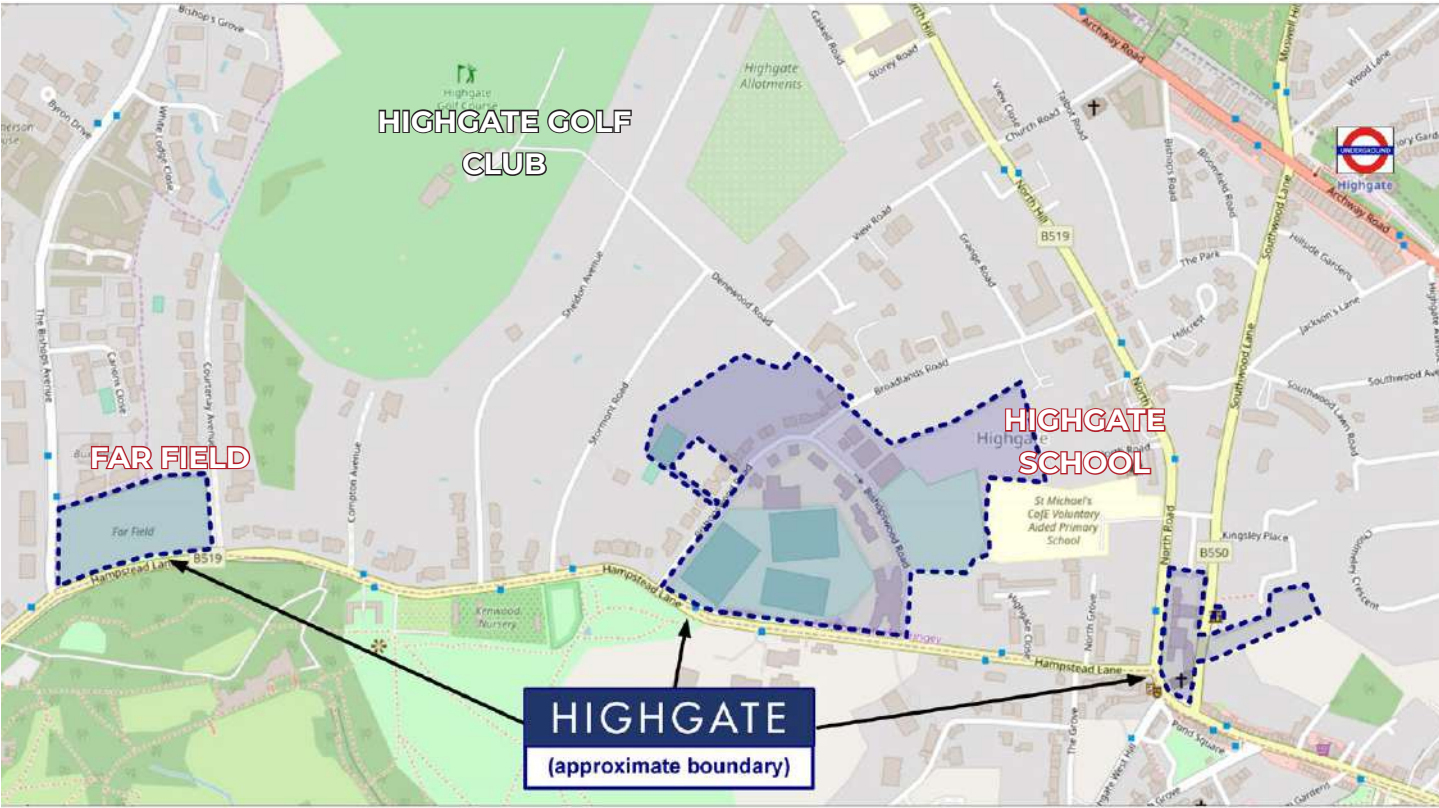


Fig. 4: Map showing Far Field in relation to the main Highgate School site.



