

3.4 Heritage Statement

Given the common is the remnant of a much fragmented and reduced series of historic open space and is within a conservation area, it is recognised the proposed MUGA will have an impact on the current nature of the space. However this impact is not considered substantial and is outweighed by the public benefit of the scheme.

The MUGA is within the London Borough of Haringey Conservation Area 10

The Conservation area designation was established in 1976 and seeks to protect the historic assets, in the form they had at the time of designation.

Historic Evolution
As a landscape ecology the common has evolved from a larger, managed but biodiverse landscape to a much smaller, enclosed, essentially mono-diverse ecology of amenity mown grass.

The function of the Common has also changed from a local, shared natural resource of grazing, firewood, and hunting, to an amenity space for recreation and the benefits of the outdoors.

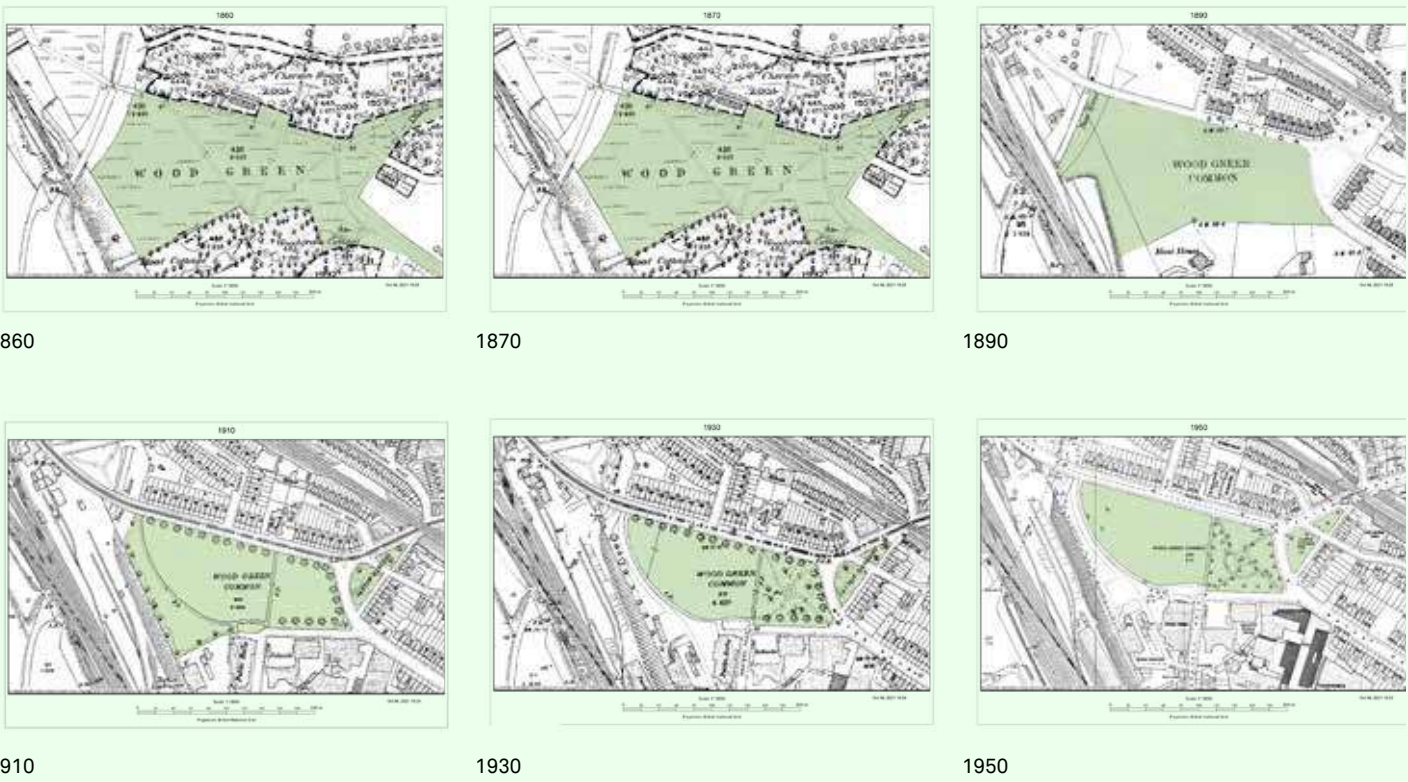
The resource of wooded and scrub land was encroached on by urbanization and by the late C19th, development plots, the rail, road, and New River infrastructure bisected the landscape, and the commons were reduced to linear strips of green running alongside main routes and to smaller greens in the space left over from development.

