



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**



DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

26 July 2022

7.00 pm

Town Hall, Watford

Contact

Barry Rennick
democraticservices@watford.gov.uk

01923 278373

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Committee Membership

Councillor P Jeffree (Chair)

Councillor R Martins (Vice-Chair)

Councillors N Bell, J Pattinson, A Saffery, G Saffery, R Smith, S Trebar and M Watkin

Agenda

Part A – Open to the Public

CONDUCT OF THE MEETING

The committee will take items in the following order:

1. All items where people wish to speak and have registered with Democratic Services.
2. Any remaining items the committee agrees can be determined without further debate.
3. Those applications which the committee wishes to discuss in detail.

1. Apologies for absence

2. Disclosure of interests

3. Minutes

The [minutes](#) of the meeting held on 7 June 2022 to be submitted and signed.

4. 22/00506/FULM - 125-133 The Parade, High Street, Watford, WD17 1NA (Pages 5 - 32)

5. 22/00583/FUL - Everett Rovers FC Dodd Road WD24 5FS (Pages 33 - 43)

Introduction

Please note that the officer report is a summary of the issues including representations made and consultation responses. Full details of the applications, plans submitted, supporting information and documents, representations made, consultation responses and correspondence can be found on the council's web based [Public Access system](#) using the application reference or address.

Specific policy considerations for each application are detailed within the individual reports. The background papers and policy framework listed below have been relied upon in the preparation of the reports in this agenda.

Background papers

- The current planning applications under consideration and correspondence related to that application.
- All relevant third party representations and consultation replies received.

Policy Framework

- The Statutory Plans and Supplementary Planning Guidance, together with relevant Government legislation, Circulars, Advice, Orders, Directions and Guidance listed below:

Local Planning Documents

Local Development Documents provide the framework for making planning decisions. These can be found on the Council's [website](#) and include:

- the existing Local Plan which consists of the Core Strategy, saved policies in the Watford District Plan 2000 and Proposals Map); and
- Supplementary Planning Documents.

County Planning Documents

The Hertfordshire Waste Local Plan and Minerals Local Plan prepared by Hertfordshire County Council are material considerations alongside the Watford Local Plan. These documents can be found on the county council's [website](#).

National Planning Documents

Key legislation can be found using this [weblink](#), including:

- Growth and Infrastructure Act (2013)
- Housing and Planning Act (2016)

- Localism Act (2011) and subsequent amendments
- Planning Act (2008) and subsequent amendments
- Planning and Compulsory Planning Act (2004) and subsequent amendments
- Town and Country Planning Act (1990) and subsequent amendments
- Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and subsequent amendments.

National guidance can be found on the government service and information [website](#), including:

- National Planning Policy Framework (revised February 2019) and supporting Technical Guidance
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (web based)
- Planning policy for traveller sites
- Relevant government circulars
- Relevant Ministerial Statements (which will be referred to in the individual reports as necessary)

Section 106 Planning obligations and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Council introduced the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) with effect from 1 April 2015. The CIL charge covers a wide range of infrastructure as set out in the Council's Regulation 123 list, including highways and transport improvements, education provision, youth facilities, childcare facilities, children's play space, adult care services, open space and sports facilities. CIL is chargeable on the relevant net additional floorspace created by the development. The charge is non-negotiable and is calculated at the time that planning permission is granted where relevant. Section 106 planning obligations can only be used to secure affordable housing provision and other site specific requirements, such as the removal of entitlement to parking permits in Controlled Parking Zones and the provision of fire hydrants.

Human Rights implications

The Local Planning Authority is justified in interfering with the applicant's human rights in order to alleviate any adverse effect on adjoining properties and their occupiers and on general public amenity. With regard to any infringement of third party human rights, these are not considered to be of such a nature and degree as to override the human rights of the applicant and therefore warrant refusal of planning permission.

Committee date	Tuesday 26 July 2022
Application reference Site address	22/00506/FULM - 125-133 The Parade, High Street, Watford, WD17 1NA
Proposal	Proposed redevelopment of the site to provide 147 residential dwellings (Class C3) and retail/commercial use (Class E) with associated car parking, cycle parking, and landscaping.
Applicant	Watford Parade (Gibraltar) Ltd
Agent	Sphere25
Type of Application	Full Planning Permission
Reason for committee Item	Major Application
Target decision date	Wednesday 27 July 2022
Statutory publicity	Watford Observer, Neighbour Letters and Site Notice
Case officer	Andrew Clarke, andrew.clarke@watford.gov.uk
Ward	Central

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 That planning permission be refused for the reasons set out in section 8 of this report.

2. Site and surroundings

- 2.1 The subject site is approximately half a hectare and occupies a prominent position within Watford town centre. The site has an irregular shape fronting The Parade, Albert Road South and Beechen Grove. The site contains a three storey building which dates from 1964. The building is currently occupied by commercial and leisure uses including an Iceland supermarket, a bar, laser planet, a nightclub, two estate agents and a beauty salon. To the rear is a large carpark used in association with the supermarket. The site is partially within the Civic Core Conservation area and the surroundings are historic containing many heritage assets.

3. Summary of the proposal

3.1 Proposal

Proposed redevelopment of the site to provide 147 residential dwellings (Class C3) and retail/commercial use (Class E) with associated car parking, cycle parking, and landscaping.

3.2 Conclusions

In terms of benefits the proposal would deliver 147 new residential units on a site which is allocated for mixed use development by the draft Local Plan. The need to boost the supply of housing within the borough is important and would be attributed significant weight in the planning balance although the lack of affordable housing provision would be a limiting factor against this benefit. The external appearance of the main building would be another benefit, improving the appearance of this site from The Parade and Albert Road South.

- 3.3 In terms of adverse impacts, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that permission should be refused for development of poor design which fails to take the opportunities available to improve the character and quality of an area and the way it functions. The external appearance of the smaller building facing Beechen Gove would appear awkward and bulky between two non-designated heritage assets, and the loss of trees required to facilitate this building is also considered very poor. Creating high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve but the overall quality of the residential units is very poor due to the heavily used nature of the cores, the very poor external amenity provision, poor outlook from many of the units and the daylight / sunlight levels which have not been measured for units which are likely to suffer most from limited levels of both.
- 3.4 Although there are considerations that weigh in favour of this proposal, officers are of the opinion that the adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole. The proposal would not therefore be the sustainable development for which Paragraph 11 of the Framework indicates a presumption in favour.
- 3.5 Notwithstanding the above, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.6 Watford Borough Council has published its Final Draft Local Plan 2018 to 2036 for Formal Consultation (under Regulation 19) of the Town and Country (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012. The formal publication ran for a period of 6 weeks between 18 January and 18 March 2021. Following a review of the comments received, submission of the plan was made in August 2021 with examination in January 2022 and anticipated adoption in autumn 2022. The Final Draft Local Plan is therefore a material planning consideration.

3.7 This proposed development is considered to fail to accord with the Development Plan and the Final Draft Local Plan 2018 to 2036.

4. Relevant policies

4.1 Members should refer to the background papers attached to the agenda. These highlight the policy framework under which this application is determined. Specific policy considerations with regard to this particular application are detailed in section 6 below.

4.2 Paragraph 11 d) of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) establishes the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' and the principles of the 'tilted balance' that apply where a local planning authority cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing supply or have failed to deliver at least 75% of their housing requirement as part of the Housing Delivery Test. Where the tilted balance applies, decision makers should grant permission unless NPPF policies on protected areas or assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusing development or, any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, assessed against NPPF policies taken as a whole. The tilted balance has the effect of shifting the weight in the planning balance away from local policies and towards the NPPF.

4.3 The Council scored below 75% in the most recent Housing Delivery Test results for 2021 and therefore the 'tilted balance' applies to the determination of this planning application.

5. Relevant site history/background information

5.1 A pre-application request (ref: 21/00865/PREAP6) was received on 9th June 2021, a meeting was held on 8th July and a written response was issued on 16th July 2021. The redevelopment of the site for mixed-use development was supported in principle, however, the scheme proposed was not supported in respect of its scale and height which failed to make a positive contribution to the wider historic context.

5.2 Following the first pre-application, the applicant entered into a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) linked to a second pre-application request (ref: 21/01537/PREAP6) which was received on 2nd December 2021. New architects were appointed to take a fresh look at the potential for redevelopment of the site. Under the PPA a series of pre-application meetings to discuss new proposals was agreed. Meetings were held on 6th January, 10th February and 24th February 2022. The proposal was reviewed by the Watford Place Shaping

Panel on 8th March 2022. Written feedback from the Panel was provided on 21st March 2022. A written response from the Council was issued on 1st April 2022.

- 5.3 The written feedback from the Panel and the Council supported the revised scale and height of the main building, but not the smaller building. Significant concerns were raised regarding the quality of accommodation, the impacts to neighbouring amenity, the lack of suitable cycle facilities and the harm to trees and biodiversity. The Watford Place Shaping Panel written feedback is appended to this report at appendix 2 and is a material planning consideration.
- 5.4 Minor amendments were made to the proposal and this application was received on 8th April 2022.

6. Main considerations

- 6.1 The main issues to be considered in the determination of this application are:
- (a) Principle of a mixed-use residential development
 - (b) Layout, scale and design
 - (c) Commercial Floorspace
 - (d) Quality of Residential Accommodation
 - (e) Affordable housing provision
 - (f) Impact on amenity of adjoining residential properties
 - (g) Transport, parking and servicing
 - (h) Trees and biodiversity
- 6.2 (a) Principle of a residential development
The Watford Local Plan Core Strategy designates this site as being within Special Policy Area 1. This policy area incorporates the town centre as a whole and seeks to strengthen and consolidate Watford's position as a regional centre with a more balanced provision of town centre facilities and infrastructure, including retail, leisure, entertainment and other town centre uses and access improvements.
- 6.3 The site is within the Secondary Retail Frontage where the Council will seek to retain the general retail character of the frontage while permitting an adequate number of non-retail units.
- 6.4 The front part of the site is within the Civic Core Conservation Area which contains a large number on both nationally and locally listed buildings. In this area the buildings have a strong relationship across the pedestrianised street

and the pond. While there is variation in building height, there is a consistency in the materials and rhythm of the buildings which creates a coherence to the streetscape.

