

**Saunders
Boston
Architects**

Palmer Park Leisure Centre, Reading

INTEGRATED PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Greenwich Leisure Limited



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Integrated Planning, Design and Access Statement

for

Palmer Park Leisure Centre

at

Wokingham Rd, Earley, Reading, RG6 1LF

on behalf of

Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL)

QA

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Note: The image to the front cover is an artistic rendering to indicate design intent only.

Saunders Boston Architects
The Generator, Quay House
The Gallery, King’s Wharf
The Quay,
Exeter, EX4 2AN

Tel: 01223 367733

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Integrated Planning, Design and Access Statement has been produced to support a Full Planning Application a new Leisure Centre extension to, and refurbishment of, the existing stadium grandstand at Palmer Park, Reading.

The current stadium provides a range of activities within the existing grandstand building including ground floor fitness studio, fitness gym spaces at first floor, and a series of changing rooms for external pitches / athletics / cycling. External facilities include athletics facilities (track and field), 460m velodrome, floodlit football pitch and artificial grass pitches for 5-a-side.

The grandstand building was opened in April 1988. It has served the local community well for over 30 years. Due to its age, the stadium requires refurbishment, including new roof works. The Council have also undertaken substantial strategic needs assessments for sport provision looking to the future, and it has been determined that a new swimming pool is to be provided as an extension to the stadium.

In terms of Planning Class use, both the existing stadium and proposed extension are use class E(d) (Indoor sport and recreation).

Accompanying this Integrated Planning, Design and Access Statement are architectural drawings describing the new leisure centre extension, proposed works to the existing grandstand building, the proposed parking and indicative landscaping strategy for the extended stadium and its immediate surroundings.

The site sits within the designated Local Green Space and Public Open Space of Palmer Park to the south-west of the main train line running from Reading to London Paddington. This Park lies directly to the east of Reading town centre. Framing the Park to the south-west is Wokingham Road. The Park is surrounded on three sides by residential properties, the fourth being the train line.

Other facilities within the Park lying to the west of the grandstand are Palmer Park Library, a children's play area and a café serving Ethiopian food. In the north-western corner of the Park are firstly grass pitches for football, followed by a nursery, St. Bart's Church and the Pakistan Community Centre, all lying on the edge of the Park. Adjacent to the north-west corner of the cycle track is a single storey building housing both grounds storage and Reading / Thames Valley Sub-Aqua Club, with a telecommunications mast located at its entrance.

At the heart of the Park, just to the north-west of the car park to the stadium is a Grade II statue of George Palmer. As Palmer Park has been created from land gifted by George Palmer, this statue should form a focal point within the Park. Its current setting is diminished by being located within a circle of tarmac.

Existing car parking lies to the front / south-west of the stadium, accessed from Wokingham Road. A small element of overflow car parking lies to the north, between the stadium and the sub-aqua club. Temporary overflow parking is allowed for during various sports meetings / busy periods through use of some of the parkland lying to the south of the access road, Palmers Way.

As noted, the existing site lies within designated Public Open Space. Care has been taken to minimise the loss of Open Space through careful siting of the new centre on mainly car parking to the north. New car parking is proposed to the south of the existing car parking, but is kept to a minimum.

Vehicular access to the new leisure centre extension will continue to be via the existing access road, Palmers Way, off Wokingham Road. Pedestrian access to the new extension will continue to be off Wokingham Road, with new and realigned footpaths being provided to link the enhanced facilities to the network of existing paths within the Park. Cycle access will continue to be from the R30 Cycle Route Network running along Wokingham Road.

The proposed vehicle and cycle parking for the site has been discussed prior to submission with the Council's Transport Development Control Officer, and complies with the Council's Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document (October 2011). Cycle parking meets the requirement of this SPD, with space to increase parking if future demands dictate. This will encourage more of the community to cycle to the site, especially as the site lies on the Local Cycle route R40. 10% of the overall car parking numbers will be electrical vehicle charging points.

The new leisure centre extension will therefore provide a community swimming pool, fitness suite and associated changing facilities, whilst the existing stadium will be refurbished to provide exercise studio spaces, with the existing changing rooms redecorated. The main entrance to the extended facilities will be through the new extension, with the stadium's entrance pavilion demolished. The new extension (planning use class E(d)) will provide the following accommodation:

- 25m 6 Lane Community Pool
- Café / seating area
- Double height activity area
- Party / meeting room
- 100+ station Fitness Suite
- Studios within the refurbished existing building
- Wet Changing Areas
- Dry Changing Areas

In support of this application the following surveys / statements have been undertaken to provide detail information about the site and to inform the proposed design:

- Air Quality Statement
- Contaminated Land Survey & Report
- Ecological Survey and Report including a bat survey of the stadium
- Energy Efficient Statement
- Equalities Assessment (covered by an accessibility statement within this Statement)
- External Lighting Details
- Heads of Terms Proposals (included within this Statement)
- Heritage Statement
- Landscaping Strategy
- Management and Maintenance Strategy (included within this Statement)
- Noise Assessment (included within this Statement)
- Open space statement (included within this Statement)
- Planning statement (integrated within this Statement)
- Statement of community involvement (included within this Statement)
- Sustainability Statement
- Sustainable urban drainage strategy
- Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Transport Assessments & Travel Plan
- Tree Survey/ Arboricultural Method Statement
- Utilities Statement
- Vehicle Parking and Servicing Details
- Vent, Flue and Ventilation Details

2.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1 Project Contacts:

Applicant:

Greenwich Leisure Limited
Middlegate House
The Royal Arsenal
Woolwich,
London,
SE18 6SX

Agent and Architect:

Saunders Boston Architects
The Generator, Quay House
The Gallery, King's Wharf
The Quay,
Exeter, EX4 2AN
01223 367733
office@saundersboston.co.uk

2.2 Project Address:

Palmer Park Stadium
Wokingham Road,
Reading RG6 1LF

2.3 Planning Description:

Full Planning Application for proposed leisure centre extension and refurbishment of existing grandstand at Palmer Park. The new extension will consist of:

- 25m, 6 lane community pool
- fitness suite (110 stations)
- wet and dry changing areas
- double height activity area
- café / seating area
- party / meeting room
- 131 car parking spaces
- 26 new cycle spaces
- parking for 2 coaches
- associated soft and hard landscaping

Refurbishment of the grandstand will involve demolition of existing entrance lobby, internal decorations and minor internal alterations. The existing roof over habitable spaces will be replaced.

2.4 Project Brief:

2.4.1 Project Justification

This Integrated Planning, Design and Access Statement has been produced to support a full Planning Application for a leisure centre extension, and refurbishment of, the existing sports stadium located within Palmer Park, south of the River Thames and south-west of the main train line to London Paddington, and off Wokingham Road in Reading. Palmer Park lies east of Reading town centre.

The current facilities at Palmer Park Sports Stadium include:

- Athletics Stadium track and field
- 460m Velodrome
- Floodlit Football Pitch
- Floodlit Artificial Grass Pitches (5 a side)
- Covered Grandstand
- Gym- Cardiovascular and Weights Gym
- Coffee Outlet
- Multi- Purpose Room
- Children's Playground
- Car Park & Cycle Parking Facilities

21 acres of land were donated to Reading Town in 1889 by George Palmer, owner of Huntley and Palmers biscuit company. In 1891 it was extended to cover 49 acres.

Palmer Park has a number of varied uses, and contains one of the oldest velodromes in the country, having been constructed at the turn of the 20th century. Primarily used by local residents, it hosts many religious festivals, sports competitions and events such as the fun fair.

The current stadium serving the velodrome and athletics facility was opened in April 1988. It has served the local community well for over 30 years. Due to its age, the stadium requires refurbishment, including new roof works. The Council have also undertaken substantial strategic needs assessments for sport provision looking to the future, and it has been determined that a new swimming pool is to be provided as an extension to the stadium.

The new leisure centre extension will therefore provide a community swimming pool, fitness suite and associated changing facilities, whilst the existing stadium will be refurbished to provide exercise studio spaces, with the existing changing rooms redecorated. The main entrance to the extended facilities will be through the new extension, with the stadium's entrance pavilion demolished.

2.4.2 Project Vision

Key priorities for Reading Borough Council have been presented in the Council's Corporate Plan 2018 – 2021. These priorities include 'Promoting health, education, culture & wellbeing' and include 'Securing the economic success of Reading'.