The Common has halved in size since 1860, including the loss of the strip along the railway embankment to the west, where Heartlands School now stands.

Early historic photos show the evolution of the municipalized Wood Green Common from an open monoculture of mown grass, with trees at the perimeter, to a designed amenity space. In the 1930s the east side of the common was set out in the style of a garden with a network of paths, planting beds, a drinking fountain and pergola, as an amenity for the workers from the adjacent Barratt factory.

Photographs from the middle of the last century, show further amenity development with the installation of what appears to be full size set of goal posts, and items of play equipment. Plans and photographs show the continued development of the playground on the west side up to the existing layout.

Tree planting along the south side, following the curve of



Evolution of the common showing reduction in size since 1860, including loss of the strip along the railway embankment to the west, where Heartlands School now stands.

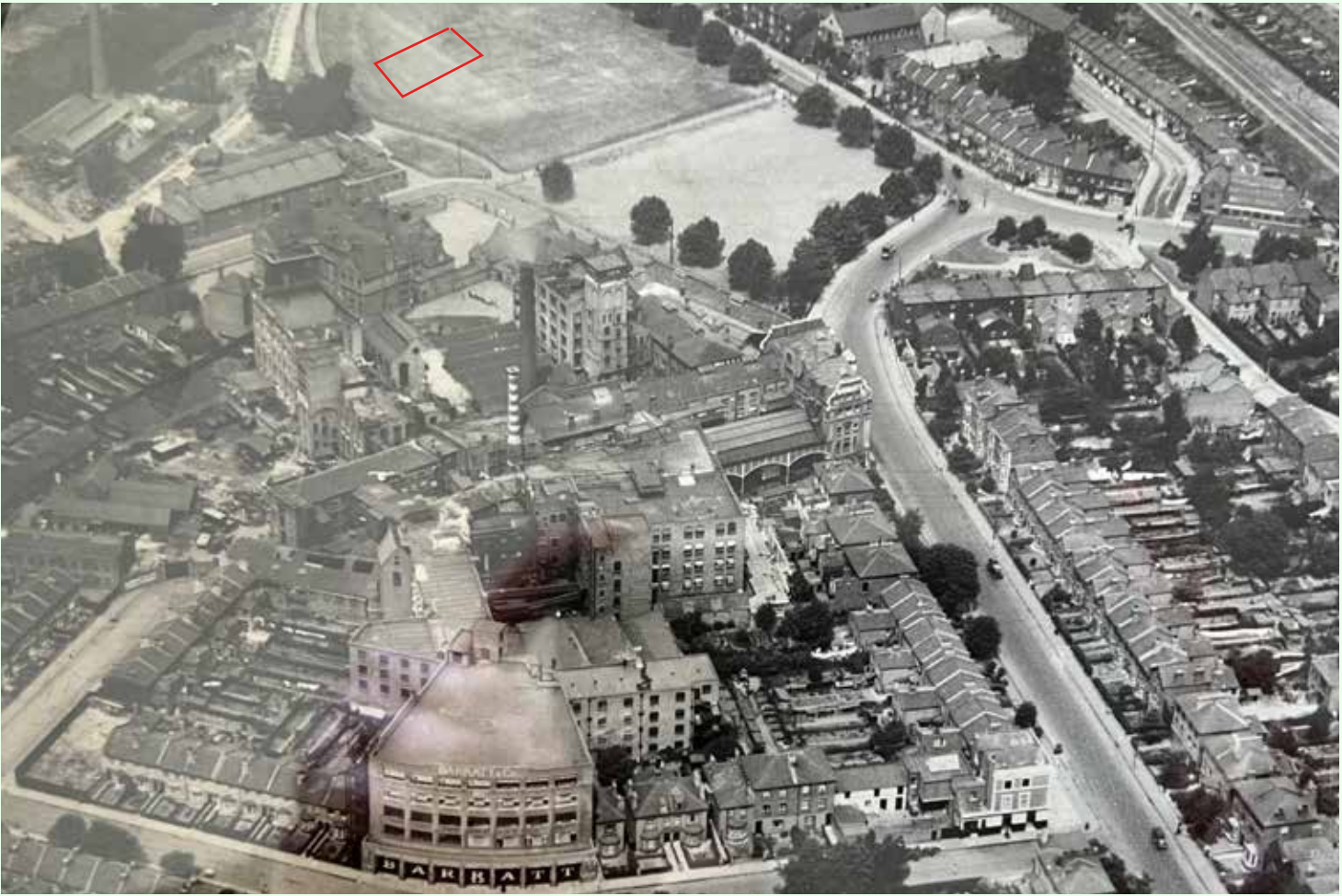
the locally listed wall, was undertaken in association with the building of Heartlands School, and gates were set into the historic wall to give access to the school. The municipalization and urbansization of the common was formalized when it came under the governance of the local authority and by 1972 was designated a 'Town Green.'