- 6.5 The Final Draft Watford Local Plan designates this site as being within the Town Centre Core Strategic Development Area. Proposals in this area will be supported where good design contributes positively towards creating a vibrant town centre, focused on people, healthy lifestyles and quality of life. Final Draft Local Plan site allocation MU10 considers this site to be suitable for mixed use development, including residential and commercial uses.
- 6.6 A night club has operated at this site since the current building was completed, occupying the upper floors. Adopted and draft policy seeks to create a vibrant town centre though there is no specific national or local planning policy which protects the existing nightclub use.
- 6.7 The existing 1960's building on site is of limited architectural merit. Its demolition to allow for the comprehensive redevelopment to create a mixed use scheme is acceptable in principle, subject to the normal considerations set out in planning policy.
- 6.8 (b) Layout, scale and design
Core Strategy Policy UD1 and Draft Local Plan Policy QD6.2 set out key design principles which should be considered when designing a proposal. Development should create high quality new places which respect and enhance the character of its area. Chapter 12 of the NPPF sets out national policy for achieving well-designed places and key design qualities are set out in paragraph 130.
- 6.9 The application site occupies a prominent position within the town centre at the corner of The Parade and Albert Road South. To the rear the site also has prominence from Beechen Grove, though the rear is currently undeveloped and lined by tall mature trees.
- 6.10 This proposal seeks to construct two buildings comprised of one larger mixed use building which would occupy the footprint of the existing building and a second smaller residential building which would face Beechen Grove positioned between St Albans House to the north and Elm Court to the south. The land between the two buildings would be used as a car park in connection with the commercial use.
- 6.11 The proposed scale and massing of the main, larger building with a height of five storeys fronting The Parade with eight storeys to the rear is considered

appropriate in accordance with Final Draft Local Plan Policy QD6.5 which addresses building height within the Town Centre Core Strategic Development Area. This building height reflects the balance between existing character, constraints and opportunities within the town centre and is appropriate for this site. The massing is not considered to cause any significant harm to the historic setting. The curved corner which wraps around The Parade is a positive architectural feature and the overall elevational treatment, subject to appropriate design details and materials is supported.

6.12 The smaller five storey residential building, which sits to the rear of the site would be of a contemporary form and style, however, its external elevations appear uninspiring and bland. The recessed balconies add little to the perception of depth and the elevations lack architectural articulation or interest. This building would be prominent in the townscape as it would be bulkier and higher than its surroundings. Its prominence from Beechen Grove would be heightened by the removal of the line of mature trees. Overall, its bland design and bulky proportions relative to the neighbouring non-designated heritage assets fails to visually engage with its setting. Final Draft Local Plan Policies QD6.1 and QD6.2 requires major development in the core development area to be high quality and make a positive contribution to place making. This building fails on both counts.

6.13 (c) Commercial Floorspace

The proposed development would create 2,153 square metres of retail floor space at ground floor and basement level. This would be comprised of two units, one larger fronting Albert Road and one smaller facing towards High Street and the pond. The retail provision represents a floor space increase on the existing retail provision in accordance with town centre policy.

6.14 (d) Quality of Residential Accommodation

The development would provide the following mix of accommodation:

- 80 x 1 bedroom units (54.5%)
- 58 x 2 bedroom units (39.5%)
- 9 x 3 bedroom units (6%)

6.15 The proposed mix is considered to accord with Core Strategy Policy HS2 of the Local Plan Core Strategy which seeks a variety of housing typologies. Draft Local Plan Policy HO3.2 more specifically requires at least 20% of new homes as family sized (3+bed).

6.16 The main block has two residential entrances accessing two cores, one of which serves 78 residential units with the other core serving the remaining 53.

At five levels one of the cores would serve 12 units. This number of units per core and floor is considered excessive failing to demonstrate that they would create safe, healthy and attractive internal spaces. Final Draft Local Plan Policy QD6.4 requires internal cores to serve no more than 8 units per floor.

- 6.17 Section 7.3.6 of the Residential Design Guide (RDG) sets out the minimum Gross Internal Areas for new dwellings in accordance with the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS). All of the proposed units would meet the minimum floorspace standard for the dwelling type proposed and are compliant with the NDSS.
- 6.18 Within the main block only 41 units (31%) have private amenity space. The lack of private amenity space for 90 units (69%) of accommodation is considered unacceptable. Final Draft Local Plan Policy HO3.11 states that a minimum of 5 square metres of private outdoor space should be provided for 1-2 person dwellings and at least one additional square metre should be provided for each additional occupant.
- 6.19 Three communal amenity areas for residents are provided at first, fifth and sixth floor levels in the main block. One of the cores would have access to all three areas with the other core only having direct access to the first floor communal amenity. Watford's RDG at section 7.3.23 expects all new flatted residential developments to provide communal outdoor amenity space. A 131 unit building would require 1985 square metres using the RDG guidance. It is accepted that this may be difficult to achieve in a town centre location, though the proposed 894 square meters, in the absence of private amenity space to 69% of units, is not considered acceptable. This communal amenity provision would be particularly poor for residents of the 53 unit core who would only have direct access to 359 square meters of the communal amenity space at first floor level which is shared with the 78 units accessed via the other core. The daylight sunlight report depicts significant overshadowing and explains that only 40% of this first floor amenity area would only receive at least 2 hours of sun on 21st March which fails to meet the BRE guidance of 50%.
- 6.20 The daylight sunlight assessment only makes an assessment of a small number of the residential units within the scheme. This sample selection taken is not considered to be representative of the scheme as a whole. The units which are likely to receive the least daylight and sunlight due to their orientation have not been assessed. In addition to this the assessment is missing two floorplans which would enable identification of the windows which have been assessed. In the absence of a full assessment, acceptable levels of daylight and sunlight to all units have not been demonstrated.

- 6.21 Of the 131 units in the main building 98 (75%) would be single aspect and nine units would only have one opening (either window or door). Eight of these nine units open onto the corner of the rear courtyard, which would severely constrain their outlook. These units have not had their daylight sunlight levels assessed. Whilst single aspect units should be avoided wherever possible, it is accepted that on high density proposals that it may be difficult to avoid single aspect units altogether. However, where single aspect units are proposed it is important to robustly scrutinise the quality of the accommodation proposed as single aspect units often suffer from issues of poor daylighting, overheating, noise disturbance or limited outlook. The application fails to provide sufficient justification to demonstrate that the single aspect units in the scheme would provide an overall high quality of accommodation when also taking account of the heavily used nature of the cores and the very poor external amenity provision.
- 6.22 The units which do benefit from private amenity space are largely those which have projecting balconies with views across the 12 metre rear courtyard which is enclosed by the flank wall of neighbouring number 135 The Parade. This 12 metre separation distance would give a poor outlook with an overbearing sense of enclosure for the single aspect north-west facing units. In addition to this the projecting nature of the balconies allows views into neighbouring units, particularly across the internal corners of the courtyard. Such a proximity would result in limited privacy for occupants.
- 6.23 All 16 residential units within the smaller residential building would have terraces or balconies, though there would be no communal amenity space. The lack of any significant communal amenity space for a block which contains all of the three bedroom units which would suit occupation by families is considered poor. Communal amenity space is a requirement of the RDG (as noted above). Many of the balconies and windows in this building overlook the proposed the car park which is likely to be used late into the evening with more movements than that associated with residential use. This would make for poor amenity in terms of outlook and noise. The ground floor units in this building have windows which are 1.7 to 5.4 meters from the high boundary fence. This lack of separation would give the ground floor units little outlook all round making them feel enclosed.
- 6.24 The Watford Place Shaping Panel were also concerned that there were too many residential units per core and questioned the significant proportion of single aspect units and the lack of private and communal amenity space. Their comments can be viewed in full in the written feedback which is appended to this report.

- 6.25 (e) Affordable housing provision
Policy HS3 of the Core Strategy requires a 35% provision of affordable housing. This provision should have a tenure mix of 65% affordable rent, 20% social rent and 15% intermediate tenures. Draft local plan policy HO3.3 also requires 35% provision, with a tenure mix which includes 60% social rent.
- 6.26 The applicant proposes no affordable housing. This has been explained through the submission of a detailed viability appraisal which shows the development to be unviable. Why the applicant would build the scheme at this level of deficit identified within the submitted appraisal is not explained.
- 6.27 The viability appraisal has been subject to a detailed and robust viability review by Aspinall Verdi (AV), acting on behalf of the Council. AV tested a policy-compliant scenario to determine whether the scheme could support the contribution sought by Policy HS3. The outcome of this policy complaint scenario concluded that the development to still be unviable generating a deficit of £15.3 million. AV also tested an entirely private scenario to determine whether the scheme would be financially viable. This concluded a deficit of £7.5 million.
- 6.28 Over time values fluctuate. AV have shown that if sales values increase and construction costs decrease, a policy compliant scheme begins to become viable. AV have strongly recommended that a viability review mechanism is included within any Section 106 agreement.
- 6.29 (f) Impact on amenity of adjoining residential properties
The north wall main building would be positioned 13.5 metres from the curtilage of the site with Elm Court and 20 metres from the building itself at the closest point. Elm Court is comprised of 12 residential units, all of which are dual aspect facing north and south. The distance between habitable room windows would vary between 20 and 27 metres. This separation represents an increase of 3 meters relative to the existing situation. Unlike the existing building, the proposed building does contain habitable room windows and Juliet balconies. This separation in this urban context is considered acceptable.
- 6.30 The main building would cause no significant loss of amenity to any nearby residential unit within Elm Court, on Albert Road South or along The Parade. This has been demonstrated by the daylight sunlight assessment.
- 6.31 The smaller building would be positioned approximately 10 metres from St Albans House (181 The Parade) at the closest point. The daylight sunlight assessment does make an assessment of daylight and sunlight impacts to this

neighbouring building, though the number of residential units within the building, internal layouts and room uses are not shown, having not been researched. It notes that two rooms within this St Albans House would have their Vertical Sky Component figures fall by 30% and 40%, though it is unaware that these two windows are the only habitable room windows within flat number 1 within St Albans House. It should also be noted that BRE guidelines state that a 20% reduction is the threshold for a noticeable change.

- 6.32 The building has habitable room windows and balconies facing St Albans House across a private service road. The separation at the closest point between habitable room windows within the development and existing flat numbers 1, 9 and 17 within St Albans House would be 11 metres. Watford's RDG at section 7.3.16 addresses privacy and outlines separation distances. Between front elevations separation distances would be determined by the street layout. Typical separation distances across roads, including service roads would typically be around 14 to 16 metres. The separation distance of 10 metres between the buildings and 11 metres between the habitable room windows would result in significant loss of privacy and outlook to existing residential units in this context. It is noted that two sycamore trees adjacent to the north western boundary are proposed for retention. Retaining these trees would further reduce daylight to the proposed residential units, particularly during the summer months when they are in full leaf.
- 6.33 (g) Transport, parking and servicing
Policy ST11.5 of the Draft local plan, which is reflective of up to date transportation requirements suggests that retail development within the core development area should be car free and that residential units provide a maximum of 0.3 spaces per unit. The existing site provides 75 parking spaces used in connection with the Iceland supermarket. Overall the provision of 57 spaces represent a reduction in car parking at the site which is supported. Although a greater reduction in the quantity of parking would be preferred, the proposed number of parking spaces, which is a 24% reduction of existing levels is accepted. The residential parking provision is in accordance with draft policy. Any increase in vehicle trips would be negligible.
- 6.34 The proposal depicts a sufficient quantity of residential cycle storage within each building to comply with Final Draft Local Plan Policy ST11.5. In the main building the cycle store would be located in the basement accessed by the lifts in both cores. Having the residential cycle parking in the basement is inconvenient and compounds concerns regarding the overall quality of the accommodation to be provided. The same policy would require 107 spaces to serve the retail uses. The plans depict 7 spaces in 4 locations around the car park for the retail use. The position of cycle parking in the basement and low

provision of cycle spaces to serve the retail uses does not encourage sustainable modes of transport. Without an easily accessible and secure place for people to store their cycle, both at home and at their destination, they are unlikely to choose to cycle their journey.

