

# Planning Statement and Design & Access Statement

ROCKS LANE MULTI SPORTS CENTRE  
ROCKS LANE  
LONDON SW13 0DG



## Installation of four padel tennis courts

Planning Portal Reference: 13166006  
Date of submission: 23 September 2024

# 1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 This Design and Access statement is to be read in conjunction with the planning application which has been submitted by Indigo Blue Works Ltd on behalf of TFC Leisure Ltd.

1.2 This Design and Access statement has been prepared on behalf of TFC Leisure, to support the planning application submitted on 23 September 2024 for the proposed installation of four new padel tennis courts.

1.3 The application site is located off Rocks Lane, to the north side of Barnes Cemetery

1.4 The overall area covers 9700 square metres and consist of multiple sports pitches and a sports pavilion building housing reception, changing facilities, and café. The application site area is 1440 square metres.

1.5 The proposal is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Richmond Local Plan Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document adopted in September 2015, as set out in this Design and Access Statement.

1.6 The layout and design of the padel courts will provide much improved facilities for the local population.

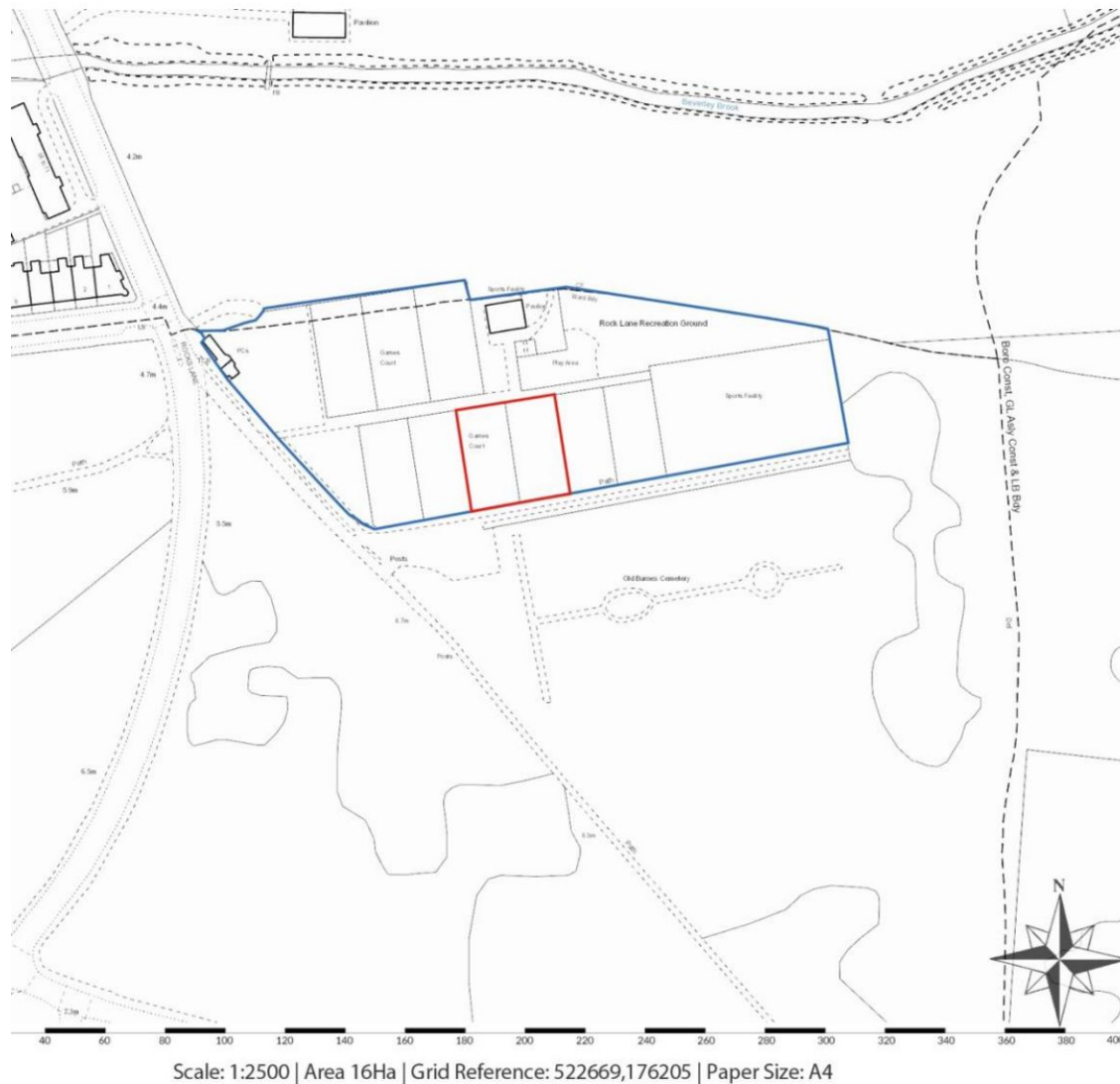
1.7 The applicant successfully runs two other sports facilities in London at Bishop's Park, Fulham and Chiswick, which provide much needed facilities for the local schools and communities.