It was identified that over 750,000 people use the Borough's sports and leisure facilities across the town each year, and so Reading needs a leisure offer that reflects its needs and that aligns with the Council's wider policies and priorities, including public health objectives and tackling inequality.

The Council subsequently procured Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) as the operator of their leisure facilities, with the joint aims of managing the existing facilities and to develop new facilities. These new facilities were identified through an assessment of local needs and delivery options, which confirmed that whilst there is sufficient pool space in the Borough the quality of provision needs upgrading. The options appraisal included in the assessment recommended the replacement of the most outdated facilities with more modern cost-effective leisure facilities that would also offer a much better service to residents and users. This included the recommendation for a new community pool at Palmer Park.

Reading Borough Council's vision is to inspire the communities to lead healthier and more active lives. Their aim, through the extension and refurbishment at Palmer Park stadium, is to motivate an increased participation in sports and physical activities to improve people's physical and mental well-being and ultimately their health. Improvements to the existing leisure provision will include:

- Increased participation in physical activity by residents, including disadvantaged and inactive groups
- An outreach and engagement service to help to secure the Council's objective to improve health and wellbeing by increased physical activity
- Physical activity development programmes covering a wide range of sports and activities, above and beyond key commercial areas
- Improved sport and physical activities and targeted Sports Club programme
- Improved opportunities to promote local employment including new apprenticeships
- Exercise referral as part of the service provision

Other strategic aims of the Council include the desire to achieve a carbon neutral Reading by 2030, and to encourage high levels of energy efficiency in new buildings. As such, the proposed extension would be energy efficient using the latest technology and intelligent design, as well as aiming to achieve an "Excellent" standard for BREEAM (the recognised standard for sustainability assessment).

All of the above presents the Borough with an opportunity to create a step change in the quality and standard of the leisure offer available to residents and visitors to Reading and will support the Council's ambitions around public health and increasing participation in physical activity.

GLL intrinsically shares the Council's visions and will work in close partnership with the Council to transform the leisure offer and provide the required improvements to the service for the residents of the borough.

2.4.3 Accommodation Requirements:

The extended facility will need to accommodate traditional sports and leisure activities, many of which are provided by the existing stadium such as fitness suites and changing rooms for external pitches. However it also needs to be able to encompass new activities for groups where participation is more challenging, thus providing a more comprehensive offering for the whole community.

The proposed scheme will provide the following facilities:

Ground Floor:

New extension:

- Double height activity area with viewing
- Café area (kitchen and servery)
- Self-sign up and concierge point
- Cash office
- 6 lane swimming pool
- Pool store
- Village changing facilities
- Plant room
- First aid
- Circulation and link to existing building

Refurbishment of the existing:

- Refurbishment of changing facilities
- Refurbishment of circulation
- Conversion of studio to offices
- Conversion of staff office space to a party room
- Conversion of store space to event kiosk

First Floor:

New extension:

- 100+ stations fitness suite
- Dry changing facilities
- Accessible changing facilities
- Plant room
- Seating/ viewing area
- Circulation and link to existing building
- Party/ meeting room

Refurbishment of the existing:

- Conversion of existing gym and free weights to fitness studios

External:

- Re-planned parking
- Soft Landscaping
- Plaza area

3.0 SITE AND CONTEXT INFORMATION

3.1 Site Location

- Palmer Park Sports Stadium is located in 49 acres of parkland (Palmer Park) in Reading.
- Palmer Park lies east of Reading town centre and north of the University of Reading.
- The site and the sports stadium is on the south and east side of the park.
- Palmer Park sports stadium and the car parking can be accessed from Palmers Way off Wokingham Road (A329).
- The park is bounded on the south and west side by residential roads, Palmer Park Avenue, St Bartholomew's Rd. On the north side it is bounded by London Road and on the east by A3290.
- The site lies within the ownership of Reading Borough Council.
- Prior to Council ownership, the owners of Huntley & Palmers biscuit company owned the land of Palmer Park.
- Palmer Park is designated both a protected Local Green Space and Public Open Space within the Reading's Adopted Local Plan.
- The proposed extension is located on the north and west of the existing building of the sports stadium.