6.35 (h) Trees and biodiversity

The Arboricultural Implications Report explains that nine trees along the boundary with Beechen Grove would need to be felled to allow for the construction of the smaller building. These nine trees are comprised of two ash, four cypress, one lime and two oak trees. The trees are all semi mature or mature and stated to be between 7 and 17 metres in height. Six trees are within the site and three outside the site. These trees provide a significant green buffer to the site along Beechen Grove their loss would result in a substantial loss of visual amenity.

6.36 Adjacent to the north western boundary of the site within the conservation area are two sycamore trees (T18 and T19). The trunks of these trees are 0.9 metres and 1.8 metres from the proposed flank wall of the smaller building with the closer tree positioned in front of the communal refuse store door restricting access to it. The report explains that the extent of pruning to these trees is beyond the relevant British Standard recommendations, though it still proposes their pruning. Even if the roots were protected by pile and beam foundations, the loss of approximately half of the crown would severely prejudice the health of these trees, which would be protected by their location within a conservation area and result in them having to be felled. The suggestion that these trees can be retained is impractical. If they were retained, they would substantially reduce light and outlook to the proposed flats, a matter which is not considered in the daylight and sunlight assessment.

6.37 The applicant suggests that the substantial loss of trees would be compensated through planting and has shown a line of six trees within the proposed car park and four trees outside the site on the embankment of the pedestrian underpass. It is not clear how the four trees outside the site would be secured and whether their position is suitable. The six trees within the proposed car park sit at the junction of four parking spaces and would therefore be contained by virtue of their position. This proposed planting would not compensate for the loss of 9 or 11 much larger, mature trees which have significant amenity value and life expectancy. Draft Local Plan Policy NE9.1 seeks to conserve and enhance the natural environment and requires development proposals should follow the 'mitigation hierarchy' of avoidance, mitigation or compensation. The retention and conservation of the trees does not appear to have been considered. The Arboricultural report suggests that

the trees were not a consideration in the site layout and the tree constraints plan referred to has not been provided. Any potential uplift in the number of residential units on this site alone does not justify such a substantial loss of trees proposed by this application.

7 Consultation responses received

7.1 Statutory consultees and other organisations

Name of Statutory Consultee / Other Organisation	Comment	Response
Hertfordshire Constabulary Crime Prevention Design Service	No response received.	None.
Hertfordshire County Council Flood Authority	No response received.	Pre commencement conditions could be used.
Hertfordshire County Council Growth and Infrastructure	Community Infrastructure Levy applicable.	Noted
Hertfordshire County Council Highways	Objects to the car focused nature of the proposal and seeks various clarifications in relation to servicing and access. Should the application be granted conditions requiring a construction management plans and a travel plan are recommended.	Noted
Thames Water	No objection.	Noted.

7.2 Internal Consultees

Name of Statutory Consultee / Other Organisation	Comment	Response
Watford Borough Council Arboricultural Officer	Objected due to loss of soft landscaping and suggested the severe pruning of some	Noted.

	retained trees would severely prejudice their health.	
Watford Borough Council Environmental Health	Requested further acoustic information, though did not object in principle.	Noted.
Watford Borough Council Housing Service	Did not support scheme because it proposed no affordable housing.	Noted.
Watford Borough Council Waste and Recycling	Stated refuse requirements and noted that dropped kerbs would be required to facilitate collection.	Noted.

7.3 Interested Parties

Letters were sent to 129 properties in the surrounding area, a site notice was erected and the proposal was advertised in the Watford Observer. 534 responses were received. 401 were in objection, 91 in support and 42 were neutral.

The vast majority of the responses were received late on Friday and Saturday evenings. Many of the responses provided no written comments, and those which did were brief and often irrelevant, though the overriding concern raised was clearly with the loss of the existing nightclub. It is noted that many respondents who had chosen the support option, wrote comments in objection. No response in support provided clear written reasoning for their support. Many of names and addresses provided appear fictional. A few comments were offensive and were not published on the Council's public access website.

The main comments are summarised below, the full letters are available to view online:

The proposed development would create 2,153 square metres of retail floor space at ground floor and basement level. This would be comprised of two units, one larger fronting Albert Road and one smaller facing towards High Street and the pond. The retail provision represents a floor space increase on the existing retail provision in accordance with town centre policy.

Comments	Officer response
Loss of the nightclub	Watford Borough Council cannot mandate that the nightclub, a private business remains open. See

	paragraph 6.6 of the report which relate addresses the principle of the development.
Loss of jobs	The proposed development would increase the retail provision which would provide jobs. See paragraph 6.13 of the report which relate addresses the commercial floorspace.
Insufficient parking / increase in traffic	Parking provision is considered acceptable and the impact on the highway network is considered negligible. See paragraph 6.32 of the report which relate addresses parking provision and highway impacts.
Overdevelopment of area	The development makes effective use of an allocated site brownfield site and contributes to addressing housing need in Watford. See section paragraph 6.5 which relates to the principal of a residential development.
Lack of open space for residential units.	The lack of open space for the residential units is poor. See paragraphs 6.18, 6.19 and 6.23 of the report which relate addresses the quality of residential accommodation.
Pressure on local services	The development is CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) liable. This levy is used to help the local authority to deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in the area.
Lack of affordable housing	The lack of any affordable housing is disappointing, though this has been subject to an independent viability review, and if permission were to be approved we would recommend a late stage review. See paragraphs 6.24 to 6.27 of the report which relates to accommodation and affordable housing.
Anti-Social Behaviour	The proposal is not considered to give rise to anti-social behaviour.
Disruption from construction	A construction management plan would be required were this application to be viewed favourably. This would mitigate disruption from the construction works. The Environmental Protection Act, the Control of Pollution Act and the Highway Act also control the matters of disruption raised.

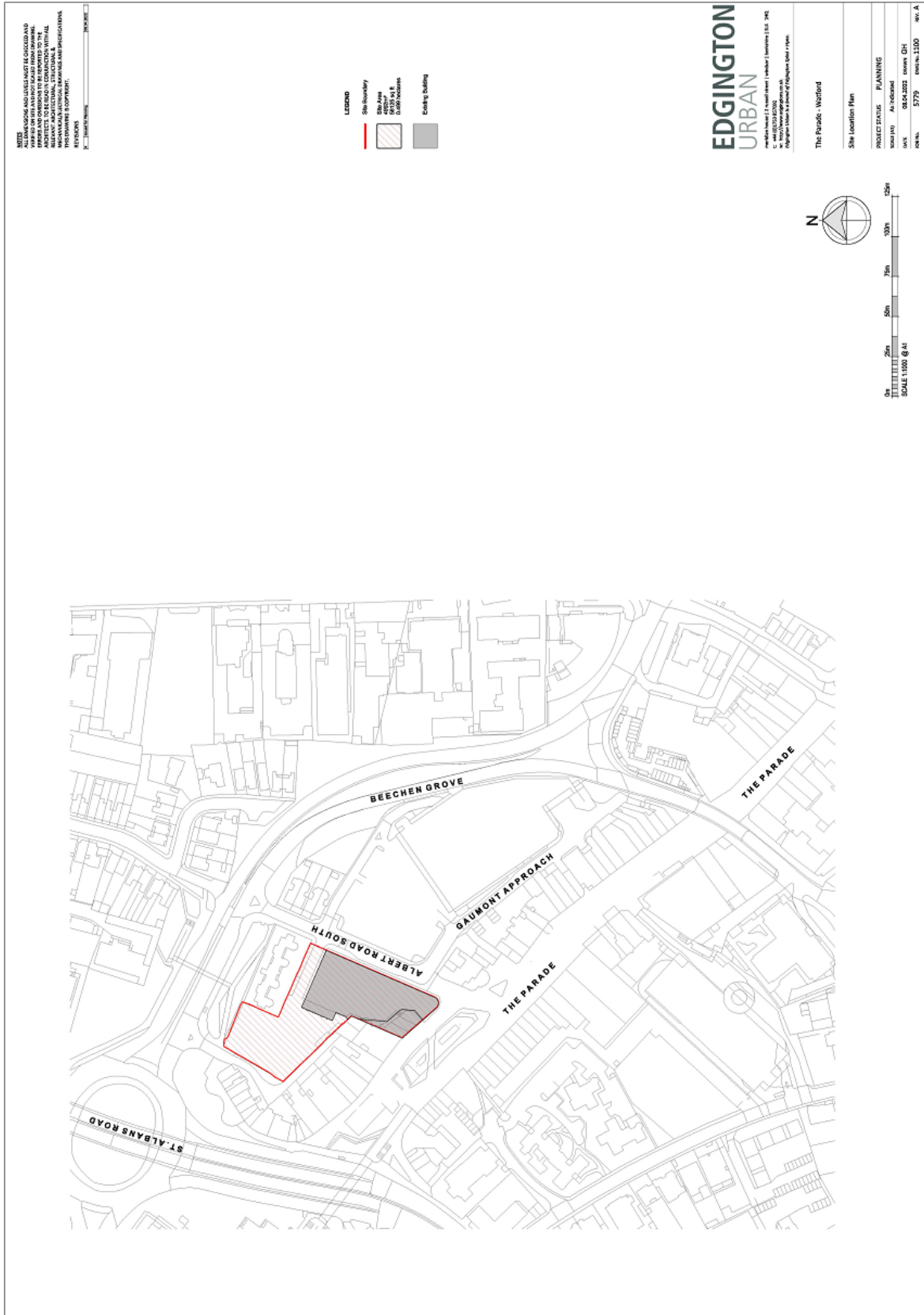
8 Recommendation

That planning permission be refused for the following reasons:

