

Washbourne Consulting

urban + rural town planning and property advice

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By email only

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e:

FAO James Phillips

London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
Planning Department
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Dear James,

24/1411/FUL - Hampton Wick Royal Cricket Club, Bushy Park, Hampton, TW11 0EA Planning letter

I write on behalf of my client, Hampton Wick Royal Cricket Club ('HWRCC'), in relation to the above live planning application validated by London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Council ('Richmond Council') for the following form of development:

“Construction of replacement two-storey pavilion for Hampton Wick Royal Cricket Club including viewing terrace at first floor level. Associated works including soft and hard landscaping, external store and cycle parking.”

Our application was made valid on 9 July 2024, and has a decision due by date of 3 September 2024.

1) Application Proposals

This application follows a pre-application meeting and written advice (23/P0311/PREAPP), issued 14/02/24, where the preliminary design was assessed by officers, and the principle of development established.

The cricket pavilion has an unfortunate history of rebuilds, with this scheme proposal resulting in at least the fourth sports pavilion at the site. The first pavilion was burnt down and rebuilt in 1901, rebuilt in 1902 and burnt down again in 1988, rebuilt in 1990 (app ref: 88/2511) and burnt down once again in September 2023 in a suspected arson attack. The latest fire caused severe, irreparable damage, leading to this subject application.

Since the September 2023 fire, two full planning applications have been submitted and approved by Richmond Council. Namely:

- Application ref: 24/0237/FUL, granted 26/03/24, for “*Demolition of the remains of a former cricket pavilion*”; and
- Application ref: 24/0378/FUL, granted 28/05/24, for “*Temporary changing facilities, WC's and club facilities accommodated within a marquee and 4No. modular cabins for a period of 2 years*”.

The new proposed building will follow the footprint of the previous pavilion, to avoid any impingement on green space, safeguarding the existing trees on the site. The massing will be broadly of the same size and scale as the previous but will be more attuned to the needs of the Club, designed to ensure future growth and longevity through inclusive, sustainable design. No new pathway is proposed, as was suggested at pre-app stage, meaning there will be no loss of green space.

The new Pavilion will include improved facilities, including 4 changing rooms, with separate facilities for female players and guests, a club room / social space comparable with other clubs in the park, a bar, catering facilities, secure storage areas, improved disabled access and facilities for officials, a new green roof and a larger septic tank.

Car parking and all highways-related matters remain unaffected by the scheme proposal, as confirmed by the Transport Statement (Velocity).

2) Site Description and Context

The application site has a site area of 0.34ha (0.84 acres) and comprises a cleared and demolished former pavilion with an access road connecting to the junction of Sandy Lane and Park Road.

The pavilion is located within the Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) of Grade I listed Bushey Park, a Royal Park and conservation area, which is home to four cricket clubs: Hampton Wick Royal CC, Teddington CC, Teddington Town CC, Hampton Hill CC. The park also is home to Teddington Rugby Club and the NPL Sports Club. HWRCC is the oldest cricket club in the park, founded in 1863.

Note that the red-line boundary of the scheme at pre-app stage also included the cricket pitches, whereas the plans validated with the full planning application have been amended to replace that extent of red-line with blue-line (site ownership), as the cricket pitches remain unaffected by the development proposal.

The site is within Flood Zone 1 and has a PTAL of 2. The site is also within an Archaeological Priority Area (Tier II, Richmond APA 2.22: Bushy Park). The pavilion is adjacent to the Grade II listed wall of Bushy Park.

For further site description and context, please refer to the Design and Access Statement prepared by scheme architects, Aros Architects.

3) Planning Considerations and Assessment

Planning law requires that where regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of and determination made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise¹. In assessing and determining development proposals, the National Planning Policy Framework

¹ Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

2023 ('NPPF') states that local planning authorities should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Where the development proposals accord with up-to-date development plan policies they should be approved without delay or where the development plan is absent or out-of-date, planning permission should be granted.