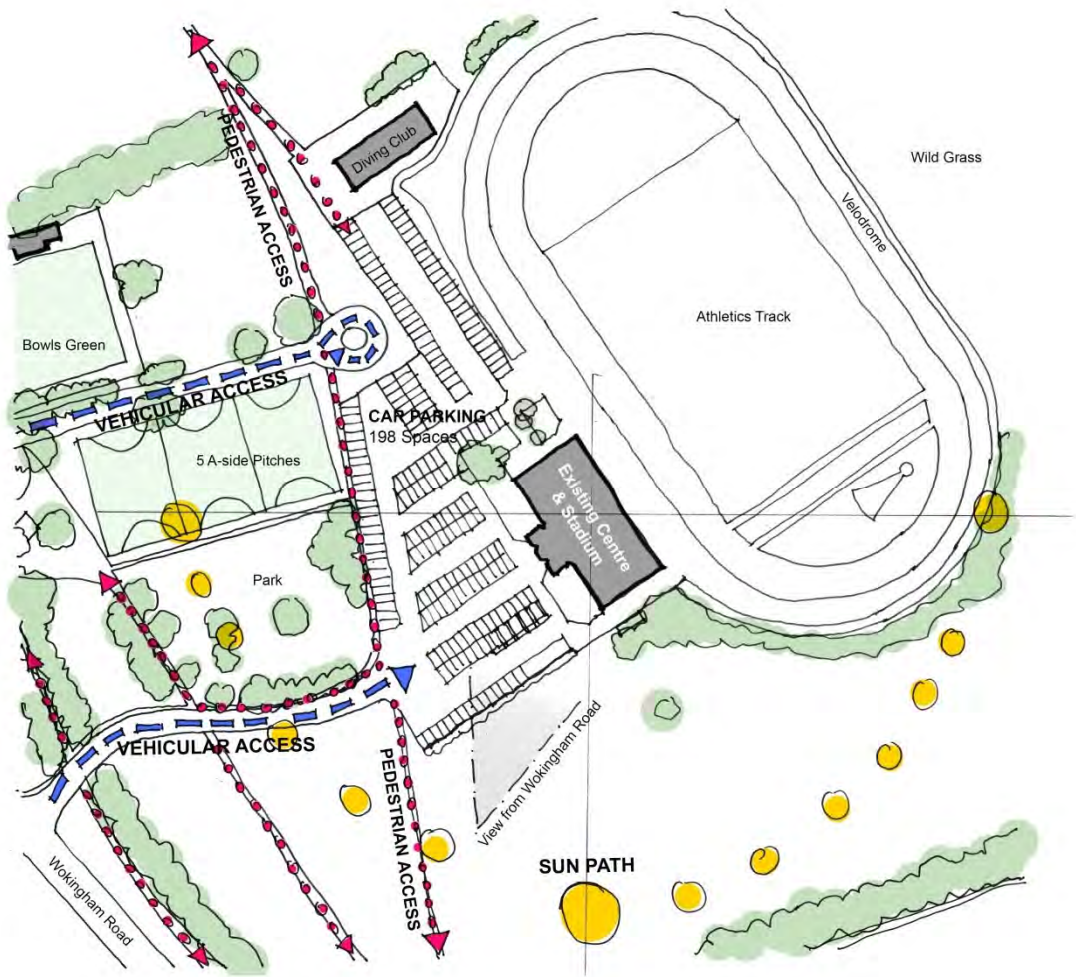


Figure 1: Site Location Diagram



Figure 2: Wider Site Location Diagram

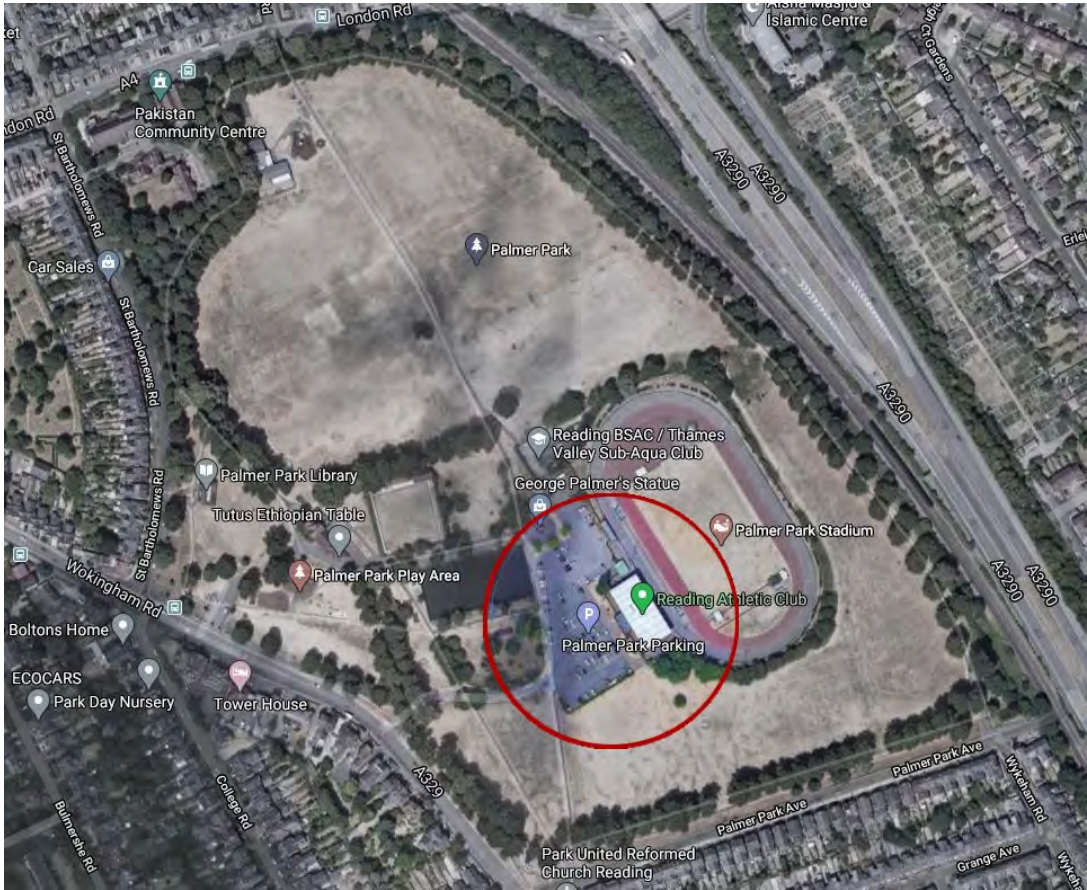


Figure 3: Site Location Diagram

3.2 Site Analysis

Boundaries/Description:

- North and east of the site there is the stadium with the athletics track, the velodrome and pitches. There is a tree belt further north and east, the train lines and the A3290 road.
- South and east of the site there is open grassland, a tree belt further south and east, Palmer Park Avenue with residential properties along the road.
- Similarly, south and west there open grassland, a tree belt further on the south and west, public footpaths and Wokingham Road with residential properties alongside it.
- The vehicular access road is on the south and west of the site.
- West of the Palmer Park Sports Stadium building there is the current car parking area, the park area with public footpaths. There are also 5-a-side pitches.
- George Palmer's statue is on the north and west of the site with vehicular access and public footpaths further north and west of the monument.
- The Sub- Aqua Club is located in the north and west side of the car parking area.

Topography:

- The site falls from the south and east corner down to the north and west corner of the site.
- The high point is by the current service yard of the existing building at its southeast corner at approximately 49.10m AOD (above Ordnance Survey datum level), falling down in the area around the monument at approximately 47.90m AOD.
- Most of the site is relatively flat being at around 48m AOD.

Orientation:

- The site runs approximately along a northwest to southeast axis.
- The existing building of Palmer Park Sports Stadium lies also on an approx. northwest to southeast axis.
- The main entrance to the stadium is on the main elevation, on the south-west of the building.

Sun Path:

- The site orientation diagram demonstrated in the site analysis sketch (figure 5) indicates the sun path which runs from east to west, to the south of the site.

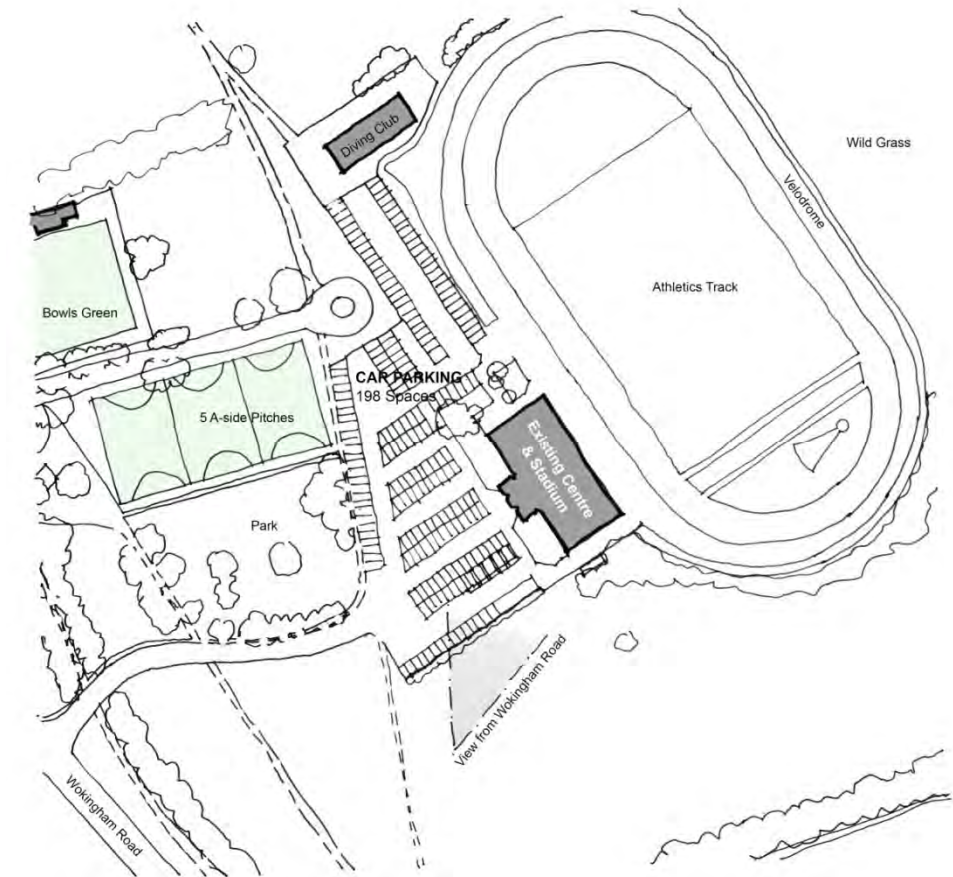


Figure 4: Sketch Analysis of Site Description

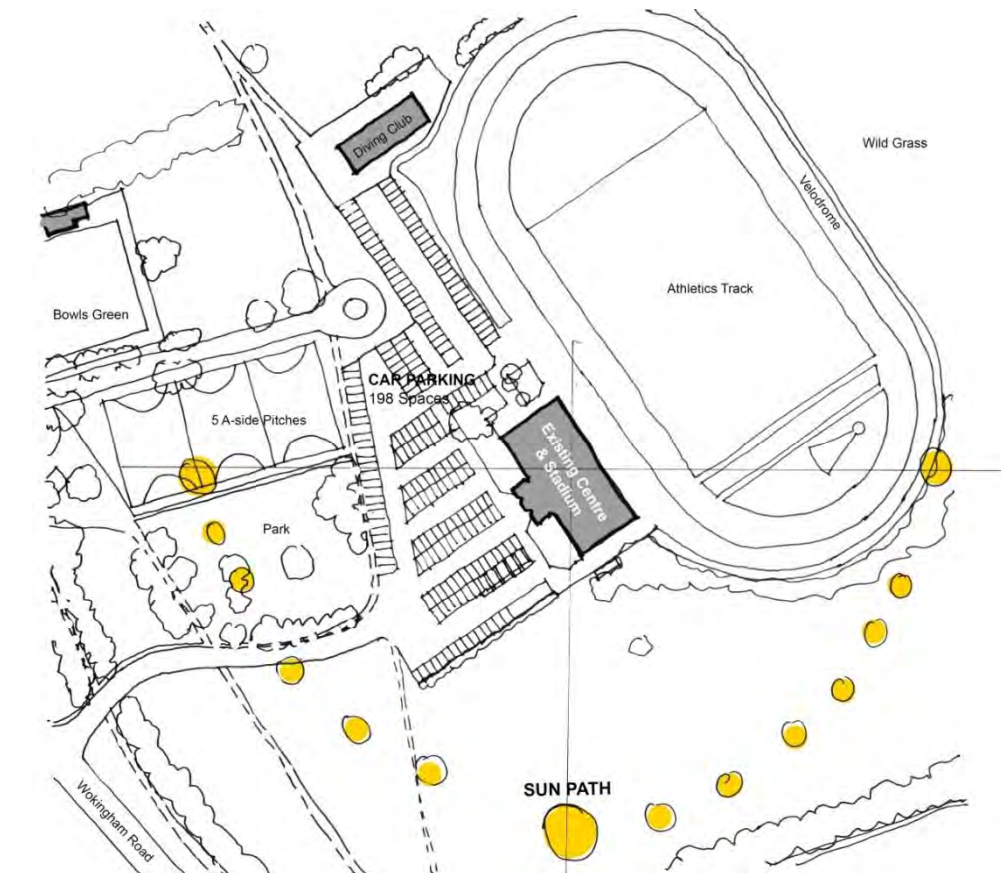


Figure 5: Sketch Analysis of Site Orientation

3.3 Site Access

The site can be well accessed with easy pedestrian, vehicular and public transport connections (bus stop) close to the site.