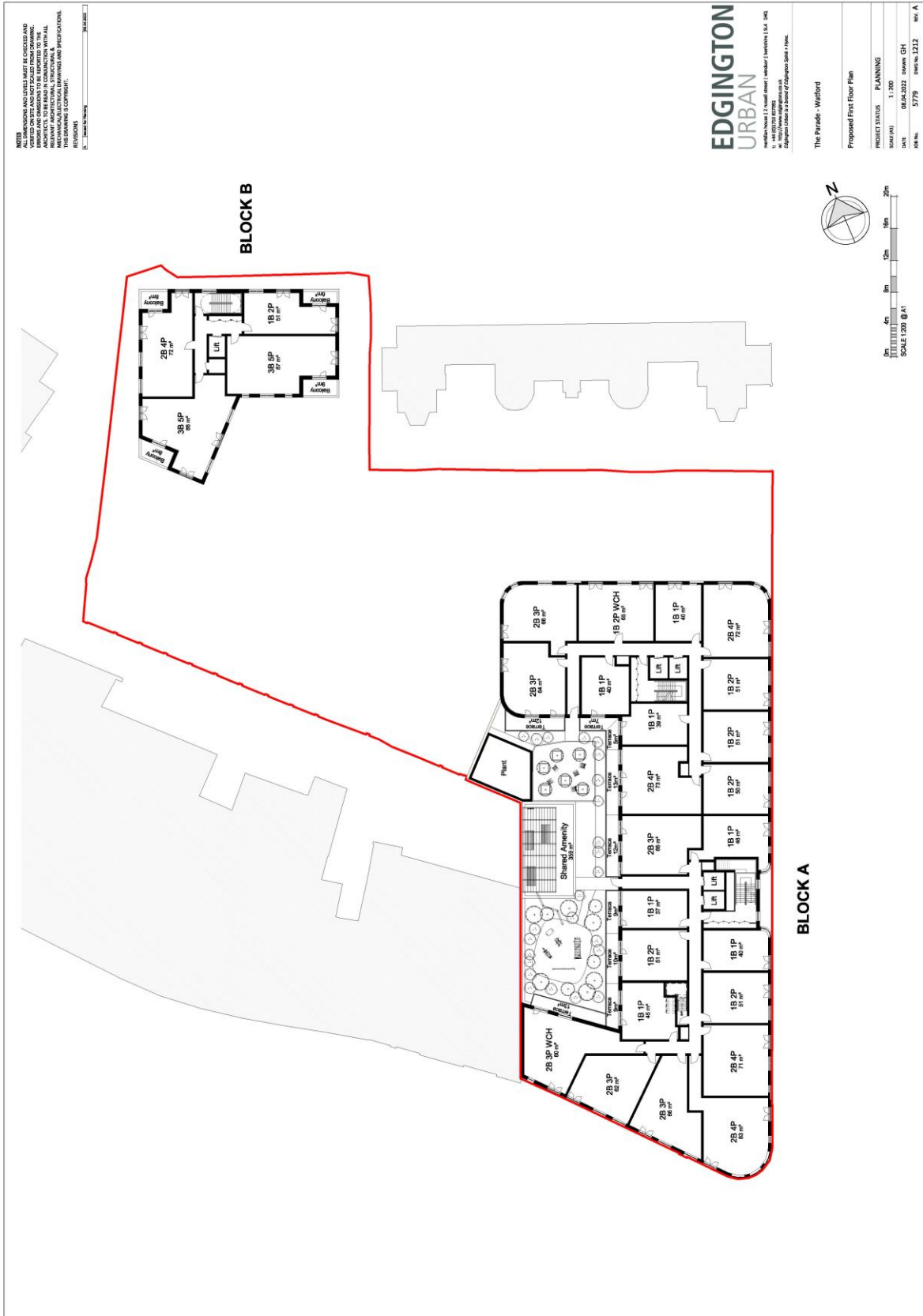
Reasons:

1. The building facing Beechen Grove, by virtue of its bland design and bulky proportions relative to the neighbouring non-designated heritage assets fails to respect the character and appearance of the surrounding area and would be an overbearing addition to the streetscene. The loss of mature, healthy trees to facilitate this building is also significant. As such the development would be contrary to paragraph 127, of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, Policies SS1, UD1 and UD2 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31, saved policies SE36, SE39 and U15 of the Watford District Plan 2000, Policies QD6.1, QD6.2, QD6.4, HE7.3, NE9.1 and NE9.8 of the Final Draft Local Plan 2018-2036 and sections 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 of Watford's Residential Design Guide 2016.
2. The residential units, by virtue of the heavily used nature of the cores, the very poor external amenity provision, the compromised outlook, their lack of privacy across the first floor courtyard and the lack of justification as to adequate daylight, sunlight and overheating fail to provide a high quality of accommodation. As such the development would be contrary to paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, Policies SS1 and UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31, Policies HO3.11 and QD6.4 of the Final Draft Local Plan 2018-2036 and section 7.3 of Watford's Residential Design Guide 2016.
3. The design of the proposal, by virtue of its proportions and fenestrations of the building facing Beechen Grove, would cause significant loss of light, sense of enclosure and loss of privacy to neighbouring residential dwellings within St Albans House. Such a loss of neighbouring amenity is contrary to paragraphs 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, Policies SS1 and UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31, Policy VT5.2 of the Final Draft Local Plan 2018-2036 and section 7.3 of Watford's Residential Design Guide 2016.

