

PART A

Report of: **DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SECTION HEAD**

Date of Committee: **12th December 2013**
Site address: **Vicarage Road Stadium**

Reference Number : **13/01076/FUL**
Description of Development: **Erection of steel framed spectator stand with cantilever roof comprising circa 2,600 seats with a concourse area at ground level incorporating concession outlets, toilets and new changing rooms for players and officials. Access to be via existing turnstile openings in the boundary wall along Occupation Road.**

Applicant: **Watford Association Football Club**
Date received: **17th October 2013**
13 week date (major): **16th January 2014**
Ward: **VICARAGE**

SUMMARY

The application is for the installation of a new East Stand at the Vicarage Road Stadium. This will replace the existing stand which is currently being demolished. The stand will not occupy the whole of the eastern side of the stadium, as has been the case with two previous applications for stands of 5,000 seats, but will be capable of extension up to this size in the future. The proposed stand will have a depth and height very similar to the existing East Stand but will be approximately 20m wider.

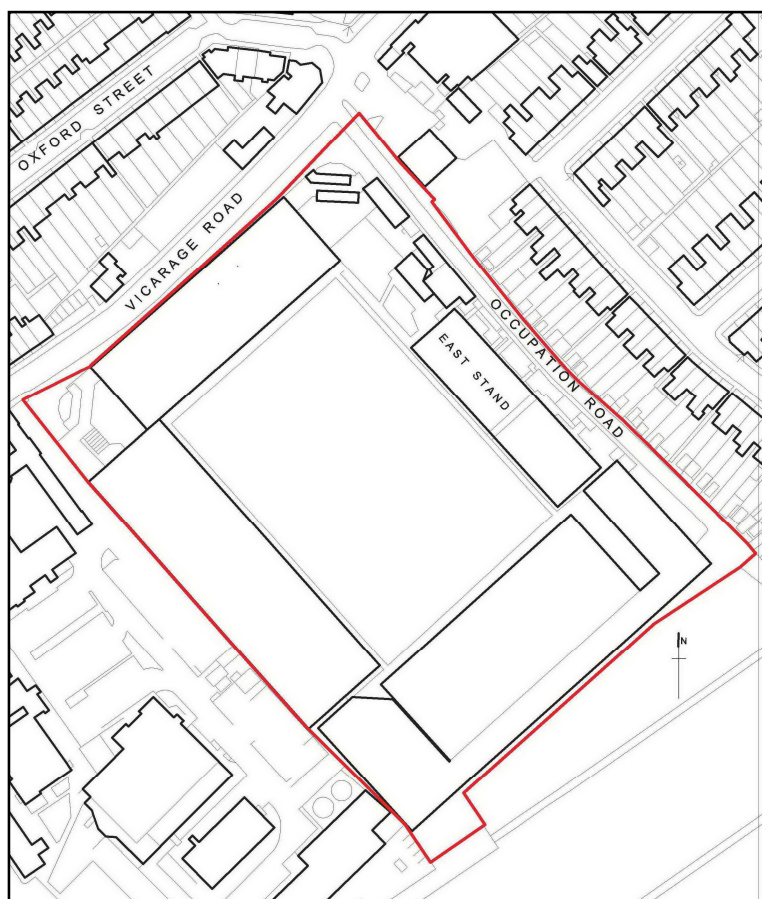
In the context of the existing stands and other stadium structures the proposal will not have any significant adverse impacts on the appearance of the stadium or the wider locality or on the amenities of nearby residential properties.

The Development Management Section Head therefore recommends the application is approved, as set out in the report.

BACKGROUND

Site and surroundings

Vicarage Road Stadium is located on Vicarage Road and is home to Watford Football Club. The application proposal is located along the eastern side of the stadium abutting Occupation Road, a private road owned by Watford Football Club. To the north and east are residential areas characterised by terraced housing. To the south of the stadium is Farm Terrace Allotments and to the west is Watford General Hospital.