Fig. 5: The main access gates off Courtenay Avenue



Fig. 6: *Disused pedestrian access gate off Hampstead Lane*



Fig. 7: *Disused pedestrian access gate off Hampstead Lane*



Fig. 8: *Maintenance access gate off The Bishop's Avenue, allowing access to the embankment area only.*

site via this route is unsafe as users would have to negotiate a steep banking, therefore this is currently unused, locked, and blocked with ball-stop netting.

A planning application to replace boundary railings was made in 2018 which included a new access to Far Field via a single gate for pedestrians off The Bishops Avenue. Planning application HGY/2018/1310 was granted planning permission in June 2018.

5. The layout of pitches on Far Field currently consists of:

- ▶ Existing soccer pitches 1, 2 & 3 of approximately 85 x 45m plus margins, set-out in the preferred north-south orientation.
- ▶ Pitch margins are tight up to the boundaries and embankment top/foot in places.
- ▶ The cricket outfield is relatively small, at approximately 50m from centre of synthetic pitch to the pavilion building corner, and similarly to the Hampstead Lane boundary fence.
- ▶ There are several athletics facilities, jump-pit, shot-put base, etc.

The existing playing field slopes downwards from the south east corner to the north west corner and the overall change in level is approximately 4.0m (existing site topography is shown on drawing: 1704-FF-LL-DR-A-10001).

The existing longitudinal fall over the pitches exceeds the Sport England recommended gradient of maximum 1:80 or 1.25%.

6. Parking - is limited to available spaces along Hampstead Lane and The Bishop's Avenue road-sides. Currently there are no restrictions on short-stay parking along most of these two roads, although walking distances can be significant. There is almost a mile along Hampstead Lane providing parking opportunities, from the Spaniard's Inn to the centre of Highgate, and a further 0.2 miles of The Bishop's Avenue with adjacent parking opportunities. Parking is generally not required for pupils. Pupils and staff will continue walking to Far Field as they do currently.

No increase in vehicular traffic affecting the vicinity is expected to arise from this proposal.

2.1.1. Site Location Plan - Immediate Surroundings

1. Far Field lies approximately 650m along Hampstead Lane, gate-to-gate, from the school sports fields on the Bishopswood Road sites. The walk from this point involves crossing 5 residential access roads, two being cul-de-sacs, or crossing Hampstead Lane twice if using the far side pavement.

The field is overlooked by several properties on Courtenay Avenue and The Bishop's Avenue. The School adopted a very sensitive design approach to maintain the character of the open space, maintaining the soft contours of the natural landscape avoiding unsightly fixed fenced courts, a multitude of multi-coloured fixed sports pitch markings and enhancing the habitat and biodiversity. The presentation boards of the proposals shared online with neighbours and during the public exhibition clearly illustrated how little change would occur with the very minor re-levelling and change of surface.

Far Field has been used as a school playing field for near 100 years, with the natural activity and cheering from upwards of 66 pupils playing and watching on the three sports pitches and moreover on sports days and athletics events. What is being proposed is primarily the opportunity of continuing this level of use more effectively also into the winter season.

Improved security for Courtenay Avenue is intended through diversion of most traffic to the pedestrian gate on Hampstead Lane corner and the new access on The Bishops Avenue.



Fig. 9: Site location plan. Far Field site shown in context with surrounding residential areas.

2.2. Limitations

2.2.1. Playability of the Pitch Area

The sloping topography and the surface conditions – natural grass on London Clay – compromises the suitability of the field in meeting the School’s needs, and significantly limits the overall annual level of use that the field can support.

An effective land drainage system is essential to the adequate wear capacity of a natural grass playing field. An industry ‘rule-of-thumb’ lifespan for land drainage is 25 years before replacement is needed. Some of the existing pitch drainage is more than 25 years old, some dates back to the 1930’s, and the complete system has now largely failed through age. The playing surface is regularly water-logged and permanently muddy in high wear areas through winter, and cannot be used reliably from November to March every year, when the soil reaches ‘field capacity’, or saturated soil water content.