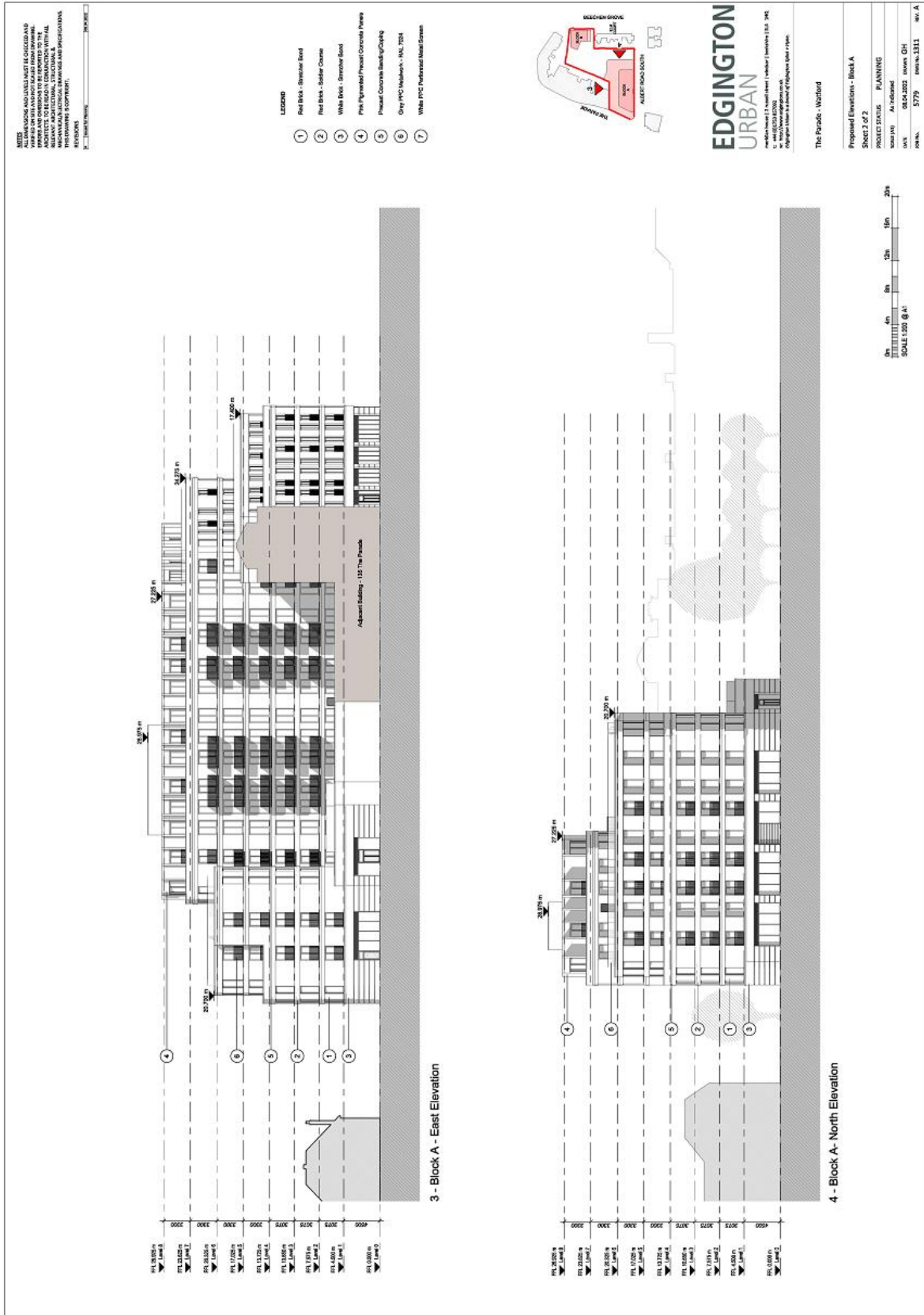
Site Location Plan



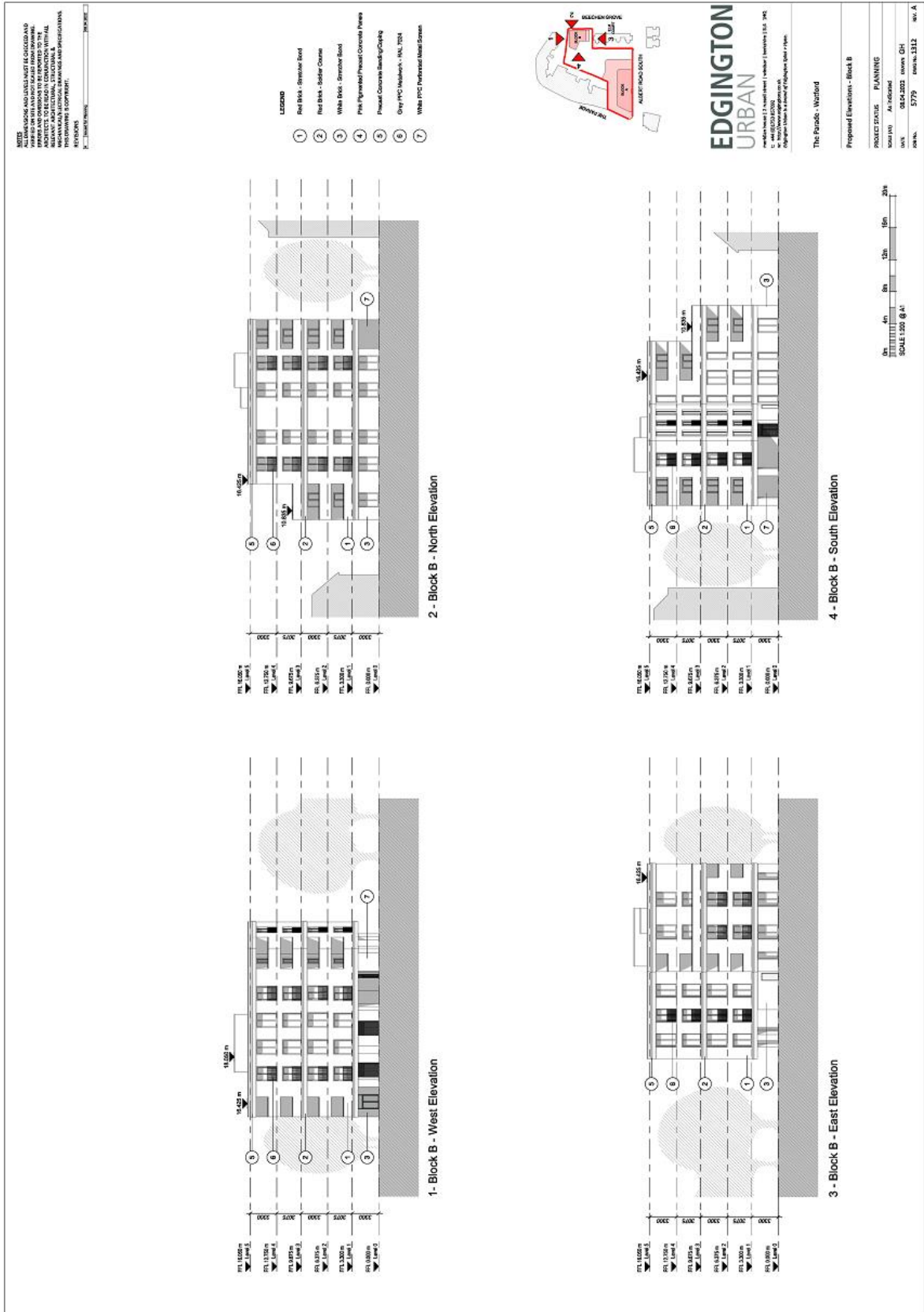
First Floor Plan



Elevations of main building



Elevations of building on Beechen Grove



Main Building from the Parade

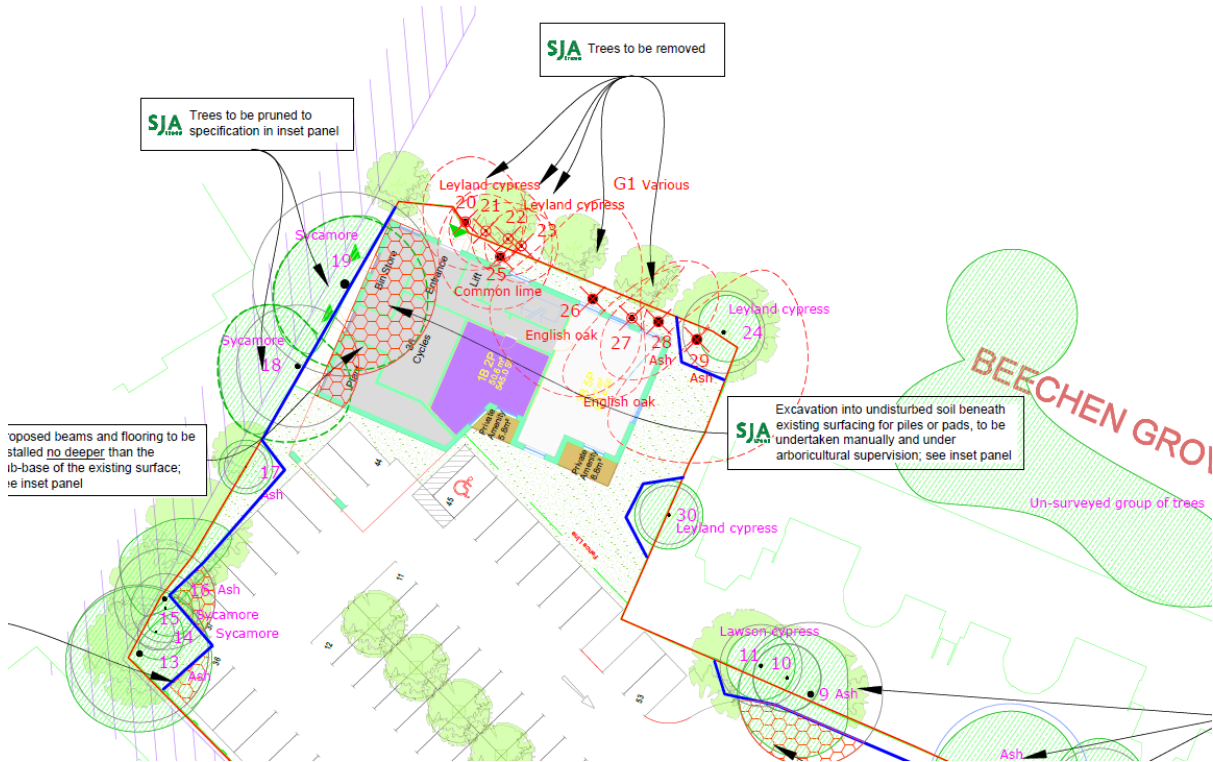


Rear building from Beechen Grove
(Trees to front would be felled. Trees to right would be pruned)

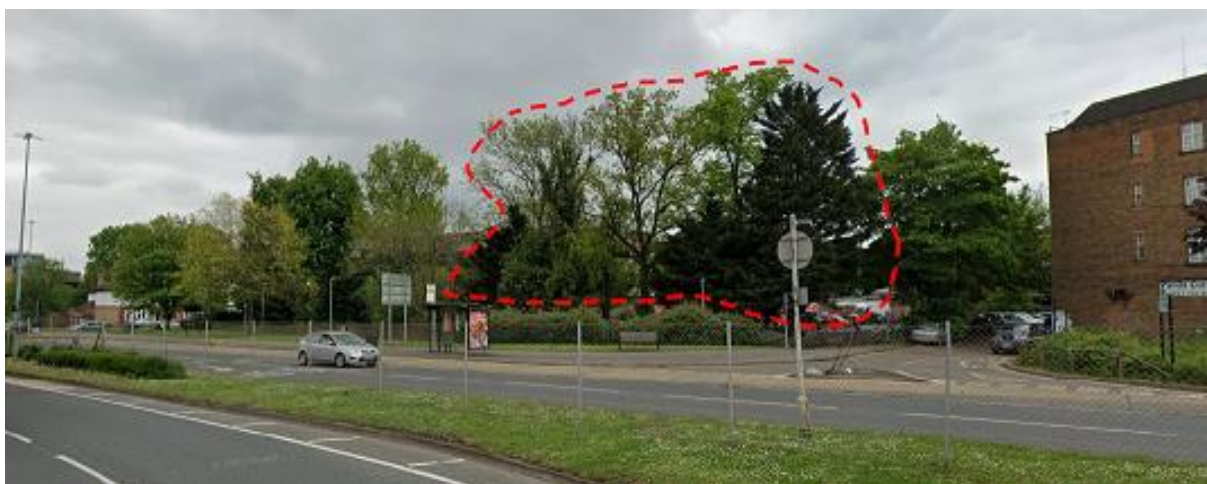


Tree Removal

Red outlines show trees to be felled. Green outline shows trees to be pruned. Line of 5 trees on plan above top boundary are indicative and do not exist.



Red outline shows trees to be felled. Trees to right of these would be pruned.





Watford Place Shaping Panel

Report of Formal Review Meeting: 125 – 133 The Parade

Tuesday 8 March 2022

Watford Community Housing, 59 Clarendon Road, Watford WD17 1LA

Panel

Peter Bishop (chair)

Irfan Alam

Michael Popper

Jessica Reynolds

Linda Thiel

Attendees

Paul Baxter	Watford Borough Council
Andrew Clarke	Watford Borough Council
Sian Finney-MacDonald	Watford Borough Council
Ben Martin	Watford Borough Council
Kate Pickard	Watford Borough Council
Alice Reade	Watford Borough Council
Tom Bolton	Frame Projects
Reema Kaur	Frame Projects
Miranda Kimball	Frame Projects

Apologies / report copied to

Louise Barrett	Watford Borough Council
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Confidentiality

This is a pre-application review, and therefore confidential. As a public organisation Watford Borough Council is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOI), and in the case of an FOI request may be obliged to release project information submitted for review.

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1. Project name and site address

125 – 133 The Parade, Watford WD17 1NA

2. Presenting team

David Minnis	Edgington Urban
Richard Hardy	Cotswold Archaeology
Peter Jeffery	Sphere25
Mark Sleigh	Sphere25
Ian Sutherland	Dwyer Property

3. Planning authority briefing

The site is approximately half a hectare and occupies a prominent position within Watford town centre. It has an irregular shape fronting The Parade, Albert Road South and Beechen Grove. The site currently contains a three-storey building which dates from 1964. The building is currently occupied by several commercial and leisure uses including an Iceland supermarket. To the rear is a large car park used in association with the Iceland supermarket. The site is partially within the Civic Core Conservation Area, and the surroundings include many heritage assets.

In the Final Draft Local Plan, this site is within the Town Centre Core Strategic Development Area and is allocated as being suitable for mixed use development, including residential and commercial uses. The proposal is for the demolition of the existing buildings on site and the development of a mixed-use scheme to provide 146 residential units split into two separate blocks, retail space, including the provision of a food store and retail store, and associated cycle parking, car parking, landscaping, and amenity.

Watford officers consider the proposed use and heights to be acceptable in principle; however, officers have some concerns and asked for the panel's views, in particular, on the layout of the site, especially the success of the Family Block; the quality of accommodation in the main block; how the scheme and its massing sit within the surrounding historic setting; and the access to the Family Block.



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4. Place Shaping Panel's views

Summary

The panel considers that the proposals for 125–133 The Parade have the potential to make a positive contribution to Watford's historic civic core. However, refinements to the designs are needed to ensure a high-quality of residential accommodation is also provided. Overall, the proposed elevations, scale and massing successfully sit within the civic core's townscape. Further consideration is needed of the design for the crown of the building, fronting The Parade, and of the way it meets the neighbouring, locally listed 135 The Parade. The panel questions the quality of the internal layouts and the narrowness of the corridors in the main block, with a significant proportion of single aspect units. The panel is concerned that there are too many residential units per core and suggests that a third core, fronting onto The Parade, could help to address these issues. The panel questions the lack of outdoor private amenity space for units facing The Parade and Albert Road South, and suggests that balcony provision would improve the quality of accommodation. The panel also questions the quality of the communal outdoor amenity space for the Family Block, and its setting, which is dominated by car parking. It suggests the number of car parking spaces should be reduced, further greening included and more work carried out to ensure the residents can access the block through a high quality, safe public realm. Lastly, the scheme's sustainability strategy requires further consideration to ensure the building's design and performance targets can be met. These comments are expanded below.