1.8 The proposals will make a positive contribution to the local area in a number of ways by providing additional sporting facilities over and above those existing and encouraging more members of the local community to play sport, thus improving the physical and mental wellbeing of the local community.

## 2.0 Introduction

2.1 The purpose of this statement is to explain the design and land use context of the proposal and to give an impact assessment of these under a brief examination of applicable planning policy in light of the Local Plan.

2.2 The site of the whole sports centre is outlined in blue below with the specific application site outlined in red.



### 2.3 The planning history of the site:

13/0569/FUL Enlargement of the existing footprint and reconstruction of seven macadam tennis courts. Granted permission 21/05/2013

23/3150/FUL Installation of four padel tennis courts. Granted permission 31/01/2024

2.4 The site currently has facilities for tennis, padel tennis, football and netball, and is well supported by the local community and schools

2.5 Padel tennis is becoming very popular in the UK as it is a typically faster moving game than regular tennis played with a stringless bat (paddle) and slightly softer tennis ball using the walls of the court a little like squash. The barriers to entry in terms of physical ability are lower and therefore the padel tennis attracts a wider range of the

population to play the sport. The sport is being promoted by the Lawn Tennis Association as a way to increase participation in racket sports across the whole spectrum of ages and abilities. The court measures 10 metres by 20 metres and has a net at the centre as with a normal tennis court. The game is usually played as doubles and is therefore considered very sociable and a perfect game for friends and the whole family, ideal for both genders to play.

2.6 The nearest transport links are Barnes railway station, 33, 378, 419 and 969 and there is car parking available.

2.7 There are no existing padel tennis courts at the Barnes centre, but there are 10 courts at the Chiswick centre which are proving very popular with the local community. They were opened at the beginning of October 2020 and provide casual play, coaching and competition for all.



Chiswick centre padel tennis courts.

## 3.0 Proposal

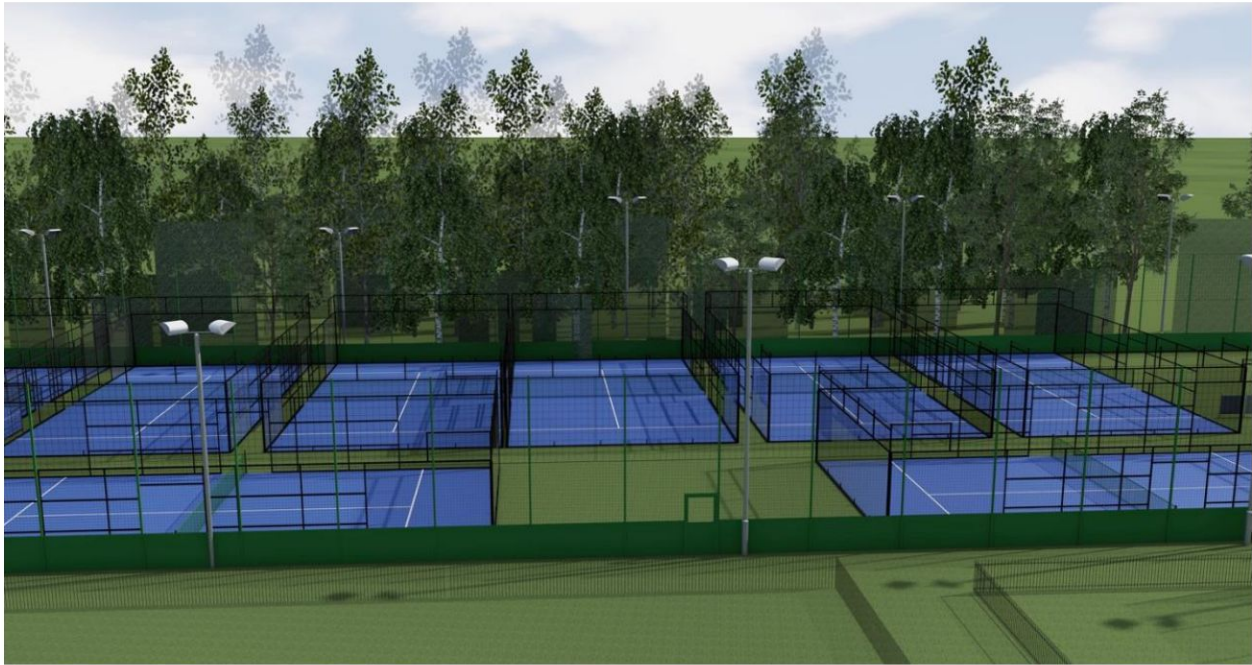
3.1 Installation of four padel tennis courts.