2.2.2. Inclusive Accessibility

The primary entrance on Courtenay Avenue is sufficiently wide for vehicular and maintenance access. It has an unobstructed gently rising slope from road level to the playing surface level. However, in wet conditions the field is not accessible for wheelchair users.

The proposals include a wheel-chair accessible ramp to be installed from the Hampstead Lane pedestrian gate towards the existing main gate, and then on over a reinforced natural grass all-weather surface to the Pavilion and STP.

2.2.3. Arboricultural Stewardship

The site has trees on every side of the boundary margin. A large proportion of trees within the site are reaching their early-mature or are at the mature stage. Some arboricultural maintenance intervention has been carried out over winter 2019-20, with further work to be carried out under the monitoring of the School’s Arboricultural Consultant. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been produced, with a log of all tree on the site of over 75mm trunk girth, species, condition, etc.



Fig. 10: Flooding & slippery, muddy playing field surface recorded in January 2020



2.2.4. Existing Changing Facilities & Fixtures

1. The existing changing pavilion located towards the central-northern boundary is functionally adequate to provide the very limited changing and toilet facilities required, however the building is now 60 years old, having replaced a wooden pavilion in 1960. The exterior appearance is deteriorating and is considered to be out of keeping with the surrounds, and in need of renovation and improvements.
2. The condition of the existing fencing around the site boundary has deteriorated due to age and the normal consequences of weathering, detracting from the character of the surroundings. Renovation of the boundary fencing and inner ball-stop fencing has been completed in 2019 along Courtenay Avenue and the northern boundary of the field. Further improvements are planned along The Bishops Avenue and Hampstead Lane.

2.2.5. Existing Sports Field Drainage

1. The site was known to have had a ditch outfall along the northern boundary with the 'High Birches' residence, from historical references in the school archives. A letter dating from the mid-1930's referred to flooding problems occurring when High Birches was built, the construction work blocking this ditch and causing the School to divert water from the ditch into a silt chamber and then to the new drainage system in what was to become Courtenay Avenue.
2. A land drainage system was installed in Far Field around the same time as the new outfall work, pre-WW2 and into the 1940's, this dating from Around 1943 when the M.o.D vacated the site which had been used to anchor a barrage balloon. The footings of the balloon anchor and access track were deposited in the north-east corner of the field as fill, with renovation of the drainage and playing surface.

In the years that followed, the remains of the ditch and the silt chamber cover were hidden deep under spoil and vegetation on the north-east corner embankment. In 2018-20, following a series of attempts to locate the outfall point by excavating, using ground radar and other specialist techniques, and in liaison with the Haringey Council's SUDS officers, the outfall point was found and exposed in February 2020 by Direct Drains Ltd, who have produced an extensive record of the existing pipework, chambers and connections into the surface water system of Courtenay Avenue.