The common has decreased in size and biodiversity and its use has evolved from both before and after the conservation designation.

The evolution reflects both changing social attitudes to recreation, and the increasing population density in Wood Green.

The MUGA proposal and the wider scheme for the common is part of the historic chain of change and seeks to address multiple contemporary social and environmental needs.

The social need is to provide more equitable access to a wider range of recreation and play opportunities, and to give access to nature, for all ages and genders, in an increasingly population dense, unequitable urban environment, where nature is depleted.



Wood Green Common early 1900s, before development of Barratt Gardens and tree planting. Barratt's factory in the foreground and MUGA footprint outlined.

The environmental need is to address the impact of the climate emergency and balance nature recovery with provision of amenity space.

The public benefit is the provision of an all-weather, enclosed, safer by design, lit court, set out for a range of games, including netball, to proactively encourage girls into sport.

LBH will deliver a program of safe, welcoming, and targeted MUGA sessions, to encourage participation by those identified as likely to be (self) excluded from sporting activity, for example.

Design Mitigation within the Conservation Area

The design rationale to counter comments that the MUGA is overbearing in its design, not in keeping with the nature of the common and represents a loss of open space are as follows.

1. Size

The size of the MUGA is modest and does not dominate the common, the footprint is 4.5% of the available open space.

The pitch design is significantly smaller than the pitch that was in place in the 1970s, as seen in historic photos which takes up almost all the grassed area of the common.

In response to public consultation in the development of this scheme the MUGA has halved in size.

Research with Sport England and the Football Federation has established the smallest court size to facilitate those sports; football, netball, and basketball shooting, that local people and local sports development agencies wanted.



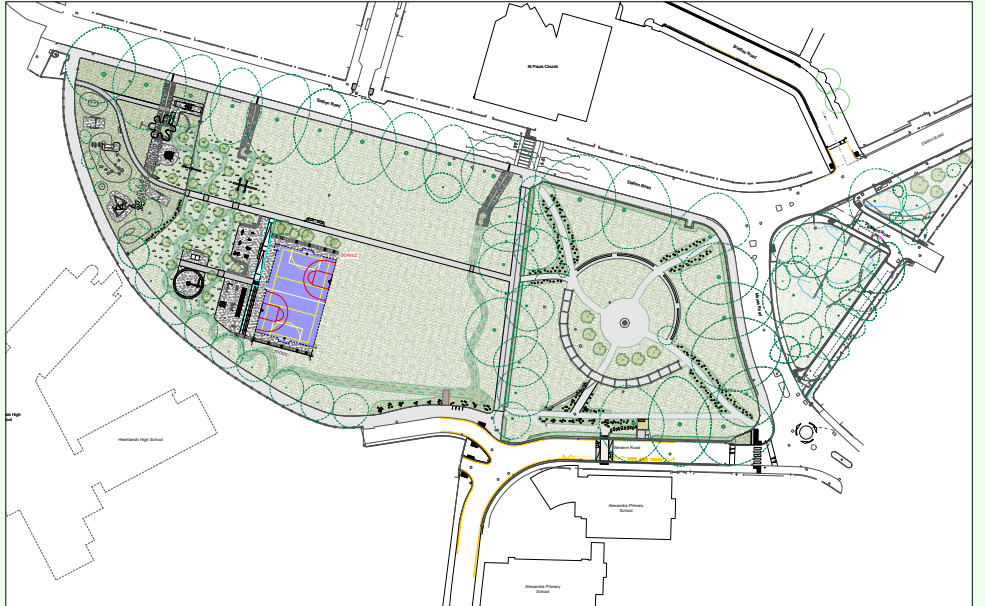
Evolution of amenity space, dominated by the football pitch in the 1970s.
Top left, looking west before Heartlands was built, with football goals and line markings taking up the open space.
Bottom left and right, play area, in the east corner with football pitch dominating the open space to the west
Top right, the pergola without wisteria and Alexandra School in the background.