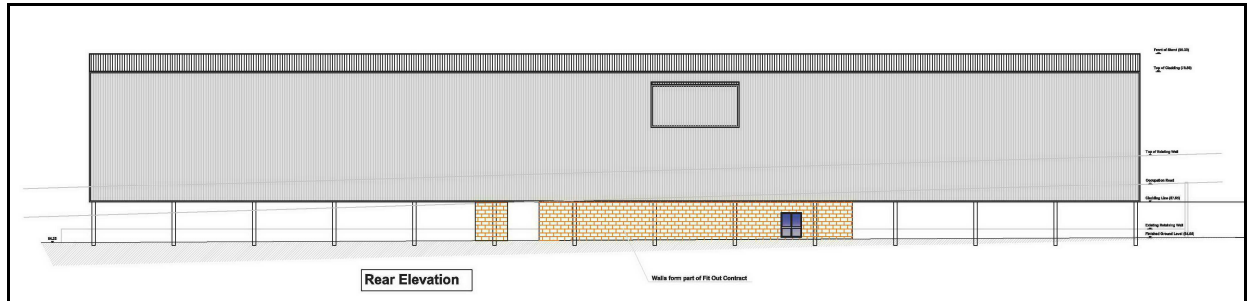


Proposed development

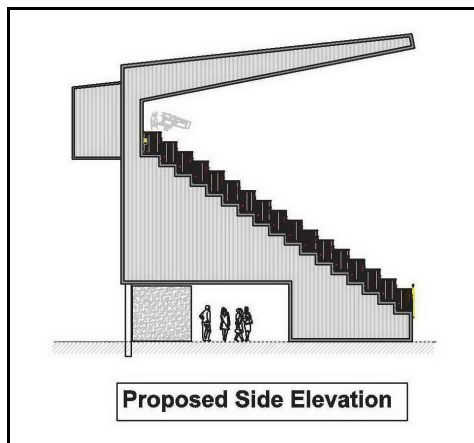
The proposal is to erect a new East Stand with seating for approximately 2,600 spectators. The stand will have a steel frame with concrete seating deck and cantilevered roof and be clad in a profiled metal sheeting coloured gunmetal grey. It will measure approximately 90m wide, 15m deep and 15m high. The stand will incorporate a ground level concourse with concession outlets and spectator toilets either side of a centrally located changing room block for players and officials. The stand will

incorporate seating areas for spectators in wheelchairs at the front of the stand. The

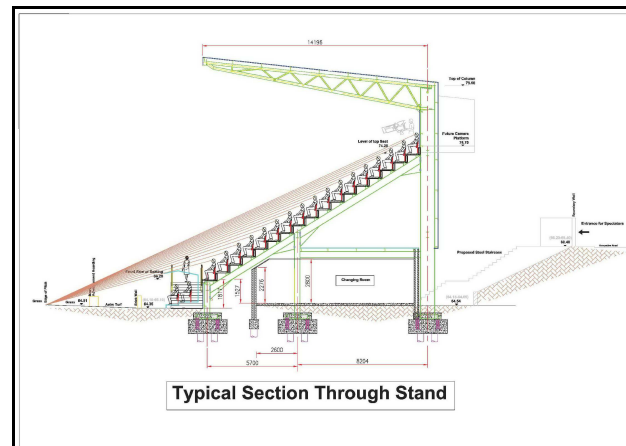
structure of the stand will allow it to be extended in width, depth and height in the future to accommodate additional seating.



Rear elevation to Occupation Road



Side elevation



Typical section

Planning history

The stadium has a long history of development extending back to 1922 when the original East Stand was erected. This was subsequently extended to the south in 1969. Only applications directly relevant to the East Stand are listed below.

01/00725/FUL – Conditional planning permission granted in April 2002 for demolition of existing East Stand and erection of a new stand comprising 4,289 seats. This permission was not implemented.

08/00214/FULM - Conditional planning permission granted in May 2008 for demolition of existing East Stand and erection of a new family and community stand comprising 5,000 seats. This permission was not implemented.

11/00076/EXT – Conditional planning permission granted in April 2011 for the renewal of planning permission ref. 08/00214/FULM for the demolition of existing East Stand and erection of a new family and community stand comprising 5,000 seats. This permission was not implemented.

13/00827/DEM – Prior approval granted in August 2013 for the demolition of the existing East Stand.

Relevant Policies

National Planning Policy Framework

Sections 7 and 8

Watford Local Plan: Core Strategy 2006-31

T3 Improving Accessibility

UD1 Delivering High Quality Design

Watford District Plan 2000

SE22 Noise

SE23 Light Pollution

T21 Access and Servicing

CONSULTATIONS

Neighbour notifications

Letters were sent to 43 properties in Liverpool Road, Clifton Road and Vicarage Road. No replies have been received.

Advertisements in local paper/ site notices

A public notice was published in the Watford Observer on 25th October 2013 and three site notices were put up outside the site on 29th October 2013.