Fig. 11: *The existing pavilion building*



Fig. 12: *New fencing installed in 2019 along Courtenay Avenue*



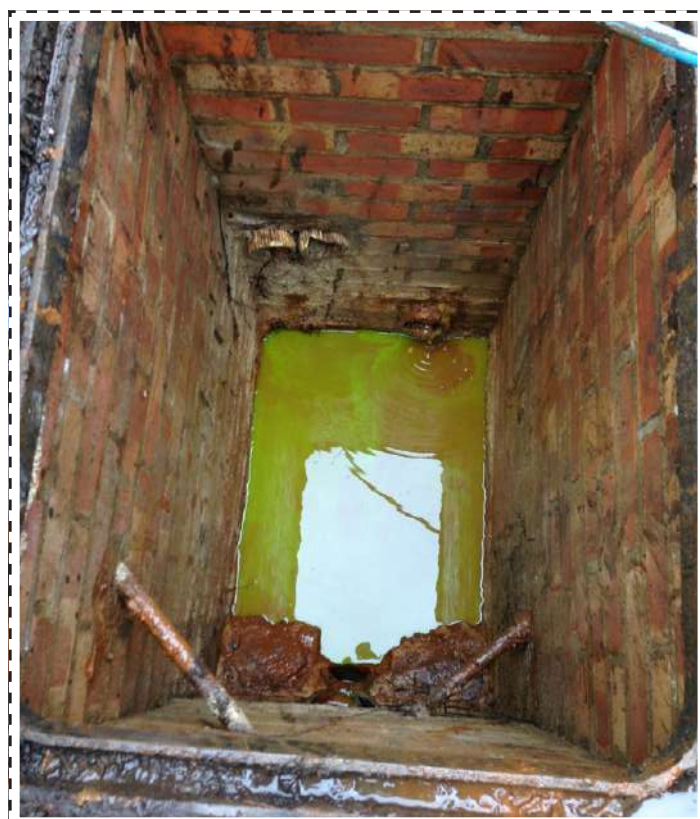
Fig. 13: The remains of the stone-block lined ditch, later brick wall and concrete bed.



Fig. 14: One of the lateral pipe spillways into the ditch, blocked by tree roots



Fig. 15: The exposed outfall chamber cover with inflow land drainage pipes & outflow to the road system.



The existing sports field drainage from Catchpit 01 connects to the main surface water drain in Courtenay Avenue. this was proven by dye testing and CCTV



Fig. 16: Tracer dye from the field corner chamber appeared in the road system.