Roads/ Vehicular Access:

- The main road bordering the park is Wokingham Road (A329) along the west boundary of the park.
- South and east of the park is Palmer Park Avenue a mostly residential road. A3920 runs along the east and north of the site. London Road is at the north of the park and St Bartholomew's Road northwest of the site.
- The main vehicular access into the site of Palmer Park Sports Stadium and its car parking area is Palmers Way, off Wokingham Road on the southwest side of the park and the car parking area.
- There is also a vehicular access into the park at northwest side of the park reaching the monument of George Palmer Statue. However, this road does not currently provide access to the car parking area of the sports stadium

Pedestrian/ Cycle Access:

- There are pavements running along Wokingham Road, St Bartholomew's Road and London Road.
- The park and therefore the existing centre can be accessed by foot from the St Bartholomew's Road, Palmer Park Avenue, London Road and Wokingham Road.
- There are public footpaths in the perimeter and within the centre of the park. These could be used for access into the centre from the surrounding residential neighbourhoods.
- There is a cycle path along the Wokingham Road which is part of the R30 Cycle Route Network of Reading which connects Palmer Park to the Reading town centre.

Cycle Parking:

- There is cycle parking provided in the current facilities of Palmer Park Sports Stadium.
- There are currently 6 cycle racks providing with 12 cycle parking spaces.

Public Transport Access:

- There is a bus stop, 'College Road' at the west corner of the park and 'Palmer Park Avenue' on the south corner, which connect the park and the site to the public transport.
- There is also 'Liverpool Road' bus stop on London Road north of the park which connects the park with more bus routes.
- This means that there is the opportunity of easy access to the site by the wider community, through more sustainable means of transport.

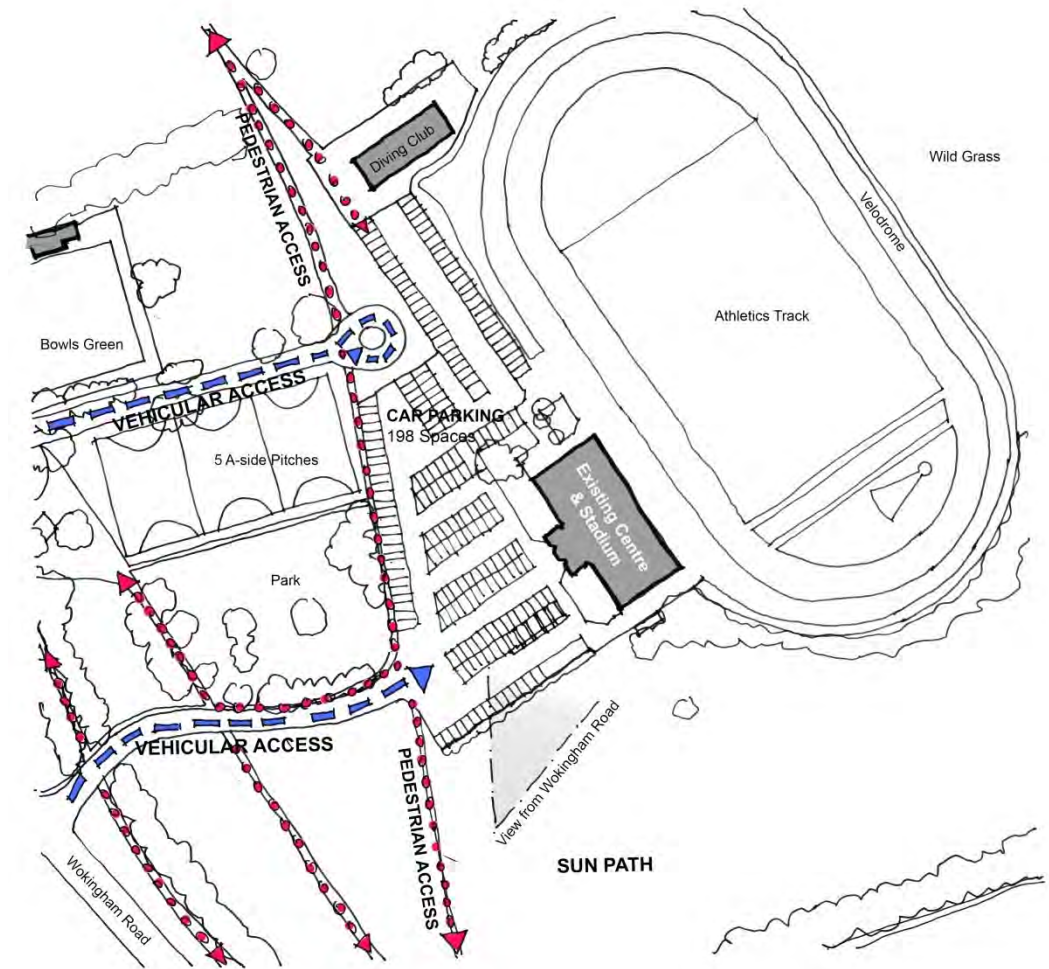


Figure 6: Sketch Analysis of Site Access

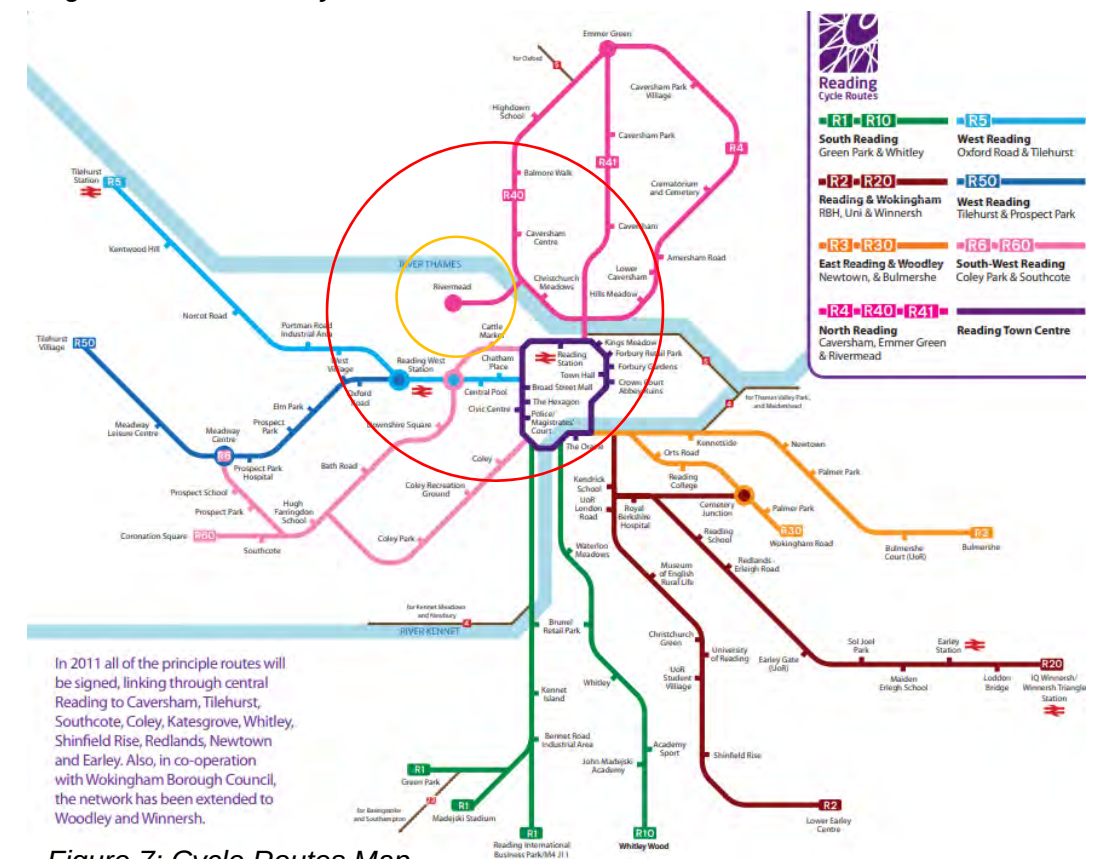


Figure 7: Cycle Routes Map

3.4 Landscape

Palmer Park sports stadium is located within the parkland setting of Palmer Park. As mentioned above, Palmer Park is a protected Local Green spaces according to the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Open Space/ Meadow:

On the south, south-east and south-west side of the site there is a large section of short amenity grass. Most of the site is hard landscaped with elements of soft landscaping in front and north-west of the existing building.