----- 1970s football pitch
----- Proposed MUGA



Stage II Scheme



Reduction in size in response to public feedback

2. Overbearing in Design

The MUGA is designed to work with the contours of the landscape and be as unobtrusive as possible.

The Common is on a shallow slope falling from the north west corner to the southeast.

A ball court needs a level surface and the MUGA is cut into the landscape and steps down approximately a metre to meet the landscape at grade at the southeast side.

To minimise the height of the cut the MUGA is oriented broad side on to the slope.

To ensure the Common retains a naturalised quality the retaining walls are formed of uncut stone slabs with a set of access steps and a DDA compliant ramp retain the earth and give full access for wheelchairs and those with walking aids on the long north west side.

The pitch surface is integrated into the common wide sustainable drainage system and is fully porous with below ground drainage layers, sloping to the swale network that runs along the south side of the MUGA.



3. Not in Keeping with the Nature of the Common.

Wood Green Common has evolved as a resource for local people, from an agrarian landscape to an amenity landscape.

The nature of the Common has changed throughout its history as it has served different needs in the shift from a rural to an suburban and now a densely urban neighbourhood.

As the neighbourhood becomes more densely populated open spaces have to provide more opportunities for sport, recreation and repose for greater numbers of people.

The MUGA is designed to deliver an amenity space to satisfy the needs of the greatest number of people. It is set within a wider landscape design that balances amenity spaces for play and repose with protecting the environment and supporting nature recovery.

For the MUGA to operate efficiently an enclosed ball court is necessary to contain and enable ball games and avoid intrusion on the adjacent amenity provision.

The fence specified has been designed by the sports industry to be as visually unobtrusive as possible.

The colour specified is based on research by English landscape designers for estate fencing, with the aim that the colour visually and neutrally blends with the background.

In 1808, James Crease, the Bath colourman, described “Invisible Green” as a dark green:

“so denominated from its being proper for covering gates and rails in parks, pleasure grounds, etc. by rendering them in a measure invisible at a distance on account of its approximation to the hue of the vegetation”

In 1829, T.H. Vanherman, the London colourman, described Invisible Green as follows:

“The Invisible Green is one of the most pleasant colours for fences, and all work connected with buildings, gardens, or pleasure grounds, as it displays a richness and solidity, and also harmonizes with every object, and is a back-ground and foil to the foliage of fields, trees, and plants, as also to flowers.”

Obviously, no structure can be designed to be invisible. The photographs of a similar fence type show the minimal visual impact the fence has on the surroundings.



4. Concerns about Light Pollution disturbing both residents living around the Common and the impact on wildlife are addressed as follows

The court will be operational all the year round and lighting is necessary in the winter months to enable use after school between October and March.

The lights will not be used after 10pm and when the court is not in use the lights will automatically turn off.

The lux levels and lighting hardware are designed for use on games pitches and project the light exclusively on the pitch surface.

The lighting heads are mounted on 8m high columns, with a bracket that allows precise angling to ensure light is projected down with minimal lateral spill.

The modules are further equipped with a Backlight control system to prevent light spill from the back of the luminaire and glare control to prevent lateral spill.

The light source is LED which are designed to allow precise angling of the light beam through the mounting bracket and prevent light spill and glare and are the most energy efficient light source.

Although the lit area will be visible, the light will not spill or cause glare on the surrounding area, including the houses along Station Road. The pitch has been located as far from residential areas as possible.

Trees are planted along the north boundary of the MUGA to mask both the fence and the lit pitch surface.