Consultations

None.

APPRAISAL

In accordance with s.38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Development Plan for Watford comprises:

- (a) *Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31;*
- (b) *the continuing “saved” policies of the Watford District Plan 2000;*
- (c) *the Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2011-2026; and*
- (d) *the Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016.*

The East of England Plan 2008 and the “saved” policies of the Hertfordshire Structure Plan 1991-2011 were revoked on 3rd January 2013.

Design and layout

The proposed stand will be sited in the same position within the stadium as the existing East Stand and on the same footprint, with the main difference being that the new stand will extend an additional 20m to the north over an area of unused terracing. It will also have a very similar height to the existing stand. The existing stand is in poor condition, with part of its roof having been removed for safety reasons, and has been unused for several seasons.

The new stand will be clad in profiled metal sheeting in gunmetal grey on its rear and side elevations and roof. This will be a significant improvement over the appearance of the existing stand. This is considered acceptable for the current proposal as it is largely replacing the existing stand and is set in approximately 9m from the boundary with Occupation Road. In future, should the stand be extended to the boundary with Occupation Road and increased to the size of the previously approved stand (accommodating 5,000 seats), an improved external treatment and appearance can be sought.

Character of the area and streetscene

The proposed stand will hardly be seen from Vicarage Road, with the only view of it being from the junction with Occupation Road looking south, down Occupation Road. The only other views of the stand will be from Occupation Road itself and from the rear elevations and gardens of properties in Liverpool Road that back onto Occupation Road. In each case, the stand will be seen in the context of the three existing stands in the stadium. It will also not be any closer to Occupation Road or any higher than the existing stand although the northern end will be 20m closer to Vicarage Road. The appearance of the stand will be improved with the proposed cladding. Overall, it is not considered that the proposed stand will have any significant impact on the character of the area or on the streetscene in Vicarage Road.

Impact on neighbouring properties

As described in the previous section, the proposed stand will not be any closer to Occupation Road, and the properties in Liverpool Road, or any higher than the existing stand. For the majority of properties that back onto this section of Occupation Road, therefore, the proposed stand will have no additional visual impact. The northern part of the stand, which extends 20m beyond the existing stand, sits directly behind Nos. 2a and 2b, Liverpool Road and 40, Clifton Road. These properties back onto Occupation Road and their rear elevations are sited 38m from the proposed stand. Given this distance, the proposed stand will have no significant adverse visual impact on the amenities of these properties.

The existing stadium already gives rise to significant amounts of noise during matches. This is particularly noticeable in the residential area to the east due to the partially open nature of the eastern part of the stadium (where the terracing exists) and the fact that part of the roof of the existing East Stand has been removed. The proposed stand will give a greater degree of enclosure to this side of the stadium and therefore may reduce to some degree the levels of noise experienced in the residential areas to the east of the stadium.

The existing floodlighting to the stadium will remain unchanged.

Transportation, access and parking

No parking currently exists at the stadium for spectators and none is proposed as part of the application. All spectators will need to access the stadium on foot or via public transport, as existing. Match day controlled parking zones exist on the streets surrounding the stadium and on many of the roads within west and central Watford to prevent additional on-street parking by spectators.

Able bodied spectators will access the proposed stand via existing turnstiles in Occupation Road, which are not currently used following the closure of the existing stand. The new stand will incorporate viewing areas for spectators in wheelchairs together with toilets for people with disabilities. Access to the stand for people with disabilities will be via the existing accessible turnstiles in the south-east corner of the stadium.

Conclusion

The proposed stand will replace the existing East Stand which is currently being demolished. The proposed stand will not occupy the whole of the eastern side of the stadium, as has been the case with two previous proposals for stands of up to 5,000 seats, but will be capable of extension up to this size in the future. The proposed stand will have a depth and height very similar to the existing East Stand but will be approximately 20m wider.

In the context of the existing stands and other stadium structures the proposal will not have any significant adverse impacts on the appearance of the stadium or the wider locality or on the amenities of nearby residential properties.

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

The grant of planning permission subject to conditions will have no adverse impact on the human rights of the applicants to develop and use their land or on the rights of third parties to use their land or enjoy their homes.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted subject to the following 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 hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:

G2.13.L1; 2013-0121-5000, 5001, 5002, 5010, 5040.

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

3. No construction works shall commence until a sample of the proposed external cladding material has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local

Planning Authority. The development shall only be constructed using the approved material.

Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the site, in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

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