

**New Squash Courts
At
Lymington Road Sports Fields, NW6
Design, Access and Planning Statement
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This planning statement is submitted to the London Borough (LB) of Camden on behalf of the Girls Day School Trust (GDST) to support a full planning application for the demolition of the existing squash courts at the Hampstead Cricket Club, Lymington Road, NW6 and their replacement with the construction of a new indoor squash court building.
- 1.2 Currently, the existing squash courts are in a state of disrepair and because of this, they are under-utilised. The construction of the temporary classroom accommodation on this part of the site associated with South Hampstead High School (SHHS) will involve the demolition of the existing squash courts. In consultation with the Club, this was considered the best option for the location of the temporary accommodation in order to minimise any impacts on the open space and the current users of the Club.
- 1.3 SHHS is run by the GDST and the GDST are also freeholders of the Lymington Road Sports Fields. As such, the GDST have consulted with the Club regarding this approach and agreed with the Club to replace the squash court facilities on the same site of the existing squash courts, once the temporary classroom accommodation is removed from the site. This will result in new and improved sporting facilities on the site. The Club are supportive of this approach.
- 1.4 The rationale for the proposed temporary classroom accommodation is to minimise disruption for local communities – including pupils and staff of the school and surrounding occupiers to the permanent school campus at Maresfield Gardens. This will be done through reducing the build time from 4 years if the school were to continue operating fully from the Maresfield Gardens site to 2 years by providing temporary classroom accommodation on the sports fields at Lymington Road.
- 1.5 A separate planning application has been submitted for the construction of temporary classroom accommodation on the site. This application relates solely to the replacement of the existing squash court facility at Lymington Road Sports Fields.

- 1.6 A full description of the application is as follows:
- 'Demolition of existing squash courts and construction of a new indoor squash court facility'*
- 1.7 Pre-application discussions took place with Council officers, Eimear Heavey, Max Smith and Zoe Trowler on the 7 November 2011. The principle of development was not considered contentious given that this is the replacement of an existing permanent building on private open space and is considered to be in a poor state of repair.
- 1.8 This proposal will result in the provision of high quality sports facilities of benefit to local people who utilise the Club's facilities.
- 1.9 This planning statement should be read in conjunction with the application drawings.
- 1.10 A description of the site and its surroundings is set out in Section 2 of this statement. Relevant planning history is set out in section 3. A full description of the proposals is set out in Section 4 and Section 5 provides a summary of the relevant planning policy framework, followed by an analysis of the planning considerations in Section 6. Section 7 concludes this statement.
- 1.11 The scheme accords with national, regional and local planning policy and in accordance with section 38 (6) of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*, the proposed development accords with the development plan and the application should therefore be approved.

2.0 Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The proposed application site is located on the southern boundary of the Lymington Road playing fields and comprises a 2 storey indoor squash court facility.
- 2.2 Currently, the playing fields comprise tennis courts, a cricket field, and the existing squash court building along with ancillary buildings. To the north of the site are 12 formal tennis courts with associated club house and changing rooms. The cricket field also lies north and east of the site, which is divided from the tennis courts by a formal fence and privet hedge. A score board and storage shed associated with the cricket club is situated in north east part of the cricket field. Cricket training nets are situated in the south east corner of the pitch and a further 3 formal tennis courts are located along the southern boundary of the playing fields.
- 2.3 To the north west of the existing squash court building is a Club house associated with the cricket club along with 3 formal Astro turf tennis courts. Two hard surfaced tennis courts are located to the west of the existing squash courts which also run along the southern boundary. A car park is situated at the south west corner, which leads from the main vehicular access point from Lymington Road.
- 2.4 The surrounding development is residential. To the west, the site is bounded by the rear gardens of residential properties that front onto Crediton Hill. Alvanley Gardens bounds the playing fields to the west and Lymington Gardens bounds the site to the south, where residential properties are on the opposite side of the road. West End Lane and the Finchley Road join at the southern point of the playing fields.

Relevant Designations

- 2.5 LB Camden's adopted Core Strategy and proposals map shows that the site is designated as private open space, referred to in the Core Strategy as 'Hampstead and Cumberland Clubs' in the Council's schedule of open spaces.
- 2.6 The West End Green/Parsifal Road Conservation Area bounds the site to the east. The conservation area's boundary runs along the rear gardens of Crediton Hill.

- 2.7 The site has excellent access to public transport with a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 6a (with 6b being the highest). West Hampstead Thameslink; West Hampstead and Finchley and Frognal rail stations (both mainline and underground) are all within walking distance to the site. In addition, a number of bus services run along the Finchley Road and West End Lane, to the east and west of the site respectively,
- 2.8 With reference to the LB Camden's Planning Guidance on Basements and Lightwells, neither Alvanley Gardens, Crediton Hill nor Lymington Road are identified as streets that are at risk of surface water flooding.