- Specific policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed.
- Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, where assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

Development Plan

The Development Plan for Richmond Council comprises the London Plan (2021) and the Local Plan (2018). Also of relevance are the Sustainable Construction SPD, Refuse and Recycling Storage SPD, Transport SPD, Design Quality SPD, Trees SPD, and the Security by Design SPG.

Richmond Council are currently preparing an emerging Local Plan, scheduled for adoption in Winter 2024/2025. The Publication Version was submitted to the Secretary of State in January 2024, with Examination Hearings ending on 12 July 2024. Given the advanced stage, the emerging policies carry some weight.

Key Richmond Local Plan (2018) Policies

A summary of the key policies relevant to this application are set out below:

❖ Key London Plan (2021) Policies

- GG1 Building strong and Inclusive communities
- GG3 Creating a healthy city
- D4 Delivering good design
- D5 Inclusive Design
- D11 Safety, security and resilience to emergency
- D12 Fire Safety
- D14 Noise
- G1 Green infrastructure
- G4 Open space
- HC1 Heritage conservation and growth
- S5 Sports and recreation facilities

❖ Key Local Plan (2018) Policies

- LP1 Local Character and Design Quality
- LP3 Impact on Designated Heritage Assets
- LP4 Impact on Non-Designated Heritage Assets
- LP7 Archaeology
- LP8 Impact on Amenity and Living Conditions
- LP9 Floodlighting
- LP10 Local Environmental Impacts, Pollution and Land Contamination
- LP12 Green Infrastructure
- LP13 Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land and Local Green Space
- LP15 Impact on Biodiversity
- LP16 Impact on Trees, Woodland and Landscape

- LP17 Green roofs and walls
- LP20 Climate Change Adaptation
- LP21 Impact on Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage
- LP22 Sustainable Design and Construction
- LP24 Waste Management
- LP28 Social and Community Infrastructure
- LP31 Public Open Space, Play Space, Sport and Recreation
- LP44 Sustainable Travel Choices
- LP45 Parking Standards and Servicing

a) Principle of Development

The *principle of development* is not in question, in light of the application's unique context. Fundamentally, the replacement pavilion will serve as a significantly better configured building built on the same footprint. Given the outdated nature of the previous pavilion described throughout this letter, a like-for-like rebuild particularly in terms of internal layout was not considered appropriate here. Instead, the rebuild presents an opportunity to deliver a much more appropriate cricket pavilion that is in line with Sport England requirements.

The new pavilion will continue to be ancillary to the sports and recreation use (Class F2(c)) of the adjacent and nearby sports pitches. Whilst the pavilion is for the primary use of HWRCC, the ground is also home to Harlequins Amateurs Rugby, Bedfont Sports FC and Kingston College Football Academy. These users' timetables and use of the pavilion will vary from sports season to sports season. In terms of 'casual users', other local schools and businesses also hire out the facility for sports events, cricket matches, etc., all on an ad-hoc basis. For example, Heathfield Junior School use the facilities on an ad-hoc basis and HWRCC have provided a permanent home for their junior girls team that had no facilities, equipment or pitches to play on – girls from the school now represent HWRCC at two age group levels and have become a fully integrated part of the wider club. This co-location of community uses at the pavilion would be encouraged by Local Plan policy 28.

Whilst the proposal will result in a pavilion that is 94sqm (GIA) larger than the previous pavilion, this will not necessarily result in an intensification of the site. Car parking figures remain the same, and events connected to the sports club will continue as per the arrangement that occurred with the use of the previous pavilion. A single function space on the first floor for 100-120 persons is proposed with a supporting bar and kitchen. In terms of the former pavilion's arrangements, the first floor bar area was limited to a capacity of 60 people due to the fact it only had one staircase (owing to fire regulations), although it was large enough to accommodate more; and the ground floor social space (also used to host social events) had a capacity of approx. 80 people, equating to a total of approx. 140 users on-site at any one time. As such, the proposed use combines both social spaces from the previous pavilion into one multi-functional space, i.e. the proposed function room.