3.2 This application seeks planning permission to erect five padel tennis courts on the site of two existing sports courts.

## 4.0 Layout and design

4.1 The courts will be constructed from steel posts, reinforced safety glass walls and coated steel mesh.

4.2 The posts will be galvanised and coated



Computer generated image of the proposal

4.3 The surface will be as existing, which is porous macadam on a crushed stone base with sub surface drainage.

4.4 The courts will be accessed via a corridor between them and openings either side of the centre nets.

4.5 Sufficient space is allowed round the perimeter to allow for maintenance and cleaning of the glass.

4.6 This project will enable the centre to operate in the near term and future proof the community sport provision at the centre for the long term. This will provide the opportunity for more families and individuals to play sport.

4.7 There is no proposed change of use in this proposal - sport is still being provided.

4.8 The new padel tennis courts will utilize the existing flood light provision, so no new lighting is required.



View from Rocks Lane



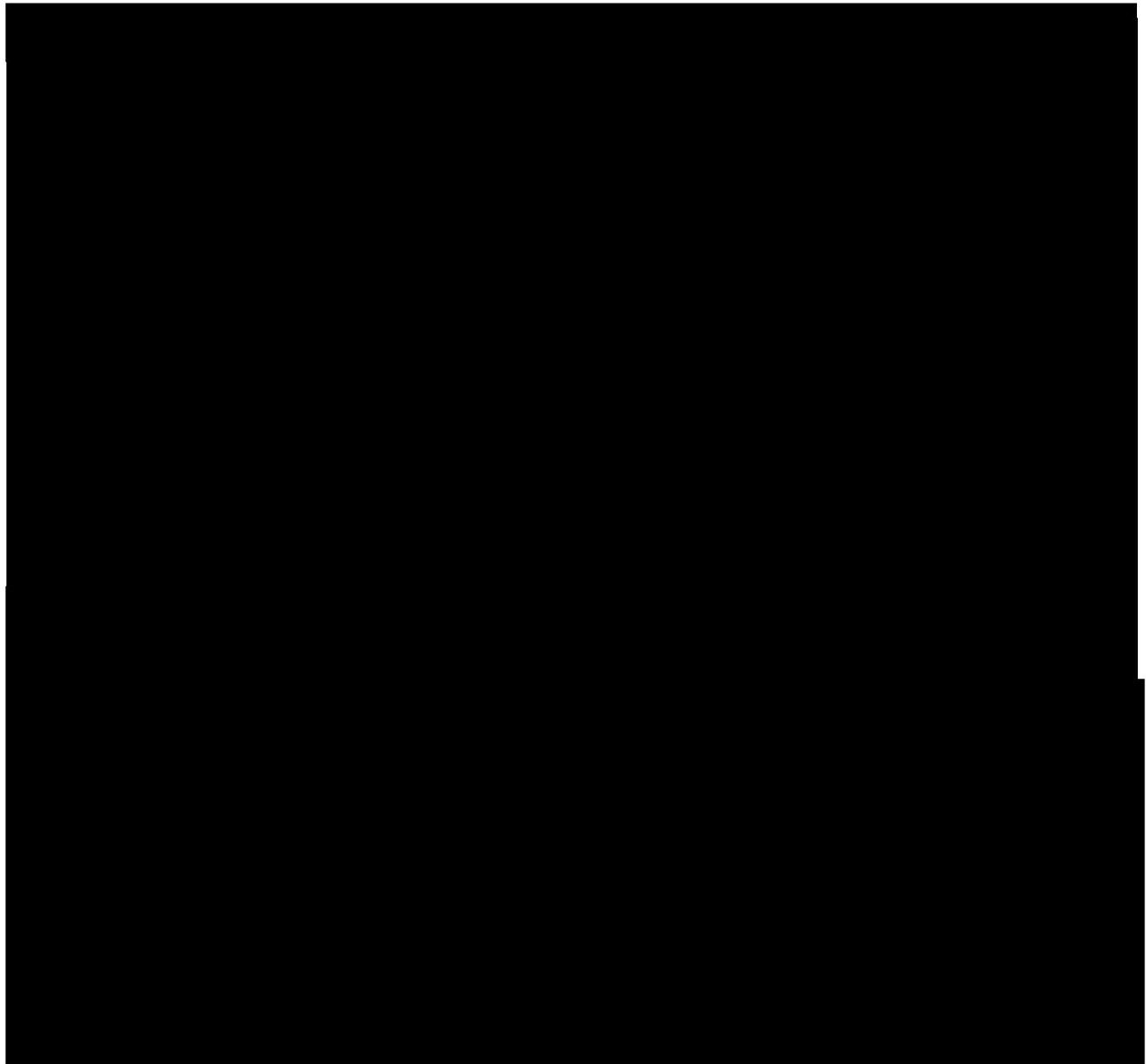
View of the proposal site

## 5.0 Needs and Objectives

5.1 The site currently has 4 outdoor floodlit tennis courts, 4 floodlit padel tennis courts, 3 floodlit 5 a side football pitches and 3 multisport courts

5.2 Furthermore, local schools are increasingly integrating padel tennis in to their sports timetable. Rocks Lane Multi Sports Centres offer facilities free of charge to local state schools. However, due to the demand for the padel courts, we cannot always supply the courts needed at the times schools prefer.

5.3 The proposed development therefore seeks to respond to the demand experienced, and expand the current padel tennis court facilities at other sites.



