

**From:** Tim Lansley [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 02 December 2025 23:31  
**To:** Section 62A Applications Non Major <section62anonmajor@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** Cotham school PINS Ref: S62A/2025/0132

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
PINS Ref: S62A/2025/0132  
[REDACTED]

Dear Planning Inspectorate,

APPLICATION no.25/14638/PINS. Works to install 9 no. floodlight columns around the MUGA and AW pitches at Cotham School with associated planting and works.

We wish to object to the above application. The development proposed would have a significant, adverse impact on residential amenity as a result of the potential for increased noise, especially later in the evenings, and significant light pollution. These effects must be considered in the context of the cumulative impacts of the gradual expansion of the school over the last 20 years. The application therefore must be judged as representing a clear conflict with policy BCS 21 of the Core Strategy and policy DM33 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan.

The attached document sets out in more detail the grounds for our view of the potential effects of the proposed development.

We trust that you will give careful consideration of our objection below, and arrive at your conclusion in a balanced way.

Yours faithfully,

Tim and Julie Lansley

PINS Ref: S62A/2025/0132

Application No.25/14638/PINS

Application for Planning Permission for works to install 9 no. Floodlight columns around the MUGA and AW pitches at Cotham School with associated planting and works.

General comments.

The decision on the application should recognise the proximity of the 'MUGA and AW pitches' to the dwellings on the northern and eastern sides of the playing field and hence their exposure to inappropriate or ill-considered development on the playing field. The boundary of the 'all weather playing surface' is about 10m from the rear garden boundary of 27 Cotham Lawn Road and 20 to 30m from properties on Cotham Park. In addition, the rear of 27 Cotham Lawn Road sits slightly above the level of the 'MUGA and AW pitches' further adding to the potential significance of the floodlighting proposal for residential amenity. This issue is considered in greater detail below.

The decision on the application should be considered also in the context of the gradual, incremental expansion of Cotham School over the last 20 or so years. This has led in a cumulative way, to significant harm to the character of the Conservation Area and the residential amenity of the local area. At each stage of the School's expansion, the argument has been made that the dis benefits, in terms of adverse impacts on the Conservation Area and local residential amenity, are out weighed by the educational benefits. If this incremental approach to the development of the school had been replaced by following instead, a comprehensive plan for the long term development of the School, perhaps greater weight would have been given to wider cumulative impacts of incremental school development. This would have benefited the long term well being of the locality.

Against this background of a failure to provide a robust, comprehensive planning framework, the local planning authority should reject further, incremental school development proposals in recognition of the cumulative harm already inflicted on local amenity, unless there are clear educational benefits that could not be delivered by other means and only when the potential for adverse impacts on wider planning considerations are negated by comprehensive mitigation measures.

The applicants argue in support of the proposal that the flood lighted 'MUGA and AW pitches' would provide direct educational benefits. However, these would probably be negligible. The school does not make frequent use of the playing field beyond 4pm and rarely beyond 5pm. This includes the spring, summer and early autumn months when daylight would enable most if not all sports to proceed later into the evening. Instead, flood lighting the playing field would benefit primarily external parties and the financial well being of the school. But this benefit to the school surely, would not be significant when set in the context of the total school budget. At the same time, the harm to the amenity of the locality arising from the additional noise and light pollution that would arise with a go ahead for the proposal must be seen as significant given the proximity of neighbouring dwellings and above all, unreasonable when set against the harm to these considerations that has already occurred from the incremental development of the school as set out above.

The applicants highlight the demand from external groups for using the playing field under flood lights. They do not provide any evidence why this demand cannot be met during daylight hours despite the sensitivity of neighbouring dwellings given the proximity of the 'MUGA' and AW pitches' and the cumulative harm to residential amenity resulting from incremental School expansion. If a decision is made to allow the development to go-ahead, the use of the floodlight pitches should be limited therefore to occasions when the need can't be met during daylight hours or by other existing, available opportunities.

The potential adverse implications of the proposals for residential amenity.

The floodlighting proposal would enable greater use of the playing field. In particular, it would enable greater use in the middle and late evening. These hours are often when residents are at home, maybe seeking to enjoy the tranquility currently offered by their outside space. This benefit would be significantly eroded by noise arising from the extended use of the playing field well into the evening, in particular from the kicking and hitting of balls and especially, the shouts and cheers that often accompany football training sessions. Further disturbance to quiet evenings would also be likely to be generated by users accessing the new facility, in particular by car, including the slamming of metal gates around the school.

The applicants proposal could harm the visual amenity of nearby dwellings. This is acknowledged by the Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment, submitted in support of the application. At para. 4.11 it advises that, 'It is the view of this report that further mitigation is required to reduce the perceived impact of the new floodlighting from the east during the winter.' It then proposes the planting of new evergreen trees and hedging at the rear of properties on Cotham Park to mitigate this outcome. However, no consideration is given to other options for landscaping schemes to mitigate the visual impact of the proposal on these dwellings. No opportunity has been given for local residents to comment on alternative landscape mitigation schemes and their potential to offer greater protection of residential amenity.

The potential for adverse visual impact on the outlook from the rear of no.27 and 29 Cotham Lawn Road is dismissed by the supporting information to the application. Reference is made to the new classroom block and existing trees screening the outlook from these properties. However, at least a half of the playing pitches can be viewed from the rear of no. 27 while the existing trees, mainly deciduous, only provide a partial screen during the winter months. The attached photograph illustrates the current rear outlook from no.27.

Bats fly over the garden of 27 Cotham Lawn Road, swooping near the house in summer and autumn evenings, and over the surrounding playing field. They are most active at dusk - just when the floodlights would be in operation.

The information supporting the application acknowledges the presence of bats. The possibility for their displacement if the floodlighting proposal went ahead is dismissed on the grounds that the particular species of bat over the playing field is not light sensitive. However, the bats may be displaced by users of the floodlight 'MUGA and AW pitches' and the resulting noise. We have observed that when in our garden in the late summer evenings, the bats do not fly overhead or in the vicinity.

## Conclusions

The potential adverse effects of the application set out above represent conflicts with Policy 21 of the Core Strategy and Policy 33 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan. Together with the proximity of dwellings and the cumulative harm to local residential amenity already arising from the incremental

development of the School, and the limited educational benefits, these effects should lead to the refusal of the application.

If it is intended to grant permission then this must be accompanied by the following strict conditions to minimise the adverse effects set out above.

The agreement of an appropriate mitigation scheme that screens the floodlighted 'MUGA and AW pitches' from the rears of no. 27 and, if it is to be returned to residential use, no. 29 Cotham Lawn Road, and nos 13-23A Cotham Park, in consultation with the residents of these dwellings.

Hours of operation restricted to not beyond 9pm during weekdays, 5pm on Saturdays with no use allowed on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

The agreement of a Management Plan that ensures that: the use of floodlights only occurs when the need of potential users cannot be met during daylight hours or by other existing and available facilities; the floodlights are switched off when the pitches are not in use; and, a mechanism for handling complaints about the out of school hours use of the pitches that gives fair consideration to issues raised by complainants and the needs of users.

Tim and Julie Lansley