Vegetation/ Tree Belts:

There are tree belts along the perimeter of the park. There is also a tree belt and vegetation north, east and south of the stadium.

Within the site, there are a few trees northwest of the building and around the George Palmer monument.

There is a small park area with trees to the west side of the existing building, adjacent to the current car parking.

Ecology:

An ecological appraisal of the site was commissioned by Reading Borough Council, and produced by John Wenman Ecological Consultancy in August 2019. This appraisal notes that “the survey site is not designated statutorily or non-statutorily for its conservation interest.” No UK Priority Habitats (as defined under the NERC Act 2006) are shown in the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre records for the site, although there are records of mistle thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*), a widespread bird that is usually associated with woodlands and parklands.

The appraisal concludes that habitats on the site that would be affected by the proposals are predominantly amenity grassland and hard standing and small sections of poor species hedgerows – habitats of little-to-no ecological value.

However, there are opportunities to enhance the site’s bio-diversity value and recommendations have been included for protection of existing features such as retained shrubs and trees. The conclusions of this report are included in section 9.0 following, with the full report included separately with the Application.

Arboriculture:

A tree survey and arboricultural impact assessment has been produced in Nov. 2020. This identifies that one category “B” tree and seven category “C” trees are to be felled to achieve the proposed layout, with another 6 trees of low quality (potential health & safety risk) to be felled as part of the development. Mitigation of tree loss is to be offset through enhanced replacement tree planting, with root protection zones to include during construction. Other conclusions of this report are included in section 9.0 following, with the full report included separately with the Application.

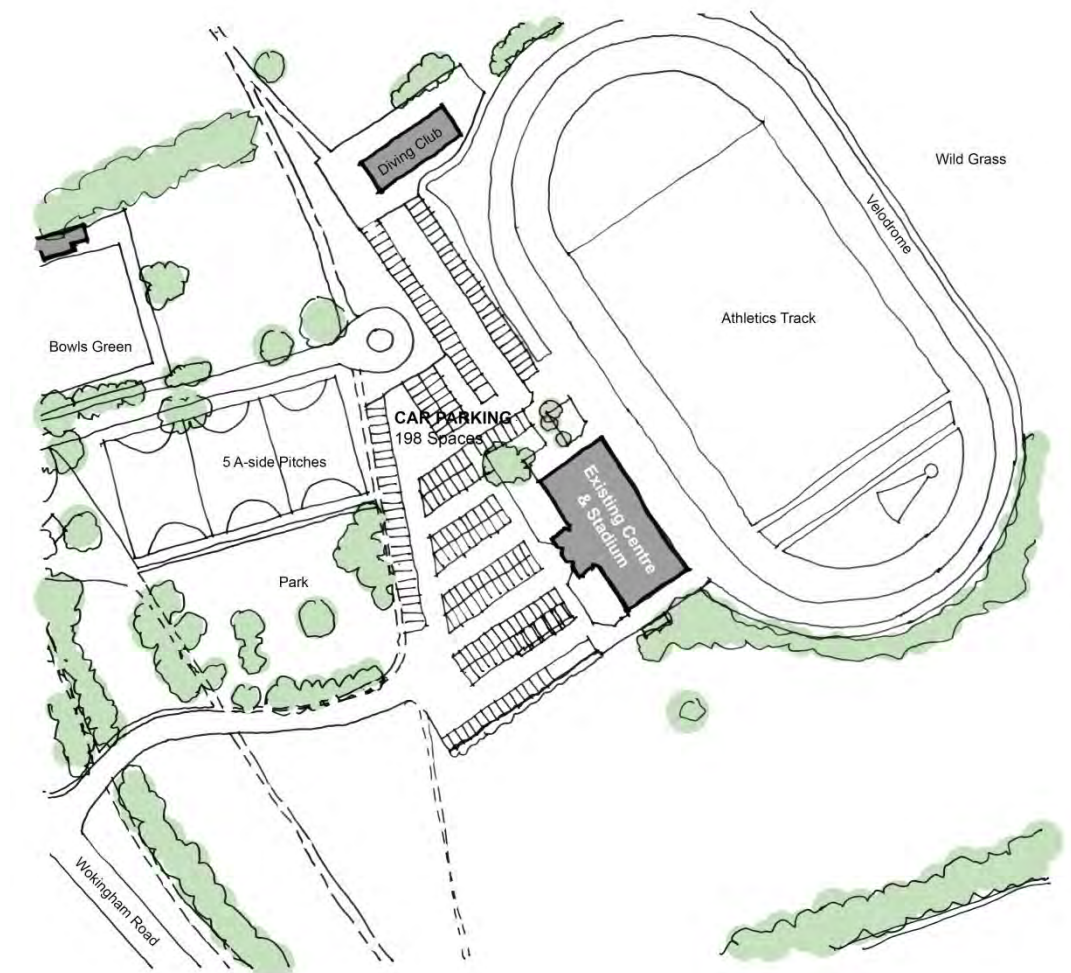


Figure 8: Sketch Analysis of **Landscape**

3.5 Historical Context

1872- 1877

Between 1872 and 1877 the site and the area around it were more of a rural area. The site lies west of the railway line and east of the town centre.



Figure 9: Historical Diagram, 1872- 1877

1898

The map below published around 1898 shows the development of the Palmer Park stadium and initial grandstand. The park appears in the form it currently has today. George Palmer gifted the site of Palmer Park to Reading in 1889 at the end of his term as Mayor of Reading. In 1890 he decided to increase the size of the park to 49 acres, also offering sports facilities to the local community. William Ravenscroft was the architect that designed the park and the pavilion / grandstand. The larger Palmer Park opened on 4th November 1891. Further development, mainly residential occurred west of the railway line.



Figure 10: Historical Diagram, 1898

1910

There is some further development within the park with a bowling field being created on the site. Also, further residential development occurred on the south and north of the park.



Figure 11: Historical Diagram, 1910

1932

The park seems to have gained more sports activities and sports fields by 1932. There are now several tennis courts on the site as well as the bowling green field. George Palmer's statue was moved in 1930 to its current location within the Palmer Park from Broad Street, its original location.



Figure 12: Historical Diagram, 1932

3.6 Existing Building

The existing building is located within the southern part of Palmer Park.

The form of the existing building is rectangular. The roof of the existing building is formed by nine curved roof elements. The existing building is double-story in general, with the front elevation formed of brick to the ground floor, and large expanses of glass to fitness spaces at first floor. The grandstand seating is at the rear of the building on the eastern side facing onto the sports athletics track and velodrome. It was opened in 1988.

The materials of the existing building are predominantly red brick and glazing with some red steel columns.

The current facilities at Palmer Park Sports Stadium include a gym, a multi-purpose room and a coffee outlet. There is also a covered grandstand overlooking the athletics stadium track and field, and the 460m velodrome. There is also a floodlit football pitch and floodlit artificial grass pitches to the north / west of the existing building.

The building has served the local community well. However, the facilities need improvements and refurbishment in order to adequately meet the current and future needs of the users.

The existing building's entrance lobby will be demolished. The main entrance will be relocated to the new extension. For security reasons this part of the building will be enclosed through creation of a new external glazed wall, with a secondary (fire escape) door.