Much of this additional space is due to larger changing rooms at ground floor level and a larger function room, bar and kitchen at first floor level. Better design of the pavilion's upper floor, described in greater detail below, means the larger footprint does not necessarily mean the building is materially larger, nor does it come at the expense of the site's contributions to the MOL or heritage assets. Rather, the proposal reduces the amount of hardstanding on site by 63sqm.

Further, note that this application is considered appropriate development within the MOL and therefore no case for 'Very Special Circumstances' is required. Please refer to Appendix 1 for the 'Metropolitan Open Land – Exception case' letter issued separately, as well as the 'MOL Appraisal' report, prepared by Turley.

In light of the above, the principle of development is considered acceptable and compliant with London Plan policies G3, D4 and HC1; and Local Plan policies LP1, LP3, LP13 and LP28.

b) Design Matters

The portion of Bushy Park subject to the proposal is entirely given over to sports use, with the only listed building in close proximity being the adjacent Grade II listed wall. Nonetheless, the site is situated within a conservation area, Grade I listed park and the MOL, albeit the site is previously developed land. These considerations have played a key role in setting the scope of the redesign of the new pavilion.

NPPF paragraph 205 states *“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance”*. Paragraph 212 states Councils should look for opportunities within conservation areas, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance - proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably. The development plan policy echoes this sentiment.

The previous pavilion was outdated in terms of its compliance with Sport England and England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) guidance / requirements, with issues, being resolved in the proposed scheme, such as no dedicated female changing facilities or disabled facilities, insufficient changing facilities for both teams and for officials. The previous pavilion was also outdated in terms of general functionality, with a septic tank at capacity due to increased membership, and issues with security and anti-social behaviour leading to fire risk and vandalism. The first floor was also underutilised relative to its volume.

The previous pavilion was built in 1990 and was of no particular historic merit in terms of its design. Instead, its historic value arises from the nature of the sports use, as per the submitted Built Heritage Statement (Turley) at para 3.17: *“The site and use of the cricket ground contributes positively to the heritage significance - character and appearance - of the Bushy Park Conservation Area through its local historic interest associated with the provision of sports and recreation”*.

Also note the pre-app written response stated the previous pavilion: *“did not impose itself very much on the setting, although it did have a large, prominent roof with a somewhat ‘heavy’ appearance.”*

At present, the combination of a demolished pavilion with fencing around the perimeter of the former site, and the new temporary facilities adjacent, creates significant visual harm to the site’s heritage assets and to its contributions to the MOL, when compared to the previous situation and what will result once built.

Aros’ project brief has been to provide a replacement pavilion that does not impose any further than the previous pavilion, whilst rebuilding the pavilion to best practice in terms of sports pavilion standards. Moreover, the proposal has been designed to avoid any loss of green space, being built entirely on former concrete hardstanding within the parameters of the former pavilion.

The design has been developed in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders. The Royal Parks have been engaged with throughout and the scheme considers the guidance outlined in Bushy Park Management Plan 2014-2024. The ECB requirements are detailed in section

2.3 of the DAS and have been a key guiding principle for the design throughout. Similarly, consultation with Sport England has been held, as detailed in section 2.5 of the DAS.

The new pavilion will encourage access for all and champion diversity, with modern day facilities for both female and male players. The new space will be fit for future adaptation, flexible in accommodating new sustainable technologies as systems advance and become more readily available. The pavilion will be designed with strong secure by design principles to deter against forms of vandalism and acts of anti-social behaviour. Further, the inclusion of a new green roof contributes to the scheme achieving a 10% biodiversity net gain.