3.0 Planning History

3.1 A review of LB Camden's online planning records revealed the following planning history:

- In August 2000, outline planning permission was sought for the masterplan of the south west corner of the site for the demolition of the existing squash courts and the construction of a swimming pool building to be attached to the existing Clubhouse, along with the conversion of the Clubhouse to changing rooms and the re arrangement of the car part and vehicular entrance plus associated plant, landscaping and fencing, the relocation of the tennis courts and the addition of floodlighting. The application was refused at appeal in February 2001 (reference PW9902597).
- In November 2007, planning permission was granted for the retention of 17 poles to support safety netting around the Hampstead Cricket Club.
- In June 2009, planning permission was granted for the installation of a 2 metre high fence and gate in the south west corner of the existing car park.

3.2 Other than minor works to trees on the site, no further relevant planning history was found.

4.0 The Proposal

- 4.1 Full planning permission is sought for the demolition of the exiting squash court building comprising 165 sqm of floorspace and the construction of a new squash court facility on the same site comprising 165 sqm of floorspace.
- 4.2 The existing squash courts are in a state of disrepair and it has been established that it is not cost effective or desirable to refurbish the existing squash courts to bring them upto modern standards. As such, they are in need of replacement. The construction of a new squash court will provide a more aesthetically pleasing building.
- 4.3 Further, the demolition of the existing squash courts will enable the construction of temporary classroom accommodation for SHHS, enabling the redevelopment of their permanent campus at Maresfield Gardens within a significantly reduced timeframe, therefore, considerably reducing disruption to pupils, staff and surrounding occupiers.
- 4.4 SHHS will occupy the site for 2 years and once the School vacates the site, new squash courts will be constructed resulting in improved sports facilities for the benefit of local people using the Club's facilities.
- 4.5 Due to the need for temporary classroom accommodation to occupy the existing site of the squash courts for two years following their demolition, it is requested that the relevant planning permission allows, by condition, a period of five years to begin the development of the replacement squash courts. The longer timeframe to begin the development (rather than the default period of three years) is required as development will not be able to start until the School vacates the site, which could be up to 2 years and 6 months after planning permission is granted for this development. This would only give the GDST a very short time to begin development. As such, in this circumstance and with reference to section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, it is considered appropriate allow a longer timeframe to begin development in this circumstance.

4.6 The demolition of the existing squash courts will be undertaken in accordance with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006 and will have all proper regard to Health and Safety considerations. The construction of the new squash courts will be part of the considerate constructor scheme and will be carried out with reference to best practice in order to minimise noise, dust, emissions and disturbance with regard to users of the Club and surrounding occupiers.

5.0 Planning Policy Framework and Guidance

Regulatory Framework

- 5.1 Under section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 if regard is to be given to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 38 (3) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that the development plan consists of the Regional Spatial Strategy and the development plan documents. In this case, these are:
- The London Plan (adopted July 2011);
 - LB Camden Core Strategy (adopted 2010);
 - LB Camden Development Management Policies (adopted 2010).
- 5.2 National planning guidance, emerging development plan documents, and supplementary planning guidance, among other matters, are relevant material considerations.

National Planning Policy

- 5.3 Government guidance on planning issues is set out in a series of Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). The relevant PPGs and PPSs are summarised in Appendix 2.
- 5.4 Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17) (Planning for Open Space, Sports and Recreation) states that, where recreational land and facilities are of a poor quality or under-used, local authorities should seek opportunities to improve the value of existing facilities.

Draft National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.5 The Planning Minister has published a Written Ministerial Statement under the title "The Plan for Growth" which reflects themes set out in the March 2011 Budget Statement in drawing attention to the support for sustainable development and in foreshadowing a presumption in favour of sustainable

development that is to be the centrepiece of a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

5.6 In June 2011 a draft of the presumption was issued for consultation purposes followed in July 2011 a by a draft of the NPPF itself.

5.7 The NPPF emphasises that LPAs should adopt a positive approach to development proposals and that for schemes that are sustainable the default position for the planning decision maker should normally be "yes" unless the proposal would cause clear planning harm.

5.8 Paragraph 128 of the NPPF states that access to good quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities and the planning system had a role in helping to create an environment where activities are made easier and public health can be improved.

Circular 11/95 – The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions

5.9 Circular 11/95 advises that conditions should be necessary, relevant to planning, relevant to the development permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.

Regional Planning Policy

5.10 The London Plan was adopted in July 2011 covering the period up to 2031. This forms part of the statutory development plan for LB Camden and provides a strategic framework for the formulation of local planning policies.

Local Policy Framework

5.11 Along with the London Plan, the current development plan for the Core Strategy and the Development Management Policies, which were both adopted in 2010. Relevant policies are referred to in other sections of this planning statement and are set out in Appendix 2.