5.4 It has been rewarding to see people coming to our Chiswick centre for the first time and an increase in sporting participation amongst groups that we have been aiming to attract for some time namely infrequent sports people, female players, teenagers, the homeless, wheelchair players, the LGBT+ community, universities and a mix of people from different races and religions and we are sure this will be repeated in Barnes. The increase in all these categories is in line with many initiatives that have been promoted by Sport England and the NGB, the Lawn Tennis Association. In fact, we have been so successful with our inclusion and participation programme, we have recently been granted the Lawn Tennis Association Outstanding Contribution to Tennis Award for our development of padel tennis in the community! The LTA have also recognised our Chiswick centre as a venue of excellence to deliver International Padel Tennis

Tournaments. We hosted our first International event at Easter 2023 to great acclaim. This completes our full range of competitive opportunities from local to international tournaments.

5.5 The development and improvement of the padel tennis facilities is fundamental to ensure Rock Lane Multi Sports Centre can maintain a high-quality sports provision to the local community. The new courts would enable more individuals in the local community to access sport, benefitting both their physical and mental health.



5.6 The new courts will provide not only more sporting opportunities but also new job opportunities for younger members of the community, in the area of sports coaching and management. The new courts will also enable the centre to run Padel Education courses for coaches, referees and officials.

## 6.0 Relevant Planning Policies

### 6.1 Development plan policies and standards

The Development Plan for the purposes of S38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 is the Richmond Council Local Plan 2018 and draft local plan 2022 together with the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018.