Elevational treatment

- The panel feels that the scheme's proposed scale and massing, with a stepped arrangement of blocks, sits comfortably within the town centre and Civic Core Conservation Area context. In particular, the panel considers the way the building wraps around the corner of The Parade and Albert Road South to be a successful approach.
- The panel suggests that, as designs progress, the applicant should reconsider its approach to outdoor amenity provision. It considers the current amenity space to be insufficient, especially for the smaller units fronting The Parade and Albert Road South. While the current elevational treatment is successful, the panel feels the addition of recessed or Juliet balconies would raise the quality of the residential accommodation without harming the historic townscape.
- The panel encourages the design team to look closely at the relationship between the proposals and the neighbouring building at 135 The Parade, and to ensure in particular that the new block's crown treatment meets the existing block and its prominent gable in a sympathetic way. The panel asks for further long views to show how the two buildings will sit comfortably alongside one another.



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Internal layout

- The panel questions the high proportion of single aspect units in the main block, and suggests that there are number of potential benefits to adding a third access core. It would help to improve the internal quality of the scheme by allowing the introduction of more through-units and dual-aspect units.
- While the panel welcomes the three communal amenity spaces distributed across the main block, it questions the residents' journey along narrow corridors to access these outdoor spaces. A third core could enable more generous corridors to be provided throughout the block.
- A third core could also enable better connections at ground level, and allow direct access for residents onto The Parade, avoiding the need to exit via the Albert Road South.
- A third core in this location could also help to create a comfortable threshold between the back of the new block and the residential units with windows facing out from the rear of 135 The Parade.

Servicing

- The panel questions the prominent positioning of the residents' bins and recycling storage on the Albert Road South street frontage, and suggests an alternative location should be identified.
- The panel also questions the location of the bicycle storage in the basement, and suggests a more accessible location for residents is explored.

Family Block

- While the panel supports the scheme providing family units in the smaller block, it is concerned by the block's ground floor setting.
- The commercial car park dominates the site and leaves a limited amount of public realm for the residents of the Family Block. To ensure there is meaningful ground floor space, the panel suggests that some of the commercial parking spots, close to the Family Block, to prevent its setting from being dominated by vehicle.
- The panel also suggest that reducing the number of car parking spots can also allow more greenery and landscaping to be introduced into this space.
- The panel suggests that the triangular plot, located between the Family Block and the car park, should be incorporated into the scheme's landscape design to help enhance the quality of this space.
- The panel also finds the scheme's edge treatment, including the site's relationship with the pedestrian underpass on Beechen Grove and with the



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access road to the north, requires further resolution. It is important that the journey to the front door of the block is safe for residents, and is characterised by high quality public realm.

Sustainability

- The scheme's sustainability strategy needs to be developed as part of the next design iteration. The panel encourages the scheme, as a town centre site, to aim for very high standards in relation to both embodied and operational carbon.
- The panel suggests that the use of large, portrait format windows throughout the building is like to lead to overheating, and asks for further thought on whether they could be smaller, and whether spandrel panels can be incorporated to reduce solar gain. It also suggests that the windows should be openable to allow for natural ventilation.
- Given the current proportion of single-aspect units, and risk of overheating, the panel is concerned that the thickness of floors and walls will be insufficient to achieve the proposed u-values. The panel asks these are revisited.
- The panel also suggests further clarity is needed about the nature of the proposed materials and their carbon efficiency, especially the use of pigmented concrete.
- While the panel welcomes the replacement of the trees that will be removed from the site to enable the development, it questions whether their replacement on land outside the site is a practical option, requiring both agreement and maintenance from Hertfordshire County Council. The applicant should resolve the deliverability of these plans ahead of submission.

Next steps

- The panel is available to review the scheme again, if required, when the design team has been able to respond to its comments.



Agenda Item 5

Committee date	Tuesday, 26 July 2022
Application reference Site address	22/00583/FUL - Everett Rovers FC Dodd Road WD24 5FS
Proposal	Creation of a Community 3G Football Turf Pitch FTP 8380 sq. metres with associated features (see details)
Applicant	Mr Wayne Frost
Agent	Mr Tom Betts
Type of Application	Full Planning Application
Reason for committee Item	Number of objections
Target decision date	27/07/22
Statutory publicity	Site Notice
Case officer	Sam Oguz, sam.oguz@watford.gov.uk
Ward	Leggatts

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 That planning permission be granted subject to conditions, as set out in section 8 of this report.

2. Site and surroundings

- 2.1 The application site comprises Everett Rovers FC, a well-established football club within the Leggatts Ward. The site is 4.0 hectares, which includes multi-sized football pitches, clubhouse and associated parking. The main access to the site is from North Western Avenue and cars enter whilst travelling northbound, with Dodd Road servicing the club. To the east of the site is Cherry Tree Primary School, to the south is Harebreaks Wood and to the west is the development which comprises of housing on the former West Herts College site. This development comprises a mix of housing types. The site has 60 parking spaces available for use by its members and has no floodlight provision.
- 2.2 The site is not in a conservation area nor does it affect the setting of a listed building.

3. Summary of the proposal

3.1 Proposal

- 3.2 The main part of this proposal is for the erection of a 3G football pitch within the existing playing field. The new facility will be a full size pitch available for both matches and training. It will be contained by a 4.5m high steel mesh fence measuring 106m x 77m. The pitch will be located parallel to the boundary fence with Cherry Tree School. The pitch will be floodlit with 6x 15m floodlight columns. A storage container will be used to store equipment overnight, this will be located within the fenced area.
- 3.3 In addition to the pitch, there will also be the inclusion of 4x 8m floodlights for the club's parking facility and a further 2x 5m lights adjacent to the club house. The proposal also includes a footpath connecting the pitch to the road and existing clubhouse.

3.4 Conclusion

The proposed works are deemed to result in a significant enhancement to the current facilities on site. Although the hours of use of the site are to be increased, the parking available on site is deemed to be sufficient to meet the intended demand of the site. Whilst nearby residents have objected due to potential noise and light pollution, no objection has been raised by technical consultees. To control this aspect, strict conditions are recommended.

4. Relevant policies

- 4.1 Members should refer to the background papers attached to the agenda. These highlight the policy framework under which this application is determined. Specific policy considerations with regard to this particular application are detailed in section 6 below.

5. Relevant site history/background information

- 5.1 The football club has been present on this site for a number of decades and does contribute to the surrounding community in a positive manner. The clubhouse and changing rooms were recently constructed (under ref. 15/01685/FUL) and have brought the site up to modern standards.
- 5.2 Previously, the site was adjacent to the Bill Everett Centre, a community sports centre. Within this past decade this has been demolished and the site is currently still vacant. The new properties on Dodd Road are the closest residential neighbours to the proposal.

6. Main considerations

- 6.1 The main issues to be considered in the determination of these applications are:
- (a) Principle of development
 - (b) Scale, design and impact on the character and appearance of the area
 - (c) Impact on neighbour amenity
 - (d) Traffic, highways and parking impacts.
 - (e) Public benefit
- 6.2 (a) Principle of the development
The current use of the site is as an established outdoor sports facility (Use Class F.2), this will remain unchanged as a result of this proposal. The addition of a 3G pitch represents an enhancement of the existing facilities on site. The space is underutilised for training and an enhancement to community and sporting facilities is welcome in both local and national planning policy.
- 6.3 It is considered that that the principle of the proposed 3G pitch and associated works on this site is acceptable.
- 6.4 (b) Scale, design and impact on the character and appearance of the area
The proposed 3G pitch will be 106m x 77m with a 4.5m tall steel fence. These dimensions are considered as appropriate for the intended use and align with the Sport England sizes for football pitches. In addition the site would be comparable to other pitches in the Watford area. The positioning of the pitch next to Cherry Tree School will mean it is as far away as possible from residential dwellings on Dodd Road and will have a lessened impact on the playing field. The location also means the view from the A41 is partially obscured due to the

siting of the clubhouse which will screen most of the pitch from view. Given the size, siting and location within an outdoor sports facility, the proposal would have no significant impact on the streetscene and is acceptable in terms of scale and design.

6.5 The proposed lights to the parking area and clubhouse are deemed to have no significant impact on the character and appearance of the area.

6.6 (c) Impact on neighbour amenity

Despite several neighbour objections against this application, the 3G pitch is set back far enough from the nearest properties that it would not give rise to any direct impacts. Despite neighbour objections mentioning both noise and lighting as an issue, Environmental Health have examined the submitted information and raised no objection on these grounds. Whilst there is likely to be an increase in the use of the site, particularly during the winter months, this has been addressed in the design and access statement and it is recommended that a condition is applied to restrict the hours of use from 8am – 10:10pm. This will limit any noise and light disturbance on adjoining neighbours. A noise impact assessment has also been carried out and it is noted that while the noise to surrounding area may change in the types of noises heard, they would not impact upon the general amenity of residents. The nearest noise sensitive location is predicted to receive a maximum noise level of 46 dB, this is below the 50dB threshold of the WHO and below the current average noise of the surrounding area. It is also noted that regardless of this proposal the neighbours will experience similar impacts as are present at the moment as the proposed pitch does not represent an increased capacity of the site, just an increase in time occupied.

6.7 Given the above assessment, it is considered that the new pitch and associated works are unlikely to result in a significant level of increased impact to neighbours. The applicant has demonstrated that impacts will aim to be reduced by implementation of a site management plan and controls on the time of use on the site.

6.8 (d) Traffic, highways and parking impacts.

The proposed changes to the site will have no impact on the highway or parking provision. The changes will increase the operational times on the site, however, information submitted would suggest the pitch would hold a maximum of 60 people in a midweek period. With a private car park capacity of 60 cars and 2 minibuses, it would be expected that the parking provision on-site could accommodate the additional operational hours. In addition to this, a 5 year Active Travel Plan has been supplied, aiming to reduce car journeys to the site by at least 20%. Despite neighbour concerns, it is likely that any increase in car activity on site can be accommodated by the private parking provision, particularly when the pitch will be in main use for midweek training.

6.9 (e) Public benefit

It must also be acknowledged that the proposal is likely to result in a high level of public benefit. Having a 3G pitch enables training and play in a variety of weather conditions and times of the year, something the club has to currently outsource. Additionally, sport is linked heavily to increased health and wellbeing and any proposal to enhance a sporting facility must have significant negative impacts to warrant a refusal of the application. In terms of this proposal, the benefits of the proposal outweigh the potential harm.

