

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Demolition of Existing Buildings, Creation of a 3G Football Pitch, 2no Tennis/Multi Use Courts, 6no Doubles Padel Courts, 4no Shipping Containers to Create Café, Terrace and Storage Facilities, 1no Shipping Container for Changing Facilities and Associated Parking, Secure Cycle Storage, Private Access Road, Fencing, Lighting Posts and Canopies

Wythenshawe Town Football Club

Padel & Pickle Ltd

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Report Info

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This Planning, Design and Access Statement sets out the details of the proposals for the junior sized football pitch at Wythenshawe Town Football Club and the reasons why the proposals are fully compliant with both local and national planning policy and should be supported by Manchester City Council.
- 1.2. Before the submission of this planning application, there have been discussions and face to face meetings at Manchester Town Hall with the relevant officers which have been very positive. These discussions and meetings have also been beneficial to ensure that all the supporting information the local planning authority need to inform their decision has been produced and submitted with the planning application.
- 1.3. The applicant has also been in discussions with MCR Active and a Playing Field Statement is currently in the process of being completed by the applicant primarily for their benefit. A meeting with MCR Active is scheduled for 23rd January.
- 1.4. All the technical reports submitted with the application have concluded that there are no reasons why the proposals cannot be implemented on the application site. These reports relate to the following:
 - Drainage;
 - Ecology;
 - Biodiversity Net Gain;
 - Highways;
 - Trees;
 - Noise.
- 1.5. This Statement concludes that there are no material planning reasons why the proposals cannot be supported by Manchester City Council. Therefore, it is respectfully suggested that the planning application should be approved and planning permission granted without delay.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. MWT Planning Ltd. are instructed by Padel and Pickle Ltd (“the applicant” or “our client”) to provide professional planning advice in regard to the preparation and submission of a planning application to Manchester City Council (“the LPA”) for the following:
- 2.2. **Demolition of existing buildings, creation of a 3G football pitch, 2no tennis/multi use courts, 6no doubles padel courts, 4no shipping containers to create café, terrace and storage facilities, 1no shipping container to provide changing facilities and associated parking, secure cycle storage, private access road, fencing, lighting posts and canopies.**
- 2.3. The above development is proposed for the junior undersized football pitch at Wythenshawe Town Football Club which is not currently used by the junior teams who now use a central venue for matches
- 2.4. The drainage is so poor that in the 2023/24 season approximately 50% of matches scheduled for that pitch were postponed. It is clear that a drainage system needs to be installed to resolve the issue but the club have limited finance available and consequently have entered into negotiation with a third party who are prepared to finance the project to develop the land for multi sports use in line with the user clause in the Club’s lease with Manchester City Council.
- 2.5. Pre-application discussions and face to face meetings at Manchester City Council have taken place with the relevant officers which have been very positive and have shaped the content of this planning application.
- 2.6. The team put together by our client is as follows:

MWT Planning Ltd – Planning Agent
LMP – Architect
BEK – Site Investigation
GSA – Drainage Strategy and Design
Stantec – Transport Planning
Yew Tree Gardens – Arboriculturist
E3P – Noise Impact
- 2.7. All the above practices have vast experience in their respective fields and know exactly what is required for the reports required for the submission of planning applications.
- 2.8. None of the specialists involved found any insurmountable issues and their findings are summarised in the main body of this Statement.

3. Site and Surroundings

- 3.1. Wythenshawe Town Football Club are a football club who were established in 1946 and are currently members of the Northern Premier League Division One West.
- 3.2. The football ground, Ericstan Park, is located off Timpson Road in the Baguley area of Wythenshawe.
- 3.3. The ground has two pitches and is bounded by the A560 to the north, a railway line to the south, residential properties to the west, a Selco Builder's warehouse to the south west and a Tesco Extra car park to the north west.
- 3.4. The wider surrounding area is a mixture of residential and commercial/industrial development.
- 3.5. The pitch which comprises the application site is to the south of the main pitch and has drainage issues which are set out in the main body of this Statement.