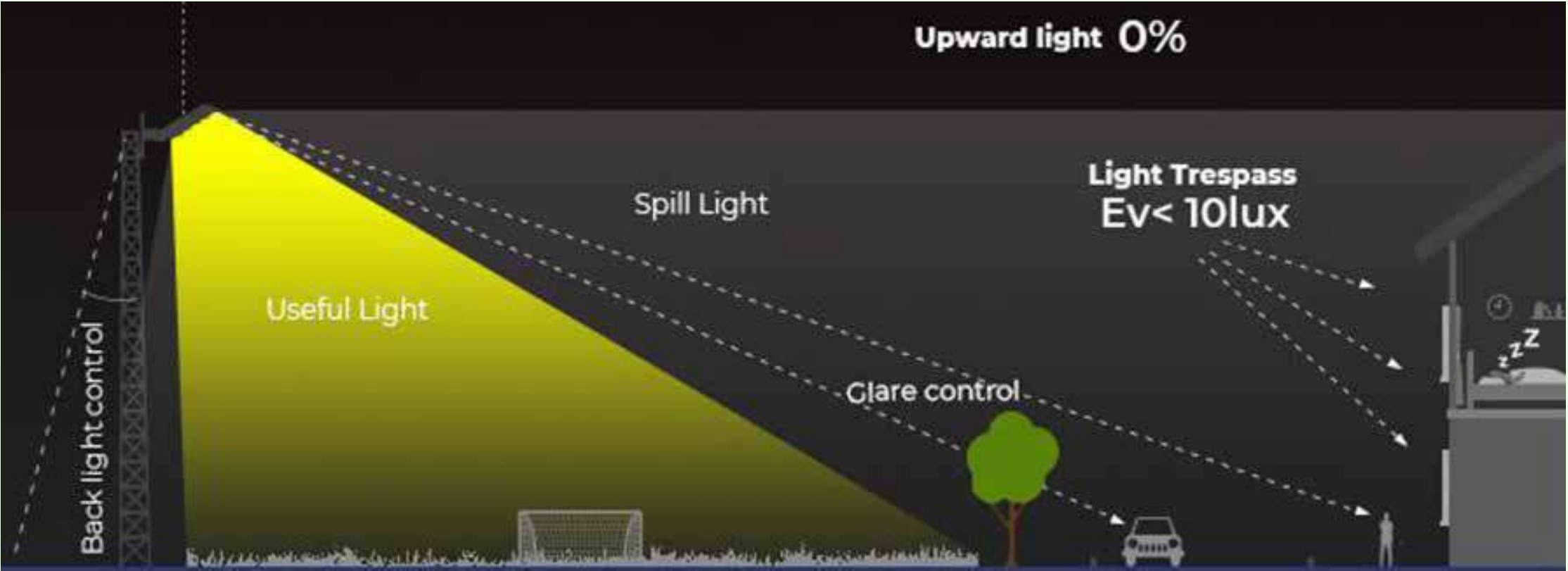


Diagram to show how back light control angling the lights and glare control will miniies light spill.

5. Impact on Nature.

The ecological assessment found the Common has low biodiversity, with low potential for roosting bats and a monoculture of mown grass in the centre which provides limited habitat and foraging opportunities.

The trees along the north side are all mature London planes, though there is greater tree diversity in Barratt Gardens and along the south side.

The proposed tree planting is located along the north and west boundary of the MUGA and in Barratt Gardens and is outside the red line of this application.

However, the proposed trees close to the MUGA form a visual and audio screen to the pitch. The trees are selected for greater resilience to climate change, species diversity and to provide habitats and a food source for insects and birds.

There will be no direct light spill onto the planted areas and the trees to the west will have understory wildflower meadow planting with a focus on night-flowering species as a food source for invertebrates which will provide night-time foraging for bats.

The wider scheme planting will exceed the net gain 10% increase in biodiversity required by the 2021 Environmental Act.

6. Anti Social Behaviour

The MUGA will not have open access but will require booking and a key code.

It will not be open 24 hours and will have restricted hour of operation, closing at the latest at 10.00pm.

The Council will be able to monitor uses and behaviour and will run a pro-active program of events to encourage people from all generations and abilities to use the MUGA.

The MUGA is part of a wider Council policy to encourage people into sports and to model positive active behaviour.

The MUGA will have an active presence from the Parks and Leisure officers and from other community groups.

7. Noise

The MUGA is sited away from the residential properties on Station Road, Mayes Road and Tower Terrace.

Parks and Leisure will pro-actively police the use of the MUGA to deter anti social behaviour and ensure it is not used after 10.00pm

Tree planting along the north and west side and the existing trees to the east will both visually screen the MUGA and act as an acoustic wall.

In conclusion, as the rationale, plans and other visualizations demonstrate, the MUGA is designed and sited to be as visually unobtrusive as possible and every measure has been taken to eliminate light spill, and minimise the size.

The social, recreational and bio-diversity benefits the scheme will bring to an area of continued urban development, demonstrates the less than significant impact on the common, which is outweighed by the public benefit