Highgate School
Far Field
21.02.2020

Sports Field

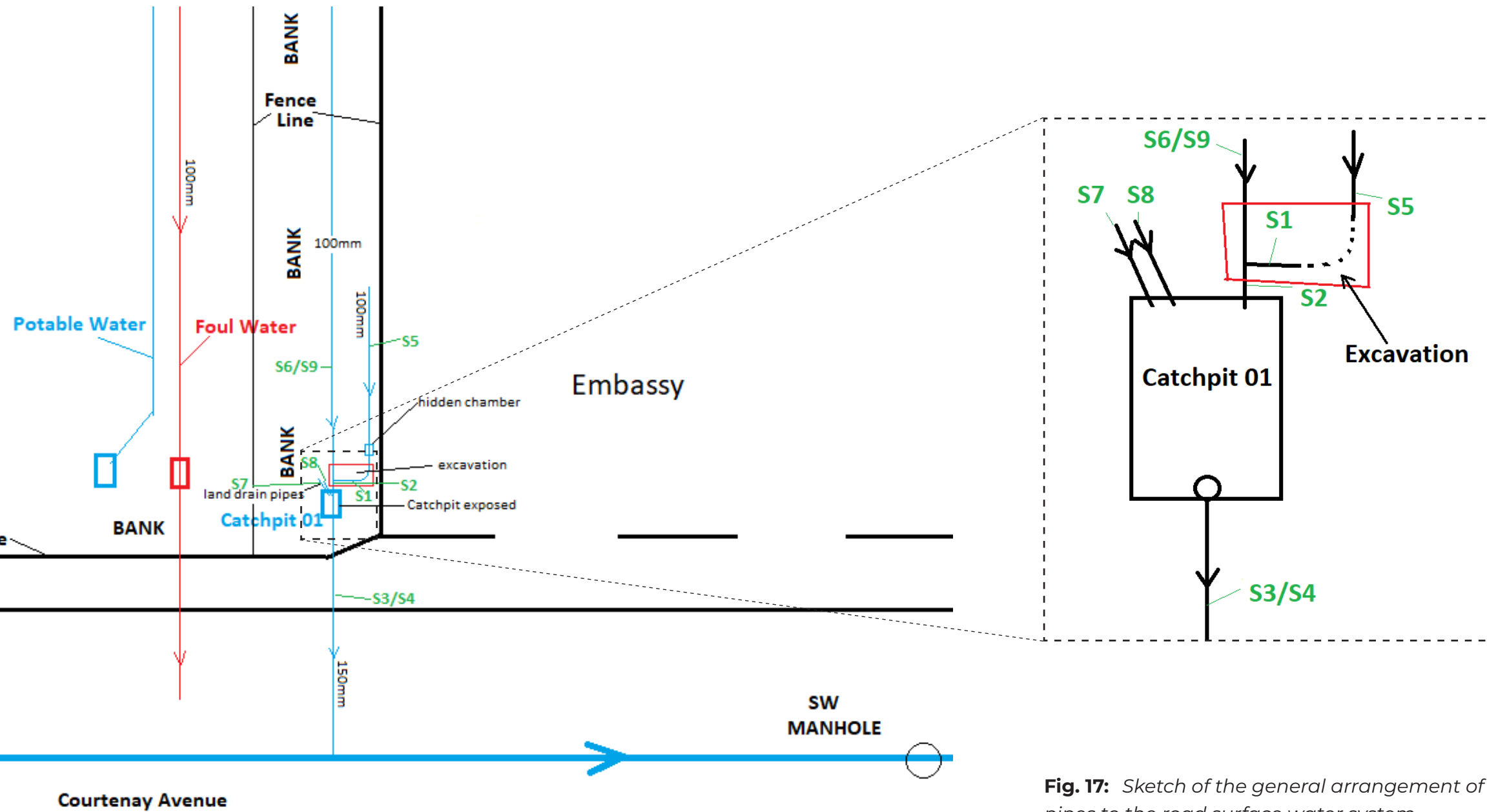


Fig. 17: Sketch of the general arrangement of pipes to the road surface water system.

- The outfall pipe from the field to the Courtenay Avenue surface water system will require some renovation to remove roots, or possibly replacement within the school grounds boundary section. The main outflow pipe to the road system will remain as the same internal diameter of 150mm.

3. Proposal

3.1. Design & Accessibility

The proposed scheme is presented in section 3.1.3 and includes the following elements:

- **Aesthetic Improvements to Changing Block (section 3.1.3.4, p. 28):** Renovation of the existing building.
- **Access Ramp (section 3.1.4.2, p. 32):** Formation of an access ramp with iron handrail from the currently disused pedestrian access off Hampstead Lane.
- **Site Entrances (section 3.1.4.1, p. 31):** Reinforced natural grass emergency vehicle path connecting the Pavilion to the Courtenay Avenue and The Bishops Avenue access points.
- **Natural Grass Margins (section 3.1.4.3, p. 32):** Establishment of natural grass margins, some to be reinforced invisibly.
- **Light Pollution (section 3.1.6, p. 34):** Pathways to have low level lighting if required for safety reasons.
- **Improving Ecology & Bio-diversity (section 3.1.5, p. 33):** Planting to improve ecological diversity and further tree management.
- **Improving Perimeter Boundary (section 3.1.8, p. 34):** Improvements to the boundary fencing on Hampstead Lane and The Bishop’s Avenue sides.
- **Earthworks (section 3.1.9.1, p. 35):** Re-levelling of the playing surface plateau by minor cut and fill, following topsoil removal. Excess topsoil to be removed from site.
- **Drainage & Hydrology (section 3.1.9.2, p. 36):** Renovation of the existing outfall pipe to Courtenay Avenue.
- **The Synthetic Turf Pitch (section 3.1.10, p. 38):** Installation of a sand-carpet synthetic pitch, with drainage and layered construction, including an attenuation capacity.