4. Proposed Development

- 4.1. The proposed scheme is a multi sports facility providing what is set out below.
- 4.2. An artificial football pitch which will be large enough to accommodate 5, 6 and 7 a side matches. This will be a 3G surface laid on to a shock pad and will be floodlit when necessary.
- 4.3. During school hours the football pitch will be available free of charge to schools in the Wythenshawe area. If the schools wish to use the pitch for sporting activities other than football, then that will be possible in principle.
- 4.4. There is demand from local junior leagues for facilities to cater for competitive under 6 to under 10 year old matches and the pitch will be able to meet that demand. The evening use is expected to be largely adults.
- 4.5. Locally, there is limited availability for 5 a side pitches.
- 4.6. Wythenshawe Town have fourteen junior football teams that will be able to use the facilities, and the intention is to have mini football tournaments every Saturday morning for up to 8 teams per session running from 09:00 to 12:00 hours.
- 4.7. One of the two hard courts to the west of the site will be covered and available for the following sports:
 - Tennis (there are currently no covered courts available in South West Manchester);
 - Pickleball (the fastest growing sporting activity in the US and open to all ages); and
 - Netball.
- 4.8. The court will also be suitable for wheelchair tennis.
- 4.9. The uncovered hard court is going to be marked out for netball also. There are no publicly accessible netball courts available locally and Wythenshawe Ravens Netball Club have already registered their interest.
- 4.10. To the south of the site are six doubles padel courts with the three located in the south west corner to be covered.
- 4.11. South of the doubles padel courts is a café, terrace and storage facility which is to be created by four shipping containers.

- 4.12. A private access road is proposed to go along the northern, western and southern boundary of the site providing access to parking spaces for the proposed facility.
- 4.13. There is secure and covered cycle storage to the north of the site near the entrance.

5. Relevant Planning Policy

Legislative Framework

- 5.1. By sections 70(2) and 79(4) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the scheme applied for must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Development Plan Policy

- 5.2. The Manchester Local Plan guides development within Manchester and consists of the following:
- Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan for Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford and Tameside, Trafford and Wigan 2022 to 2039;
 - The Core Strategy;
 - Extant Unitary Development Plan Policies;
 - The Greater Manchester Joint Waste DPD;
 - Greater Manchester Joint Minerals DPD.
- 5.3. The policies most relevant to the proposed scheme in the above documents are as follows.

Places for Everyone

JP-S1 – Sustainable Development
JP-J1 – Supporting Long-Term Economic Growth
JP-J2 – Employment Sites and Premises
JP-G8 – A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity
JP-P3 – Cultural Facilities
JP-P7 – Sport and Recreation

Core Strategy

DM1 – Development Management
SP1 – Spatial Principles (partially superseded by PfE)
T1 – Sustainable Transport (partially superseded by PfE)
EN10 – Safeguarding Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities
EN14 – Flood Risk
EN16 – Air Quality (partially superseded by PfE)

EN18 – Contaminated Land and Ground Stability

EN19 – Waste

UDP

DC26 – Development and Noise

National Planning Policy

- 5.4. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Paragraph 7 indicates that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to sustainable development and paragraph 8 goes on to explain that there are three dimensions to this concept: economic, social and environmental.
- 5.5. As paragraphs 10 to 11 explain, at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and the NPPF gives very strong policy support to applications for sustainable development.
- 5.6. Paragraphs 103 to 104 set out aims directly relevant to this planning application and this will be addressed in the main body of this Statement.

Other Relevant Documents

- 5.7. The Manchester Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy and the Sport England Playing Fields Policy and Guidance are also relevant to this planning application and are addressed in the main body of this report.

6. The Applicant's Case

Principle of Development

- 6.1. The proposed scheme is to be sited on a poor-quality football pitch due to drainage issues which is within the curtilage of an existing well established sporting facility.
- 6.2. It is suitably located in a mixed-use area comprising residential, commercial and industrial development.
- 6.3. The proposed scheme will deliver economic and social benefits by enhancing provision at the WTFC site and by providing a diversified sporting and recreational offer for people of all ages in the locality and areas beyond that.
- 6.4. The proposed scheme will promote healthy communities by providing facilities which enable access to greater sporting provision for new and existing participants. It is also highly beneficial to local communities that some of the facilities will be available to local schools for free during school hours.
- 6.5. The proposed development also complies with the Manchester Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy along with the Sport England Playing Fields Policy and Guidance.
- 6.6. It is clear from the above that the principle of development is acceptable.
- 6.7. The other relevant material planning considerations are addressed below.