Refurbishments will consist of redecoration of existing changing rooms, creation of new accessible changing rooms, redecoration / alteration of first floor spaces to create new studio spaces. A condition survey has highlighted the need for replacement roof coverings over habitable spaces at first floor (studios / circulation). This will also be part of the works to the existing stadium building.



Figure 14: Existing Palmer Park Sports Stadium



Figure 15: Existing building Grand stand and athletics



Figure 13: Existing Palmer Park Sports Stadium

4.0 SCHEME DESIGN PROPOSALS

4.1 Design Development

The existing stadium building at Palmer Park is proposed to be both refurbished and extended. Both the existing stadium and the new extension are located in designated Local Green and Public Open Space in the south-eastern corner of the Palmer Park site. The location of the new extension is off the north-west elevation / corner of the stadium.

The new extension will be formed of two distinct volumes, the main entrance / social hub adjoining the stadium, and the main sports volume consisting of the swimming pool hall with fitness suite over. The entrance hub will have a slightly lower roof than the main sports volume. This is due to Sport England design guidance for the heights over swimming pools, and over fitness suites, driving the height of the main sports volume up. These roof differences allow the main roof parapet to the new extension to rise up from the existing stadium to the corner facing onto George Palmer statue. The design intent for this is to give more dominance to the statue, and improve its setting in the heart of the park.

The entrance hub will link the main sports volume with the existing stadium, and will control access to the enhanced facility. This hub will include the double height activity area, the café, circulation and the information/ self-sign up area.

The hub, the pool hall and fitness suite are designed in such a way to open up views in and out of the extension, giving a much more open and 'active frontage' addressing the surrounding park, as well as enabling views from Wokingham Road. This enables a more prominent presence of the enhanced facility and will encourage people to use the building.

The new extension has also been deliberately designed with the main entrance hub facing onto the new pedestrian plaza in front of the new main entrance. The pool hall will lead off of this main entrance in line with the existing stadium building. This allows a strong emphasis of the views to / from George Palmer statue, and creates a formalised pedestrian route running from the statue, along the face of the new extension and existing stadium, through to Palmer Park Avenue to the south.

This alignment of the new extension and creation of the new footpath will be reinforced through tree planting, creating a tree-lined avenue leading from the statue down to the Palmer Park Avenue.

The pool hall, fitness suite above, and reception area/ double height activity zone will run adjacent to this new pedestrian route. These spaces, with their dynamic activities (swimming, double height activity zone, first floor fitness suite), will be glimpsed from this pedestrian route and from the new pedestrian plaza, creating active street frontage and acting as shop windows to the facility. This has been deliberately incorporated into the design in order to attract people into the facility. Visual security for pool users is also a priority, with low level defensive planting to be installed in front of glazing, preventing people loitering / getting too close to ground floor windows.

A development framework for the whole of Palmer Park has been produced, after substantial public consultation. This framework was adopted in April 2020 as a Supplementary Planning Document, controlling future development within the parkland. The design has been deliberately changed to correspond with this document. This framework has, as its main principle, reinstating a "heart" to the park to deliberately improve the setting of the George Palmer statue. Other principles include formation of a new swimming centre, to the north-west corner of the existing stadium, and reinforcement of pedestrian routes through the parkland. All of these principles have informed the design of the new extension, and surrounding parking / landscaping.

The location of the new extension, conforming to the principles of the framework, also keeps this new build away from the surrounding properties, and screened by various tree belts.

The design has developed further through incorporation of a 6 lane community 25m pool during the bidding process for providing the leisure service contract for Reading Borough Council. Initially a 4 lane community pool was to be considered for the new extension, with the request to investigate a 6 lane pool coming through after issue of the initial project brief. This allowed the opportunity to reconsider the form of the building, and its relationship to the George Palmer statue. Compressing the building footprint by moving the double height activity area in front of the existing stadium (instead of to the side) has allowed the building to be drawn away from the statue, visually improving its setting.

The proposed extension also respects the existing stadium, in that the roof parapet falls to the existing roof line, not over-dominating the existing building.

The following exercises have contributed to a balanced design, addressing the master planning principles set out within the development framework, and respecting the new extension's location in relation to the existing stadium. Investigations into materials, approaches and security have also influenced the design, as noted in the following.



Figure 15: Proposed aerial 3D View of Palmer Park Leisure Centre

4.2 Standards and Compliances

Saunders Boston have referenced a suite of design guidance which has informed the design. This guidance includes:

4.2.1 Planning Policy:

- Reading Borough Council's Local Plan and Proposals Map (adopted November 2019)
- Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document (adopted October 2011)
- Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (adopted July 2011)

4.2.2 Sport England Design Guidance:

- Accessible sports facilities design guide 2010
- Accessible Sports Facilities Audit Check List (October 2012)
- Swimming Pools Design Guidance Note 2013
- Swimming Pools Design Guidance Note - Appendices 1 to 5 inclusive
- Sports halls: Design and Layouts Design Guidance Note (Feb 2012)
- Developing the right sports hall (March 2012)
- Briefing Note: sizes of sport hall storage (October 2012)
- Fitness and Exercise Spaces (March 2008)
- Floors for Indoor Sports design guide (Sept 2007)
- Artificial Sports Lighting Design Guide (November 2012)
- Outdoor Sports Lighting Briefing Note (September 2010)
- Wayfinding and Signage for Sports Facilities (July 2013).
- Dementia-Friendly Sport and Physical Activity Guide from the Alzheimer's Society

4.2.3 British Swimming Guidance:

- <http://www.swimming.org/asa/facilities/swimming-pool-design/>
- <http://www.swimming.org/asa/facilities/management-advice-guidance/>
- <http://www.swimming.org/asa/facilities/management-advice-guidance/>
- Dementia Friendly – Environmental Assessment Tool. <http://www.swimming.org/>

4.2.4 Health and Safety Guidance:

- Managing health and safety in swimming pools - HSG 179

4.2.5 Legislation:

- The design is to comply with all relevant statutory obligations and requirements. This includes compliance with the current (as of November 2020) suite of Approved Documents within Building Regulations.

4.2.6 Hierarchy of Standards:

- Where there is any conflict between two or more standards, the Sport England standard is to be adopted, unless specifically agreed otherwise with the Council.
- BREEAM standards are also to be adopted in order to achieve the rating of "Excellent", unless specifically agreed otherwise with the Council.
- Where materials, goods or appliances or workmanship standards are covered by more than one standard and/or recommendation, the higher or more stringent shall be adopted.

4.3 Proposed Leisure Centre Building

4.3.1 Design Concepts

The proposed new leisure centre combines the functionality and performance required for modern sport and leisure, with a design that responds to the unique challenges of the site at Palmer Park.

The performance sports spaces are very well defined through a combination of guidance from Sport England and design standards set by the National Governing Bodies (NGBs). This has led to a compressed footprint, wrapping around the corner of the existing stadium, pulling the building away from the statue thereby improving its setting. This also allows vistas out to surroundings on three sides of the new extension.

The design concepts at Palmer Park are:

- Create a highly visible and attractive entrance hub off which will lead access to the existing stadium, and access to the swimming pool and first floor fitness suite.
- The entrance hub is to have large glazed elements / double height activity zone, all visible from both the car park, also allowing glimpses of activity from Wokingham Road. This is designed to create visual attraction to the main entrance, allowing the general public views into the activity zone. The aim is to draw the public to the centre and into the main entrance.
- Create a cohesive link with the existing building. This is achieved by wrapping the double height activity zone around part of the front elevation of the existing building. This also serves to pull the new extension away from the George Palmer statue.
- Create visual links from the new building to the surrounding parkland and activities. The swimming pool is opened up visually by having glazing on two sides looking over the pedestrian plaza and the statue to the north. The fitness suite on first floor has views over towards Wokingham Road to the west, the parkland to the north, and over the velodrome / athletics track to the east. The double height activity zone is also visible from Wokingham Road and the southern section of the parkland, showing activity within the centre. By including defensive planting directly in front of the ground floor glazing, visual security of the swimmers in the pool is protected.
- The new extension has to sit within the development framework for Palmer Park. The main theme of the framework is to reinstate the heart of the park, improve the statue's setting and reinforce pedestrian avenues / footpaths through the park. The new extension achieves this through creating a pedestrian plaza directly outside the main entrance, locating the extension away from the statue and improving the soft landscaping/paving around it, and by creating a tree-lined avenue leading from the statue to Palmer Park Avenue. Further details of the framework, and how the new extension sits within this, are contained later on this Statement.
- Locating spaces requiring no visibility away from the public faces of the building. This is achieved by locating plantrooms in the corner of the new extension facing onto the athletics field. The village change facility is located at ground floor, facing onto the existing athletics clubhouse on trackside. First floor changing is located in a strip separating the gym and reception hub, allowing views out from the fitness suite over the athletics field.
- Incorporation of passive design measures to make the project a low carbon and sustainable development. These include:
 - Building orientation analysis
 - Exceeding Building Regulations in terms of thermal performance and air-tightness of envelope
 - Low energy usage and energy efficiency for building services
 - Heat recovery from extract ventilation