7. Consultation responses received

7.1 Statutory consultees and other organisations

Sport England:

Sport England raises no objection to this application as a statutory consultee which is considered to meet exception 5 of their adopted Playing Fields Policy and paragraph 99 of the NPPF subject to a planning condition being imposed relating to the following matter as set out in this response:

- Artificial Grass Pitch Certification;

The principle of the proposal is also supported as a non-statutory consultee and advisory comments are made on technical issues such as hours of use and sports lighting.

7.2 Internal Consultees

Environmental Health:

The lighting and noise assessments are satisfactory. I would suggest you post condition the noise assessment recommendations re a noise action plan, for monitoring and controlling behaviour and use of the facility, with a clear complaints process, to resolve any future issues arising. In terms of lighting, you could post condition the lighting meets the engineers levels set out in their report, which appears to be below 5 Lux provided in the contour plans.

7.3 Interested parties

Letters were sent to 64 properties in the surrounding area. 389 representations have been made in response. Of these, 374 were in support, 10 objections and 5 general representations.

The main comments are summarised below, the full letters are available to view online:

Comments	Officer response
Parking Issues	Addressed in Section 6.9 of the report. It is also noted that the situation is unlikely to change on matchdays (weekends) whether the 3G pitch is provided or not
Rubbish on site	The proposal will not affect the waste on site, the proposal does include 3 waste bins within the pitch boundary and these would be sufficient for the use of the pitch.
Social Activity/ Drinking on site	The clubhouse and its activities will not be effected by this proposal.
Noise and Light issues	No objection made by EH and relevant conditions will be implemented
Visual Amenity of the pitch	See section 6.4 of the report
Traffic and Congestion in the area	Whilst it is acknowledged that there are significant issues in terms of parking and traffic congestion, the applicant has demonstrated that the pitch will not increase the capacity of the site and has provided a detailed breakdown of numbers expected which aligns with the parking provision on-site. In addition to this the Active Travel Plan and Car sharing examples will aim to reduce traffic to the site. Also creating a more sustainable environment.

8. Recommendation

8.1 That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

1. The development to which this permission relates shall be begun within a period of three years commencing on the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The following drawings are hereby approved:

- Drawing Number: S21-331 DWG 0002.01
- Drawing Number: S21-331 DWG 0003.01
- Drawing Number: S21-331 DWG 0004.01
- Drawing Number: S21-331 DWG 0005.01
- Drawing Number: S21-331 DWG 0006.01
- Drawing Number: S21-331 DWG 0007.01
- Drawing Number: S21-331 DWG 0008.01
- Drawing Number: S21-331 DWG 0009.01
- Drawing Number: S21-331 DWG 0010.01
- Drawing Number: S21-331 DWG 0011.01
- Drawing Number: S21-331 DWG 0012.01
- Design and Access Statement: S21-331

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and the interests of proper planning.

3. Use of the artificial grass pitch shall not commence until:
 - (a) Certification that the Artificial Grass Pitch hereby permitted has met the FIFA Quality accreditation or equivalent International Artificial Turf Standard (fA TS); and
 - (b) Confirmation that the facility has been registered on the Football Association's Register of Football Turf Pitches;have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the development is fit for purpose, sustainable and provides sporting benefits.

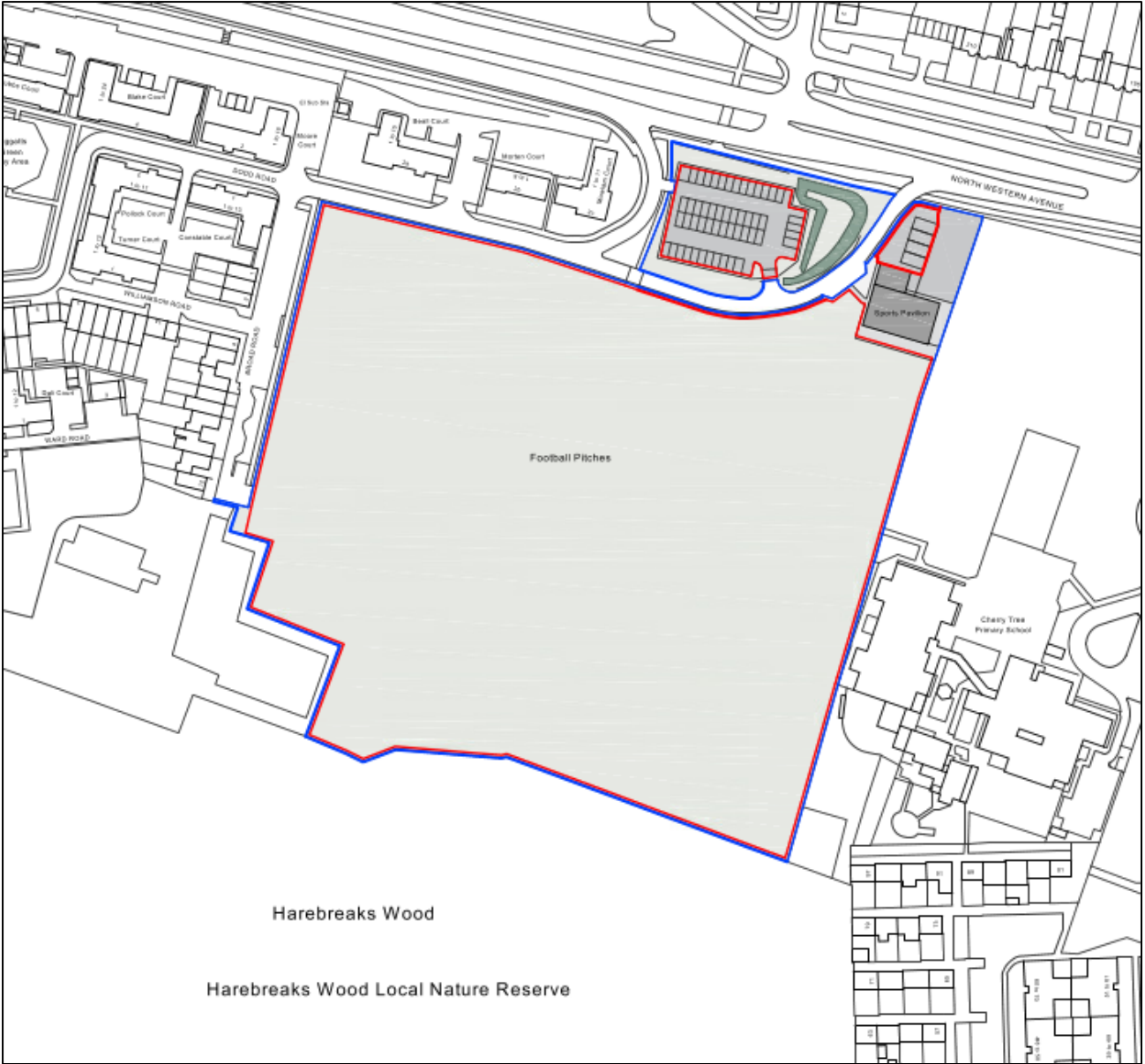
4. The artificial lighting units shall not be operated until they are installed in accordance with the approved drawings and the lighting report by Phillips Lighting B.V. (Ref. HLS3337 dated 12 April 2022). The lights shall only be operational between the times of 08:00 – 22:10 Monday to Friday and 08:00 – 18:10 on weekends.

Reason: To ensure the operation of the artificial lights does not give rise to disturbance or nuisance to surrounding residential occupiers.

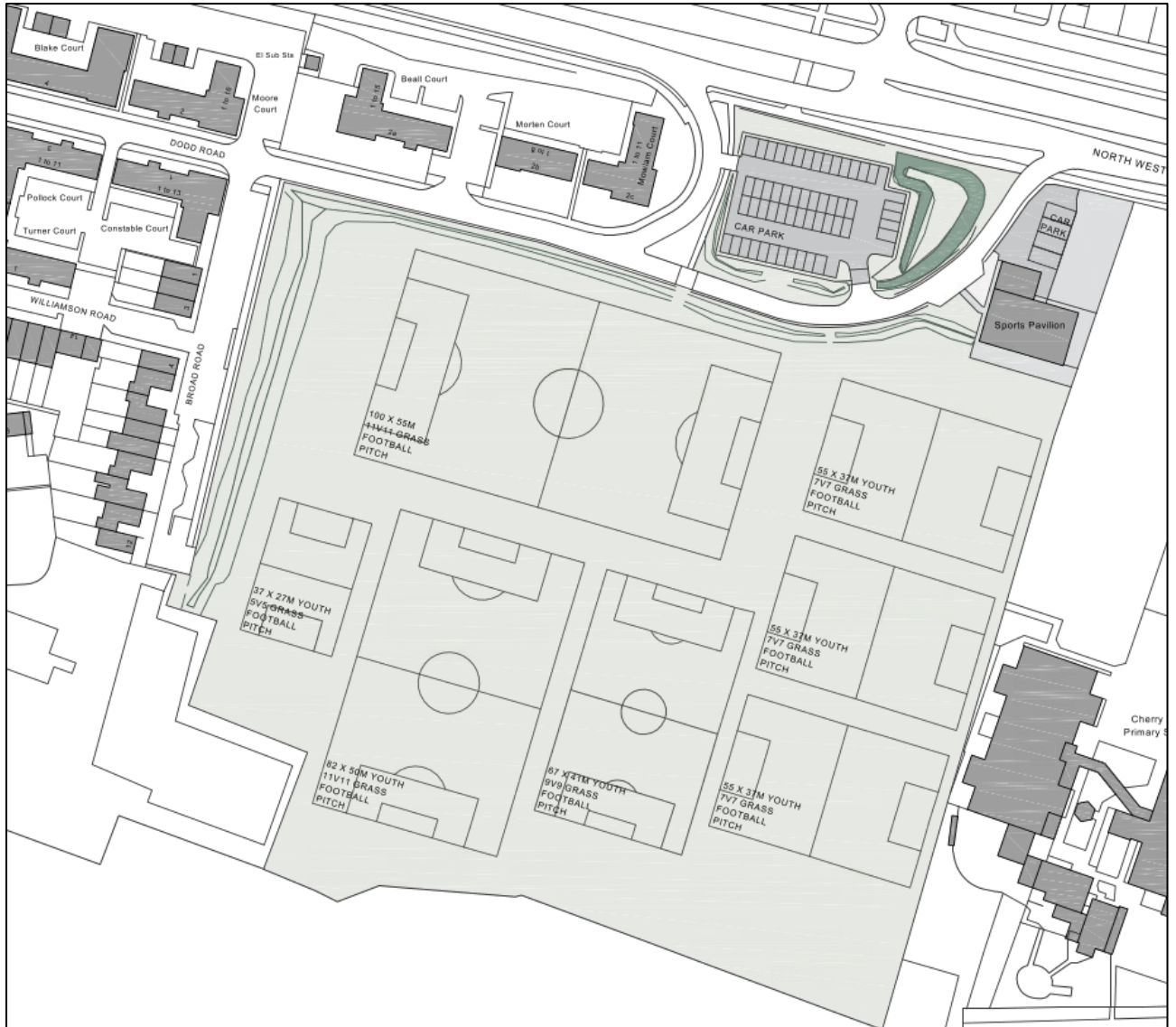
Informatives

1. The applicant is advised that the pitch should be tested every three years by an accredited testing laboratory in order to achieve and maintain FIFA Quality accreditation.