These improvements are devised despite the proposed volume (m³) of the first floor being 129m³ less than the former pavilion, to avoid replicating the 'heavy appearance' of the previous pavilion. The former mansard roof resulted in a large amount of unused space under the previously large, elongated eaves, with a bulky form, little windows and a small balcony. Moreover, the ground floor and first floor heights are in line with the heights of the former pavilion and, crucially, the new pavilion is kept below the highest point of the former pavilion. In this regard, the scheme is considered to improve the pavilion's openness and massing compared to the previous pavilion.

The proposed materiality is detailed in the DAS at section 5.7. In summary, the selected materials are to be traditional, in line with the various heritage considerations, with appropriate contemporary influence; but also practical to the everyday use associated to a cricket club.

In conclusion, the new pavilion would mark a significant improvement from the previous situation by becoming more in line with ECB and Sport England guidance/requirements, whilst being of an appropriate design to the context of Bushy Park's heritage considerations. Therefore, in design and heritage terms, the scheme will be compliant with London Plan policies D4, D5, HC1, and Local Plan policies LP1, LP3, LP8 and LP14.

Yours sincerely,



M D Washbourne MRICS
Director

Appendix 1: Metropolitan Open Land – Exception case

**Hampton Wick Royal Cricket Club - Full planning application
Metropolitan Open Land – Exception case**

The application site is wholly situated within the Bushy Park Metropolitan Open Land ('MOL'). Policy G3 of the London Plan (2021) states that MOL is afforded the same status and level of protection as Green Belt.

Richmond Local Plan (2018) Policy LP13 (Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land and Local Green Space) states at Part (A) that *“appropriate uses within Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land include public and private open spaces and playing fields, open recreation and sport, biodiversity including rivers and bodies of water and open community uses including allotments and cemeteries. Development will be supported if it is appropriate and helps secure the objectives of improving the Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land”*. Further, part (B) of the policy states *“it will be recognised that there may be exceptional cases where inappropriate development, such as small scale structures for essential utility infrastructure, may be acceptable.”*

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023), at paragraph 154, sets out the exception categories for development within the Green Belt (also applicable to MOL) - part (b) is for: *“the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it”*. Part (d) exception is for: *“the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.”*

This proposal seeks the redevelopment of the pavilion on the same hardstanding footprint as the previous pavilion. The use of the pavilion was and will continue to be for HWRCC on matchdays in connection with the existing adjacent playing fields. There will be no intrusion into the MOL further to the existing pavilion with no green space being lost.

Whilst the new pavilion is larger in floor area (uplift of 94m² GIA) and volume (uplift of 19m³) compared to the previous pavilion, this is as a result of better arranged floorspace and use of the hardstanding footprint, given the previous pavilion comprised significant redundant space and outdated room sizes. The new pavilion is of lesser height (7.35m compared to 7.52m) and altogether does not impact the openness of the MOL to any discernible degree further to the existing pavilion. The design justification for its form, siting and materials are described in the Design and Access Statement, prepared by Aros – an extract of the page describing the extent of the impact on MOL is appended to this letter, for ease of reference. The proposed function room, bar and kitchen are ancillary to the pavilion's role as a clubhouse for the players, staff and visitors of the sports-related activities, and their larger respective floorspaces are necessary to ensure the new pavilion is rebuilt to modern standards whereby post-match socialising is a key part of the matchday experience and adequate space is needed to hold occasional events such as annual dinners.

Overall, the new pavilion is not considered to be a 'materially larger' building, given it is built on the same footprint and compared to the previous pavilion, is of lesser height and is designed with more appropriate materials, layout and form.

The aforementioned Local Plan policy considers playing fields and their small scale structures to be acceptable within the MOL. The NPPF considers the provision of appropriate facilities in connection with the existing use of land for outdoor sport, and the replacement of a building in the same use and not materially larger, to be 'exception categories' within the Green Belt (or MOL), i.e. not necessarily inappropriate development. Therefore, this application for the redevelopment of the pavilion is in accordance with local and national policy and is considered appropriate development within the MOL. As such, no case for 'Very Special Circumstances' is required.

Please also refer to the MOL Openness Appraisal prepared by Turley.