Impact on Visual Amenity

- 6.8. The proposed development benefits from being sited within an area where there is existing development on three of the four sides and having a railway line on the side without built development. As a result, the finished scheme is not going to be visually obtrusive.
- 6.9. There is some existing residential development to the west and there will be a canopy over the court which is proposed along that boundary. However, the canopy is designed in a manner which ensures that the visual amenity of the residents in those houses will not be impacted on detrimentally.
- 6.10. Any impact is further mitigated by the access road along the western boundary of the site which provides a good buffer between the canopy and the houses.

Impact on Residential Amenity

- 6.11. As stated above, the residents in the houses along the western boundary will not have their outlook impacted on detrimentally.
- 6.12. E3P have produced a Noise Impact Assessment which has been submitted with the planning application documents. The findings are that there will be no unacceptable noise impact on the residents. However, the report concludes that the western side of the canopy facing the housing is required to be solid with mesh only on northern, eastern and southern elevations.
- 6.13. The solid side can be one of the following options:
- Acoustic fencing;
 - Sandwich panels;
 - Single metal profiled sheets; or
 - A living wall.
- 6.14. One of the above options will be provided along the boundary in question to ensure that there is no unacceptable impact on the residents through excessive noise levels.

Highway Safety

- 6.15. Stantec have produced a Transport Statement which has been submitted with the planning application and it concludes as follows:
- The application site is highly accessible on foot, by cycling and by public transport in accordance with national and local transport policies;
 - The additional number of trips generated by the proposed development will have a negligible traffic impact on the local highway network during the morning and evening peak hours;
 - The proposed vehicle parking numbers and proposed provision for cycle storage are acceptable.
- 6.16. Given the above, the overall conclusion of the Transport Statement is that the site is highly accessible by sustainable modes of travel and there will be no material traffic impact associated with the proposed development on the local highway network.
- 6.17. Therefore, the planning application should be considered acceptable in transportation and highway terms by the LPA.

Drainage and Land Conditions

- 6.18. Graham Schofield Associates have produced a Drainage Strategy which has been submitted with the planning application.
- 6.19. It is not considered prudent to repeat all the findings in this Statement but it can be stated that no insurmountable drainage issues were identified.
- 6.20. In addition to the above, BEK have produced a Phase 1 Preliminary Risk Assessment, a Site Investigation and Ground Assessment and a Ground Gas Assessment which have all been submitted with the planning application.
- 6.21. None of these reports have identified any insurmountable issues.

Biodiversity

- 6.22. Envirotech have produced a Preliminary Ecological Assessment and a Biodiversity Net Gain Baseline report which have been submitted with the planning application.
- 6.23. No insurmountable issues have been identified by these reports.

Impact on Trees

- 6.24. Yew Tree and Gardens have produced an Arboricultural Impact Assessment which has been submitted with the planning application.
- 6.25. There are no issues raised in this report in relation to potential damage to trees as a result of the proposed development.

Manchester Playing Pitch and Outdoor Strategy (2022)

- 6.26. The above report highlights significant capacity shortfalls across various football pitch sizes and age groups in Wythenshawe. In the Wythenshawe Analysis Area specifically, there are current shortages for adult pitches, youth 9v9 pitches, and mini 7v7 pitches. The report predicts that these shortfalls will extend to youth 11v11 pitches in the future. There is also a deficiency in full size 3G pitches identified in the Wythenshawe area.
- 6.27. The proposed development will contribute to alleviating these shortfalls by introducing a high quality football pitch which will be large enough to cater for 5, 6 and 7 a side matches.
- 6.28. Whilst this does not directly address all the identified deficiencies, it will provide valuable capacity for small-sided football which can help relieve the pressure on larger pitches.

- 6.29. As already stated in this Statement, the pitch will be available for free to schools during school hours and it will be available to all age groups in general for training sessions and youth football programmes.
- 6.30. Finally, there will be a firm commitment to ensure that the pitch and facilities as a whole will be maintained to the highest standards possible meaning that the facilities will have the best chance possible to be used to their maximum potential moving forward.

Sport England Playing Fields Policy and Guidance

- 6.31. Policy Exception E5 in the above document reads as follows:

“The proposed development is for an indoor and outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field or fields.”