5.12 In addition, relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) are also material considerations.



6.0 Planning Issues

Principle of development of replacement sports facilities

- 6.1 Policy 3.19 (Sports Facilities) of the London Plan states that developments proposals that increase or enhance the provision of sports and recreation facilities will be supported.
- 6.2 Policy CS10 of the LB Camden's Core Strategy states that the Council will support the retention and enhancement of existing leisure facilities.
- 6.3 Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will protect and improve Camden's Parks and Open spaces. The site of the exiting squash courts, which is also the site for the new facility, is designated in the Core Strategy as part of the 'Hampstead and Cumberland Clubs' private open space.
- 6.4 The proposed development involves the demolition of the existing indoor squash court building, which is in a poor state of repair and its replacement with new and improved indoor squash court facilities that meet recognised standards. This is of benefit to local people using the Club's facilities and constitutes an enhancement of sports and recreation facilities.
- 6.5 The development of the new squash court facility will replace an existing building on the same site within private open space. As such, the development does not constitute additional buildings within private open space so will not have any impact on the openness of the space.
- 6.6 The proposed development is, therefore, considered to be in accordance with policy 3.19 of the London Plan and policies CS10 and CS15 of the Council's Core Strategy.

Design Statement

- 6.7 Policy CS14 states that the Council will ensure that buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by requiring the highest standard of design. In addition,

policy DP24 of the Council's Development Management Policies states that the Council will require all developments to be of the highest standard of design and will expect developments to consider character; setting; context; form and scale of neighbouring buildings; the quality of materials; provision of visually interesting street frontages; appropriate locations for building services; existing natural features; provision of hard and soft landscaping; the provision for amenity space; and accessibility.

Use

- 6.8 As set out above, the use of the development constitutes the replacement of existing indoor squash courts, which are currently in a poor state of repair, with a new and improved building on the same site.
- 6.9 The facilities provide part of the wider sporting offer of the Lymington Road Sports Fields, which are occupied by the Cumberland Cricket Club and the Hampstead Lawn Tennis Club. The sports fields are situated in a sustainable location with excellent access to public transport, demonstrated by its high PTAL rating of 6a (with 6b being the highest). Having a range of sporting functions on the site enables local people and local schools to participate in a variety of sporting activities on an accessible site.
- 6.10 The development does not involve any alterations to the access arrangements of the indoor squash court facility. The main access to the squash courts will continue to be from the existing access from Lymington Road, which in turn will provides access to car parking, including disabled parking and cycle storage for users of the Club. Service vehicles also utilise this access. As the new building will be on the same site as the existing squash courts, the development will not have any impact on traffic or the highway.

Amount

- 6.11 The development comprises the replacement of existing squash court facilities. The building will meet recognised standards associated with squash courts. In total the proposed development will provide 165 square meters of floorspace for improved sports facilities. The development will be on the existing footprint

of the existing squash court building. As such, the development will not have a harmful impact on the existing open space.

Layout

6.12 The proposed development will be located on the footprint of the existing squash courts to ensure that the development does not cause harm to the wider open space.

6.13 The layout of the development comprises a single block, which will be of appropriate dimensions to accommodate 2 standard squash courts, along with an equipment store and viewing bench.

6.14 The new squash courts are well located in terms of access to the existing Club house. Users of the squash courts will continue to use the Club house for changing and showering as per existing arrangements. Toilet facilities are also located within the Clubhouse.

6.15 As stated above, the development does not propose any changes to access arrangements.

Scale

6.16 The building will be part 1 storey and part 2 storey. The 2 storey element is necessary to meet recognised standards for squash court facilities as the height is required for the game of squash, which is the intended use of the building. The building will be no higher than the existing indoor squash court building currently located on this site.

6.17 The surrounding development is predominately residential buildings of 2 plus storeys. The 2 storey element fronts onto the southern boundary onto Lymington Road. The building then slopes downwards from south to the northern elevation, so the 1 storey element fronts onto the cricket pitch, therefore, limiting the impact of the building on the wider open space.

- 6.18 Due to the nature of the use of the building, no windows are proposed within the building as changes in natural light can have a detrimental impact on the game of squash. Access to the building is provided via a door in the western elevation of the building, which provides ease of access to the Clubhouse without users having to encroach onto the cricket pitch.

Landscaping

- 6.19 The squash courts will be located within a wider area of public open space. Both the squash courts and the wider landscape provide an extensive offer of both indoor and outdoor sports facilities for the benefit of local people that utilise the Club's facilities.
- 6.20 As the squash courts are already located within an area that is extensively landscaped for sporting use, no further landscaping is considered to be necessary as part of this planning application.