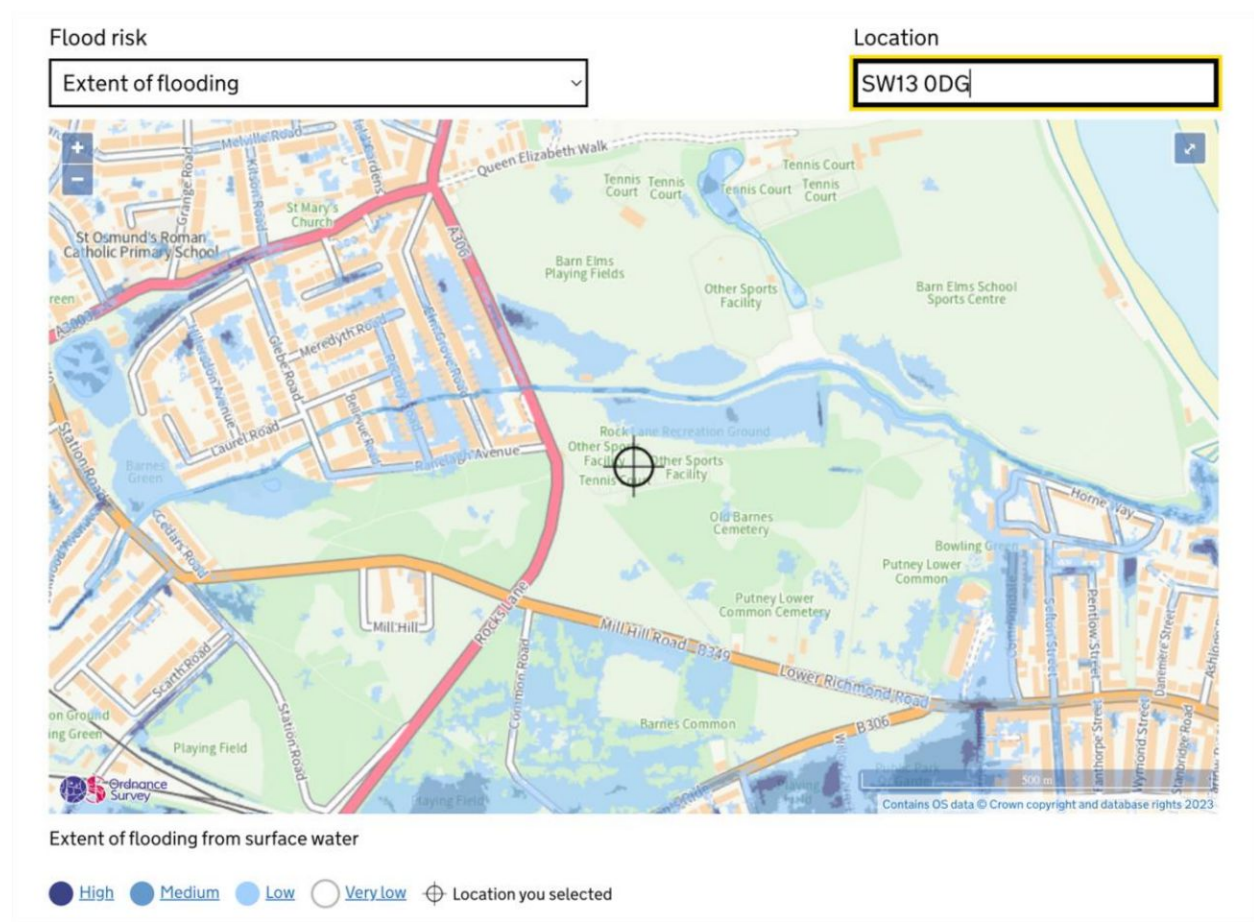
6.2 The applicants are seeking planning permission for their scheme to install four padel tennis courts.

6.3 The Richmond Draft Local Plan policy 37 – Public Open Space, children's and young people's play facilities as well as formal and informal sports grounds and playing fields will be protected, and where possible enhanced. Improvements of existing facilities and spaces, including their openness and character and their accessibility and linkages, will be encouraged.

6.5 Policy LP9 – Floodlighting. There will be no change to the existing floodlights.

6.6 Policy LP13 – Metropolitan Open Land. As an outdoor sports facility, the proposal is an appropriate use.

6.7 Policy LP21 – Flood risk and surface water management. The Environmental flood risk data shows that the site is located in river Flood Risk zone 3 with flood defences. The surface water flood risk data shows the risk to be very low. The facility is approximately 400 metres from the Thames River and, in the unlikely event that the flood defences were to fail, the sports facility would simply have to close for the duration.



## 7.0 Conclusion

7.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Indigo Blue Works Ltd on behalf of TFC Leisure Ltd and proposes to install four padel tennis courts.

7.2

- The installation of the proposed courts will increase and diversify the existing facilities and increase sporting participation amongst all of the local population
- The existing clubhouse facilities and changing rooms are better than able to support the requirements of the proposal
- The proposal will lead to enhanced facilities being made available to the local community without the loss of any already existing facilities.
- The facility is run by a company with a proven track record in the provision of community sporting facilities across south and west London.
- The facility will continue to be run as open to all and not as a private sports club.
- The facility will be unique in the UK by providing padel tennis to all as the vast majority of courts are at private tennis clubs

7.3 This statement has examined the design and access aspects of the proposal and concluded that it is an appropriate form of redevelopment in this location and should be supported.

Appendix: Article detailing the background to the applicant: Rocks Lane Multi Sports Centres (TFC Leisure Ltd).

**IMPORTANT NOTE: PLEASE DO NOT REFUSE THIS APPLICATION.** Should anything other than permission be considered, please allow us notice of any issues or objections prior to the eventual determination date and we will endeavour to review the current proposals further in discussion with the planning department.