Figure 16: Artist's Impression of approach to Palmer Park, Path leading to statue



Figure 17: Proposed view of statue's setting against Palmer Park

4.3.2 Contextual Relationship, Massing and Scale

The proposed new leisure centre extension to Palmer Park sports stadium sits on the north-west corner of the existing sports stadium. The extension has been designed to have those volumes with active street frontage running parallel with a new pedestrian plaza, creating the “heart” of the Park. This provides a vista to and from the pool hall located at ground floor. The fitness suite, sitting above the pool hall, will have views onto this plaza, with views also provided to the north parkland and onto the athletics field. The main junction with the existing building will be formed by wrapping a double height, fully glazed activity zone around the face of the stadium. This will visually signpost the entrance hub, making the building more visible and attractive than the existing stadium.

The height of the extension has been designed to rise up to the George Palmer statue, reflecting one of the themes of the development framework, and giving an emphasised height to the north west corner of the new extension. This also allows the roof parapet to fall from this highpoint down to link in with the existing building. The roof levels behind also reflect this fall, with the higher heights being required for the swimming pool and fitness suite above.

A further theme running through the development framework is the need to create a calm backdrop in terms of both massing and materiality. This is achieved through keeping the mass of the new building very simple, incorporating a very simple materials palette of glazing and copper coloured composite (insulated) cladding. The main reception hub is defined by setting it back from the elevation of the pool hall, with its elevations having double height curtain walling. Solar shading is provided by an external timber brise soleil, supporting the roof edge above and echoing / emphasising the tree-lined pedestrian path created along the face of the facility.

Careful siting of the edge of the new extension has been incorporated so that the George Palmer statue is not obscured from the vista created by the tree-lined avenue.

The scale of the new extension will be comparable to the existing building, being two storeys in height. The heights of the higher volumes of the pool hall and fitness suite above are dictated by Sport England Design Guidance, along with structural requirements. These volumes are located furthest from the existing stadium, allowing the building to “fall” in elevation to the existing stadium.

New car parking will be located on the southern edge of the existing car park. This corresponds with the development framework, and care will be taken to ensure that the surfacing of this new section will reflect the materiality considerations in the framework. Parking bays will be created through the use of permeable paving contributing to the Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy (SUDs) Access roads will need to be in more hard-wearing materials.

As such, the relationship and massing of the new extension corresponds with the existing stadium building, reinforces the theme of reintroducing the heart of the Park contained in the development framework, and will provide a simple form / mass as a backdrop to the surrounding parkland.



Figure 18: Artist's Impression of approach to Palmer Park from the monument



Figure 19: Proposed Aerial 3D View from Athletics Track side

4.3.3 Proposed Scheme

The leisure centre is accessed off Wokingham Road, via an existing access road. This road will be altered on entry to the car park to allow for coach parking bays on the south side of the road. A new footpath / avenue will be created leading from Palmer Park Avenue to the south, all the way up to George Palmer's statue. The new extension will be located to the north-west of the existing stadium, with the main hub facing onto a pedestrian plaza area linking through to the statue to the north.

The new building is divided into two main volumes, the entrance hub, and main sports hub off the hub to the north west. The hub contains the entrance foyer, information point, café area and double height activity zone. This 'Hub' part of the proposed building is the most social part of the proposed scheme and is at the centre of the both the new sports areas (pool hall and fitness suite) and the existing stadium building.

The pool hall is located on the north-west side of the hub, with ground floor glazing allowing both natural light in (carefully controlled to mitigate glare on water surfaces) and views in / out. As the pool hall runs parallel to the new pedestrian plaza in front of the building, this allows glimpses of the activities inside, but from a distance as defensive planting will be installed directly in front of the glazing. The intent is to provide a natural advert to the building, encouraging more people to use the facilities, whilst maintaining the visual privacy of pool users.

The first floor fitness suite is located above the pool hall. The design intent with this gym area is to create attractive spaces for exercising in, with views out over the Park to the north and west, with glazing looking out over the athletics field. The use of large "picture" windows will also advertise activities to Park users, with the aim of acting as a shop window into the centre, further encouraging use.

With the views in and out of the pool hall, the hub area and the fitness gym at first floor, an active street frontage along the new pedestrian plaza, looking towards Wokingham Road, is created. This reinforces the aim of encouraging more people to use the building.

The hub has also been designed to attract people into the new enhanced facility. Double height glazing will clad this hub on the west and south elevations, with solar shading provided by vertical timber brise soleil. This allows glimpses of the double height activity area located to the south of the main reception area.

The hub and pedestrian plaza will also be linked through the use of external benching / seating / tables, with food offerings from the café located on the public side of the reception area. The intent is to create a café area for use, not just by the facility's users, but by the general public and park users.



Figure 20: Artist's Impression of approach to the entrance of the centre



Figure 21: Artist's Impression of the plaza and views of the George Palmer's statue

Area adjacencies, relationships between public and staff spaces, activity areas and circulations spaces have been carefully considered and consist of the following:

Ground Floor – New Extension:

Entrance:

- The main entrance is designed to be “sign-posted” from all parts of the new car parking layout in front of the facility.
- The entrance itself is defined by double-height glazing to the main reception hub. The main entrance doors will be framed on one side by the projection of the pool hall, and on the other by the timber brise soleil / canopy support columns, with building signage located directly above. This visually draws visitors to the entrance.
- The intent is to intuitively sign-post the main entrance from outside and to create a more welcoming and exciting entrance for centre users.
- This glazed approach to the main reception hub will also act as a visual link between the pool hall volume and the existing stadium.
- The entrance will have fully automatic doors that take customers into a draught lobby forming a buffer between internal and external.

Draught Lobby:

- The glazed draught lobby will have a robust barrier matting finish to floor to enable most of the dirt and dust to be taken from shoes and boots before entering the centre.
- Care is to be taken over the colour of the matting to avoid confusing those visitors with dementia.

Reception:

- The reception area will consist of a self-sign in area, overseen by a manned concierge desk. This sign-in area will also have a dropped section for wheelchair users.
- The concierge will be a member of staff, welcoming and directing customers to the various facilities, answering questions, and aiding in the signing-in process.
- The concierge point will also serve as a means of visual security to the entrance, and to areas such as cycle parking directly outside the entrance.
- There will be an entrance barrier control system preventing unauthorised access to the centre but fast tracking those with membership cards.
- There will also be a buggy park located to the side of the entrance lobby which has a lockable rail so that parents can leave buggies and push chairs in a secure location over looked by the concierge.
- An accessible WC has also been included at reception.

Cash Office:

- There is a secure cash office room opening off the concierge area.
- The intent is to provide a secure zone for cashing up.

Kitchen / Servery / Café / Seating Area:

- The café / servery sits at the heart of the centre, overlooking both the double height activity zone and into the pool hall.
- The intent is that this area will serve as the social hub to the centre, with access to all the main activity zones off this space.
- Children’s activities within the double height activity zone can be seen by parents sat in this area, along with any swimming lessons taking place in the community pool.
- The café will also serve external seating areas located in the pedestrian plaza outside of the new extension.

Double height activity zone:

- This zone has been deliberately located on the corner of the main entrance hub, with double height glazing.
- As this zone is fully glazed, it will act as an attractive and dynamic attractive feature to the extension, being visible from Wokingham Road and the Park.
- There are elements of timber brise soleil along the façade to mitigate the solar gains. There is a viewing area within the activity area.
- The access to the activity is will be limited by a barrier control system in order to prevent unauthorised access into the space.