3.1.1. Existing and proposed area Schedule

	Existing (m²)	Proposed (m²)
Overall site area	22,337	22,337
Natural grass surface	21040.4	5,585
Synthetic turf surface	113.2	13,940
Building area	56.0	56.0
Designated areas for spectating	0	876
Designated area for bio-diversity enhancement	0	1936

3.1.2. Design Principles

In alignment with relevant planning policies and with respect to the Highgate Conservation Area, several key design principles have been identified to ensure that the scheme provides an overall enhancement:

- ▶ The new design will blend seamlessly with the existing grass field through banked and regraded landscaping.
- ▶ The proposed design will have minimal visual impact. No perimeter fencing will be constructed to enclose the synthetic turf pitch (STP), and no permanent line markings will be used.
- ▶ The design will strictly avoid the need for any built structure or retaining walls around the perimeter of the proposed STP, minimising the aesthetic impact of the proposal on the character of the site.
- ▶ The selected synthetic surface is to be chosen for minimum visual impact, maximum longevity.

3.1.3. Proposed Scheme

General arrangement plans, sections, 3D views and associated aesthetic improvement works. See overleaf.

3.1.3.1. Plans



Existing Site Plan

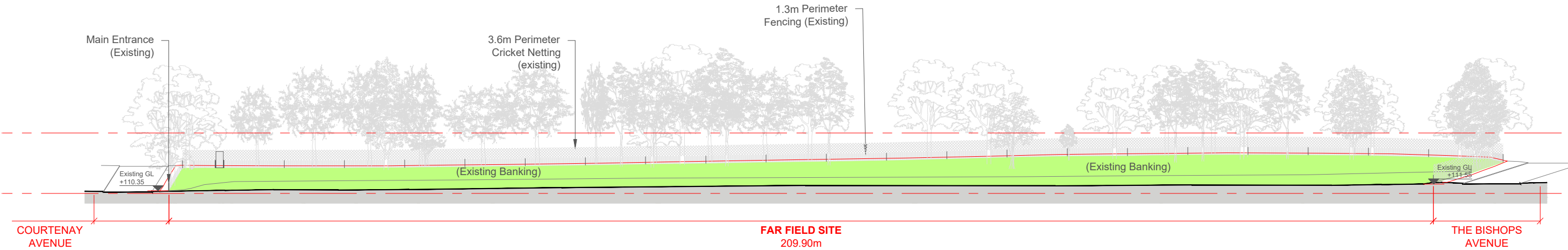
Fig. 18: Existing Site Plan - Indicates recent pitch marking scheme, 3x soccer pitches. Contour lines demonstrate sloping topography of existing site.



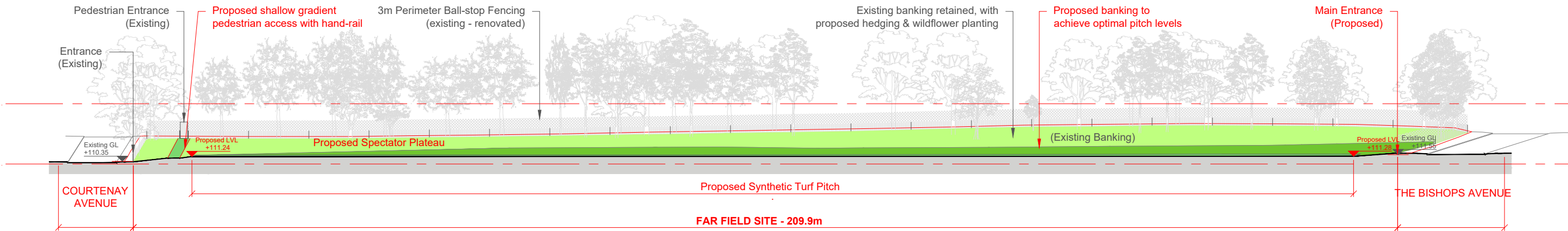
Proposed Site Plan

Fig. 19: Proposed Site Plan - new synthetic turf pitch to be installed, with gentle site regrading to achieve an optimal playing surface. Temporary markings for two hockey pitches, and proposed spectator plateau indicated.

3.1.3.2. Sections



Section A - Existing



Section A - Proposed