Appearance

- 6.21 The existing building comprises a 2 storey building that is constructed of prefabricated concrete panelled walls, with grey power coated profile steel sheeting at upper level and a corrugated cement roof. The materials are unsympathetic to surrounding development and it is considered that the existing building is detrimental to the appearance of the wider open space and the streetscene.
- 6.22 Whilst it is necessary to retain the height and form of the building to accommodate the necessary dimensions for the game of squash, the proposed development incorporates a simpler palette of materials that are more sympathetic to surrounding development.
- 6.23 The majority of residential buildings in the surrounding area are of a brick construction. The new building will be predominately of a fair face blockwork construction, with insulated steel, powder coated, sandwich roof panels. The removal of any steel sheet cladding from the elevations and the simple use of

blockwork give the building a simple, lighter appearance, which blends more sympathetically into the surrounding landscape and the streetscene.

Access Statement

6.24 The squash courts will be accessed via the existing main entrance on Lymington Road. Changing rooms, toilet and showering facilities are located in the existing Club house and users of the squash courts will access the squash courts via the Club house as per existing arrangements, via the edge of the cricket pitch.

6.25 The internal layout of the building is simple in its design, incorporating 2 standard squash courts, a equipment store within the north west corner and a viewing bench along the north wall. A wide corridor runs from west to east and the entrance to the building is located on the western elevation.

6.26 The entrance door is located on the western elevation, providing visibility of the entrance to and from the Clubhouse.

6.27 The entrance door and corridor are at an appropriate width to enable access by wheelchair users.

6.28 Access for emergency services is provided via the exiting access on Lymington Road.

Amenity

6.29 Policy DP26 states that the Council will protect the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours. Factors to be taken into consideration when determining applications include visual privacy and overlooking; overshadowing and outlook; sunlight and daylight; noise and vibration; odour fumes and dust; and microclimate.

6.30 The site is bounded to the east by the rear gardens of properties that front onto Crediton Hill and to the south by properties on the opposite side of Lymington Gardens.

- 6.31 The proposed development constitutes the replacement of existing sports facilities. As such, the development will not cause harm to surrounding residential properties by way of overshadowing; reduction in daylight and sunlight levels; noise or microclimate. No windows are provided within the proposed building, therefore the building will not have an impact in terms of visual privacy and overlooking.
- 6.32 The development will result in the replacement of the existing building, which is in a poor state of repair and is constructed of unsympathetic materials with a new facility that will utilise a simple and sympathetic palette of materials that will improve the visual appearance with regard to surrounding development and the wider streetscene.
- 6.33 The proposed temporary development therefore accords with policy DP26 of the Council's Development Management Policies.

Sustainability

- 6.34 Policy CS13 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will require all development to minimise the effects of and adapt to climate change. The Council will encourage all development to meet the highest feasible environmental stances that are financially viable during the construction and operational phases of development. This will be done by ensuring patterns of development that minimise the need to travel by car; promote the efficient use of land and buildings; and minimise carbon emissions at the construction and operational phases of development through using energy efficiently and the use of renewable energy. In addition, policy CS13 states that the Council will ensure that developments incorporate efficient water and foul water infrastructure and require development to avoid harm to the water environment and prevents or mitigates local surface run off.
- 6.35 The proposed development is in a sustainable location with excellent links to public transport, demonstrated by its high PTAL of 6a (with 6b being the highest. This minimises the need for users of the facility to travel by car.

6.36 The development will be located on the site of an existing building, making use of previously developed land for enhanced sporting facilities. The existing building is in a poor state of repair, hence the need for its replacement.

6.37 The materials used in the current building are inefficient with regard to energy use and consumption. Whilst the building's energy use is limited due to the nature of the use, the new building will utilise materials that will better insulate the building, thus limiting the amount of energy required for heating and creating a more energy efficient building.

6.38 As the development will be located on the site of the existing squash courts, it will not increase hard standing and therefore will not increase surface water run off.

6.39 It is therefore considered that the development is in accordance with policy CS13 of the Core Strategy.

7.0 Summary and Conclusions

- 7.1 The proposed development involves the demolition of the existing squash courts at Lymington Road Sports Fields and their replacement with a new building for the same use.
- 7.2 The existing squash courts are in a poor state of repair and their replacement is required to ensure that the Club can continue to provide high quality sporting facilities to local people that use their facilities. The development will therefore result in the enhancement of existing sporting facilities on the site in accordance with the London Plan and the Council's Core Strategy.
- 7.3 The new squash court facilities will be built on the site of the existing squash courts. As such, the development will not cause any harm to openness of the designated private open space. Moreover, the sympathetic use of materials in the new building will enhance the visual appearance in comparison to the exiting building in terms of the wider open space and the streetscene. In addition the proposed use of materials will ensure that the building is more energy efficient.
- 7.4 The proposed development is therefore in accordance with national, regional and local policies and therefore planning permission should be granted.