- 6.32. Much of the requirements of the above policy have already been covered in this Statement – the playing field which is to be lost is of poor quality due to drainage issues and this has resulted in around half of the games scheduled to be played on the pitch in the 2023/24 football season to be postponed.
- 6.33. This football pitch will be lost, but in its place will be a new 3G pitch available to everyone which also can be used free of charge by schools during school hours. This simply would not be possible on the existing grass pitch throughout the year given its poor drainage.
- 6.34. In addition to the new pitch, there will be high quality facilities provided across the site for the following:
- Tennis;
 - Netball;
 - Padel; and
 - Pickleball.
- 6.35. However, given how flexible the facilities are, that is not an exhaustive list and there is potential for other sports and activities to take place on the site moving forward.
- 6.36. Suitable changing facilities are proposed and there will also be refreshments available in a proposed café which will also feature a terrace which provides an excellent viewing platform.
- 6.37. All in all, the proposed scheme involves the loss of a poor-quality football pitch and, in its place, the provision of a high quality multi-use sporting facility which cannot fail but be of benefit to people of all ages in the local community and beyond.

Sport England Pre-application Response

- 6.38. The applicant is aware that Sport England will be formally consulted once the planning application is validated but still took the responsible step of seeking their views before the submission of the planning application.
- 6.39. Firstly, Sport England agree that the relevant exception is E5.
- 6.40. Sport England have raised some issues but these can be discussed with them during the planning application process as with any consultee who raises any issues with the proposals.
- 6.41. At the time of writing, the applicant is scheduled to meet with the LTA onsite so the outcome of that meeting can be submitted to the case officer at the LPA post-submission of the planning application.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 6.42. The NPPF promotes sustainable development and it is considered clear that the proposed scheme represents sustainable development and is therefore fully compliant with that aim.
- 6.43. Paragraphs 103 and 104 of the recently revised NPPF read as follows:

“Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.”*

- 6.44. There is a robust argument that the planning application complies with all three of the above because:
- a) The existing football pitch clearly has serious drainage issues and therefore cannot be used on a regular basis;
 - b) The proposed facilities far exceed the quality and usability of the existing pitch and the location is suitable; and
 - c) The proposed development is for alternative sports provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current use.
- 6.45. However, (c) is the best fit because of the high quality facilities for a variety of sports which will replace the current, poor quality, grass football pitch.
- 6.46. To ensure compliance with (c), the applicant is fully committed to ensuring that the proposed facilities reach all elements of the local community and beyond thus ensuring that the aims of Section 8 of the NPPF (Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities) are met.
- 6.47. One of the main changes in Section 8 of the revised NPPF is the addition of paragraph 97 which reads as follows:
- "Local planning authorities should refuse applications for hot food takeaways and fast food outlets:*
- a) Within walking distance of schools and other places where children and young people congregate, unless the location is within a designated town centre; or*
 - b) In locations where there is evidence that a concentration of such uses is having an adverse impact on local health, pollution or anti-social-behaviour."*
- 6.48. When determining planning applications, the LPA should consider the NPPF as a whole and the proposals subject to this planning application are in alignment with the aims of the above paragraph as they are encouraging young people to get involved in sport, to live healthily, to learn how to work as a team (congregating albeit in a positive manner). All this will also assist with keeping young people away from behaving anti-socially.
- 6.49. In short, the proposed scheme is fully NPPF compliant.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. It is not considered prudent or necessary to repeat the content of this Statement at this juncture but, given the technical arguments and details set out above, it is considered beneficial to conclude in non-technical terms.
- 7.2. For clarity, the planning application is not at odds in any way with the relevant local and national policies it is required to be compliant with to secure LPA support for the proposed scheme.
- 7.3. At present, Wythenshawe Town Football Club have a second football pitch which is not fit for purpose due to its drainage issues.
- 7.4. It is proposed that, on the pitch which is not fit for purpose, there will be a multi-use sports facility which, not only includes the replacement of a grass pitch with a high quality 3G pitch available for the benefit of the local community (including free use for schools), includes facilities of the highest quality available for a variety of sports of activities.
- 7.5. If a common-sense approach is taken in the decision-making process, it is difficult to see why this proposed scheme would not be supported by Manchester City Council.
- 7.6. It is for these reasons, and for those set out throughout this Statement, that it is respectfully suggested that the planning application should be approved and planning permission granted without delay.