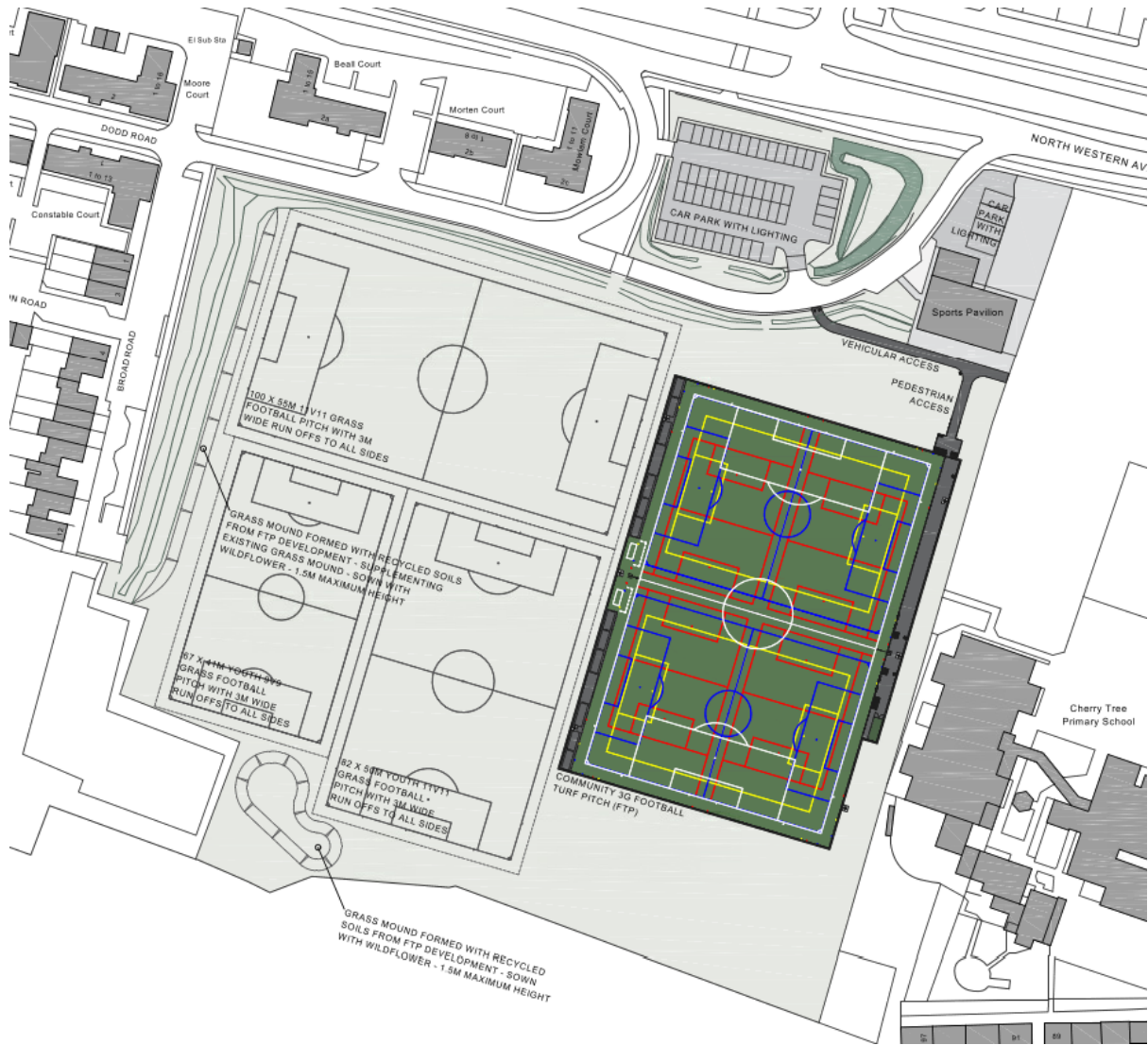
Site Location Plan



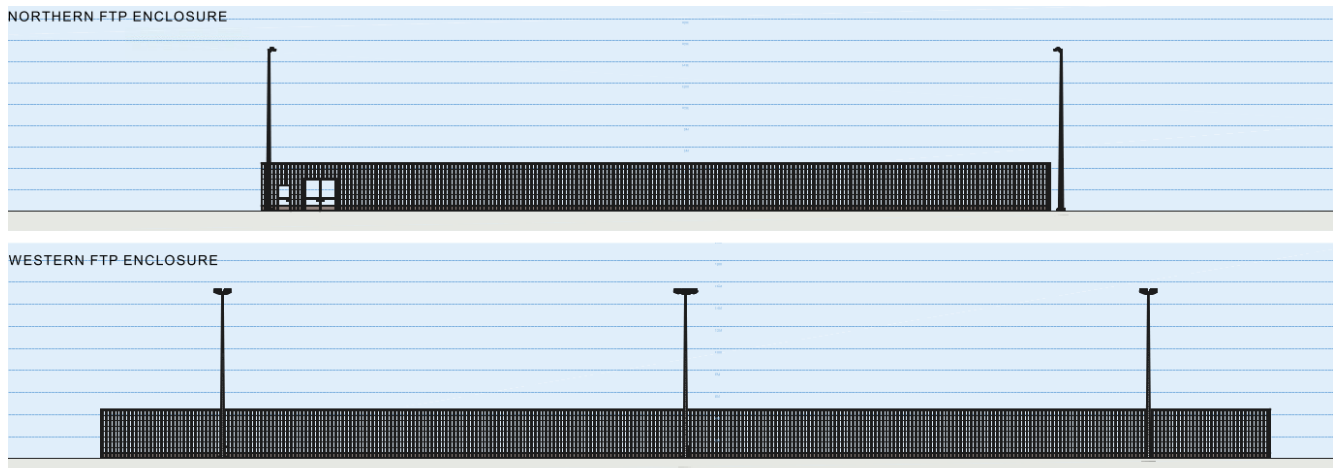
Existing Site Layout



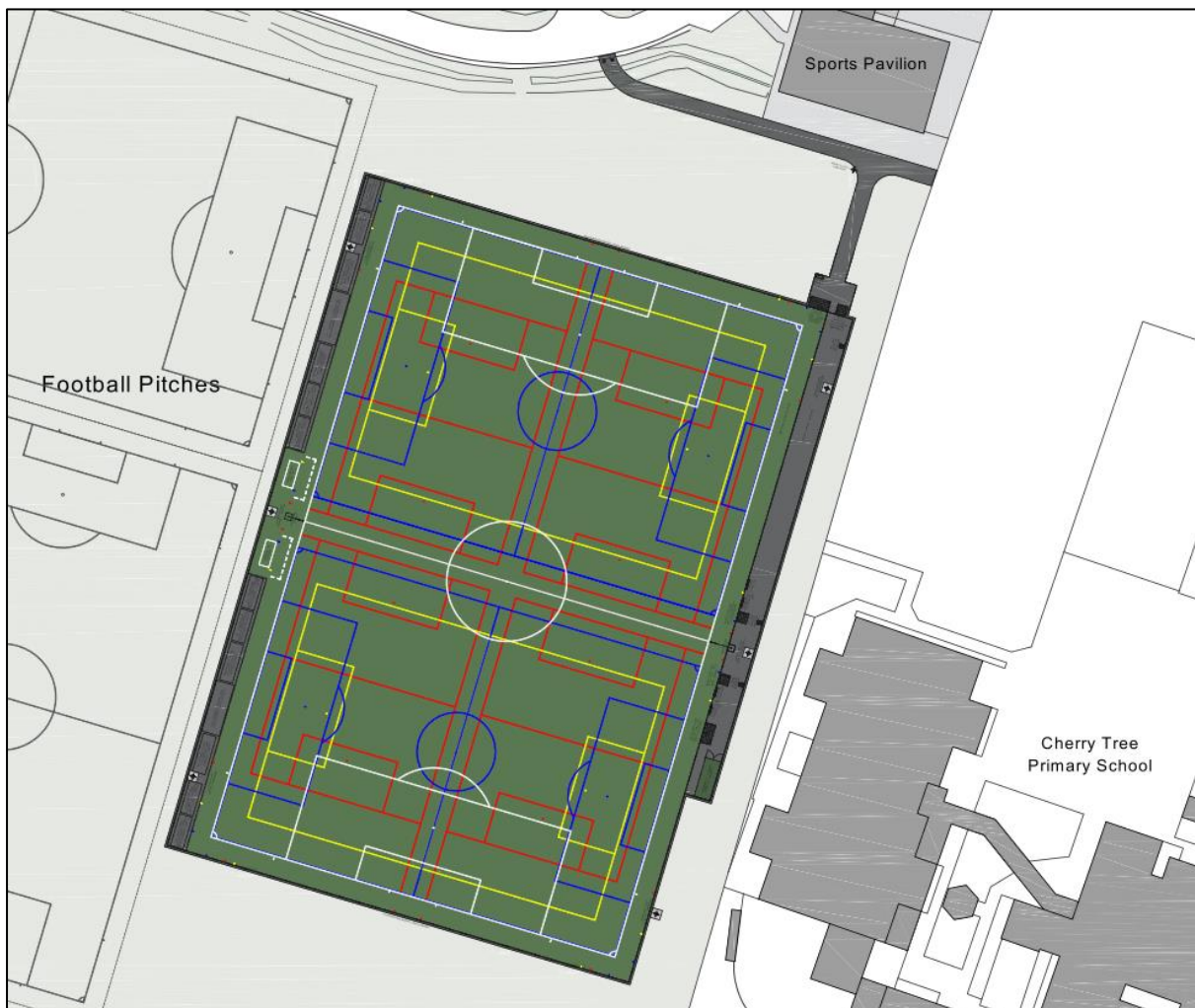
Proposed Site Layout



Proposed Elevations



Proposed Floorplan



Proposed Visualisations