Wet Change / Village Change:

- The village change area leads off the circulation area, directly opposite and highly visible from the entrance barriers to the reception area.
- Entrance into the village change area will be through a vanity area where people will also be encouraged to take off their shoes to prevent dirt being tracked into the main changing area
- The village change will be laid to Sport England’s Design Guidance Note for Swimming Pools
- There will be a series of one person, two person and family change cubicles
- Toilets, pre- and post-swim showers have also been included.
- Accessible facilities include a Changing Places cubicle, accessible changing room, accessible toilets.
- The village change will open out onto the main pool hall at the shallow end of the 25m pool with family changing cubicles located closest to this entry.

Swimming Pool Hall:

- The main entrance into the pool hall will be at the south east corner, closest to viewing from the reception area.
- The pool hall has a 25m 6 lane community pool with a profiled floor to Sport England Design Guidance.
- The 25m pool has glazing opening out onto the west and north, linking users visually with the surrounding parkland. Landscaping of defensive planting will be included in the scheme by this glazing for visual security
- Poolpod (or similar) access to the pool along with accessible, shallow steps has been included

Building Plant (ground floor):

- Ground floor plant servicing the pool will be located at the northern end of the pool hall, accessed externally from the overall flow car parking to the north.
- The plant is located close to the areas with higher demand such as the pool hall, making the layout more efficiently serviced.
- Chemical stores are also located on this north elevation, accessible from the same car park.

Vertical Circulation:

- 1 no. 8 person lift and an open staircase have been deliberately located adjacent to the entrance barriers, making them highly visible to the centre’s users
- The stair is also intended to allow viewing out onto the athletics field behind the new building.

First Floor – New Extension:

The first floor is accessed via the main staircase which is ambulant accessible, which wraps around an 8 person lift in the vertical circulation core. The stair opens out onto a central circulation area, giving access onto the fitness gym, associated dry change areas, and exercise studios located in the existing stadium building.

Fitness suite:

- The first floor is dominated by the large fitness suite that opens up to the north of the circulation area.
- The fitness gym is over 550m² and reflects the layout of the floor below. This layout allows the gym to be broken up into smaller areas such as free weights, cardio-vascular areas etc.
- One of the intents with this space is to open it up as much as possible to the surrounding parkland / sports facilities. This has the effect of showcasing activity to people in the park and allowing views out across the site.
- Glazing has been included on three sides, the north, west and east elevations. This allows views out over to the parkland in the north, and west, and views out over the athletics and cycle track to the east. This also means that the fitness suite can also be seen by Wokingham Road which further advertises the building and the activities within. It also creates a visual relationship between the leisure centre with the new plaza, the monument area and the public paths of the park.
- The double height activity zone will not be overlooked by gym users for visual security purposes, but there is potential to expand the gym over the reception area in future if and when required.
- This creates a visual relationship between the leisure centre with the new plaza, the monument area and the public paths of the park.

Dry Changing Rooms (first floor):

- As users of the health and fitness services, such as gyms, tend to be individuals, the dry change areas are designed as separate male and female areas.
- These will have layouts in accordance with Sport England Design Guidance Note for Fitness and Exercise Spaces, will have individual changing cubicles, and showers with drop-down seats etc.)
- A separate accessible changing room have also been included.

Multi-Purpose Room:

- A multi-purpose room, primarily used as a party / meeting room will be included off the main vertical circulation core, over the top of the kitchen
- This room will be a flexible room, available for multi-use, but having viewing down in to the double height activity zone.

Building Plant (first floor):

- An air handling plant room has been located at the north-east corner of the building. It is adjacent to the fitness suite and accessed from the rear escape stair.
- This plant is efficiently located closer to the areas with higher demand such as the fitness suite.

Roof – New Extension:

- The roof area will be accessed via a dedicated staircase off the northern escape stair off the fitness suite.
- This allows level access to the main roof over the fitness suite.
- There will be an element of rooftop plant screened off with mesh, located over the main fitness suite roof. This plant area will house the air handling plant, including air source heat pumps, for the central hub / sports hall zones.
- Both the fitness suite and hub roofs will house a series of photo-voltaic panels.

Plant areas – New Extension:

- Plant areas have been located along the north and east elevations of the building, and at roof level
- These areas consist of the following:
 - o External plant above the main fitness suite roof. This will be hidden behind a screen of galvanised metal mesh screens on a galvanised frame. The anticipation is that the cladding to this element will be Elephant Grating or equal approved.
 - o First floor air handling plantroom, which will have removable, acoustic louvres on the east elevation facing onto the athletics track
 - o Ground floor pool plantroom and chemical stores, accessible from the existing overflow car parking to the north of the new extension.
- The intent for these areas is to minimise both the visual and acoustic impact and prevent noise breakout from this area towards the neighbouring residences located to the south and west of the site.

Ground Floor - Refurbishment of Existing Stadium Building:

The existing entrance lobby to the stadium will be demolished, and a new external wall infill with fire exit door will be installed.

This is to secure the existing building at ground floor level, and to visually direct people to the new facility entrance in the new entrance hub.

Party/ Meeting Room:

- The existing staff space in the northern corner of the building will be converted to a party/meeting room.
- The party room is located next to the new entrance hub / activity area and therefore will be easily accessed from this space.

Event Kiosk:

- The existing store space on the northeast corner of the existing building is proposed to become an event kiosk space with easy access to the athletics and cycle track.
- The event kiosk will have a servery access on the corridor of the existing building

Staff Office:

- The existing studio in the south part of the building are proposed to be refurbished into an office room and a staff room.

Accessible change:

- The existing kitchen and cellar room will be refurbished into 2 no. accessible change rooms.

Spectator Toilets:

- The male and female toilets in the foyer area will be combined to create a larger female spectator toilet block.
- Those toilets in the northeast side of the building will be combined to create a larger female spectator toilet block.

Team changing rooms:

- Existing changing rooms will be refurbished (six different team changing rooms).

Officials changing rooms:

- One of the existing changing rooms will be turned into an officials' changing room.

Circulation:

- The existing ground floor circulation will be refurbished.
- The car to the existing 8 person lift serving the first floor will be refurbished.
- Access to the athletics field and cycling track will be maintained from both the south door to the stadium and from the north door through the new circulation core to the extension. Both accesses will be controlled for security purposes.

First Floor - Refurbishment of Existing Stadium Building:

Using the existing 8 person lift, the existing building on the first floor will have level access to the functional studio/ group cycling spaces on the south-west of the building. The grandstand is currently situated at a higher level than the main first floor; this will continue to be accessed by a platform lift from the first floor level up to the upper tier of seating.

Due to a difference in floor levels, a ramp will link the upper tier of seating through to the new circulation core of the extension.

Functional Studio / Group Cycling:

- The group cycling studio is accommodated within the refurbished existing building.
- It located in the north and west corner of the building and will be easily accessible from the new part of the building via internal steps / existing platform lift.
- This also creates easy access to the dry changing facilities in the new extension, first floor.
- The group cycling space has views out to the new double height activity area.

Fitness studio:

- The fitness studio is located on the south side of the existing building.
- The studio will have views over the car parking and beyond to the southern park area.

Roof - Refurbishment of Existing Stadium Building:

- A condition survey has been carried out on the existing building.
- This has highlighted that the existing roof covering over habitable spaces (functional studio / group cycling / fitness studio) is in poor condition
- As part of the works to enhance the facilities, it is proposed to replace / substitute this roof covering with a more suitable material / system. This will be subject to further investigations such as loadings, investigation of the integrity of existing structure etc.
- Further review / investigation of external envelope elements such as glazing and doors will occur at the next design stage, to determine condition of these elements and any improvements required.

4.3.4 Appearance, Materials and Glare

The new leisure centre extension will consist of two main volumes in a perpendicular / rectangular form:

- Pool hall with fitness suite above
- Reception hub, with the pool hall linking to this hub, and with the double height activity zone wrapping around the existing building

The proposed building needs to accommodate these large volume spaces. The distribution of these two masses and volumes has been carefully considered in order to break up and balance the overall mass of the building, especially in relation to the existing stadium building. The aims and intents of the development framework have also been taken into account: This framework calls for creation of a feature corner to the north of the new extension, “with additional height to give interest to the built form and massing”. The high point of the new extension will be at the north, facing onto the statue. This also allows the following:

- o Incorporation of spaces requiring additional head height at this end of the building
- o The fall in height of the whole new extension towards the existing building.

The main mass of the building is constructed using a composite cladding material that provides:

- High levels of thermal performance without hot and cold spots or any areas of cold bridging
- High levels of air tightness to reduce heat loss and aid thermal performance
- A high speed of construction reducing cost and disruption to neighbours

This gives simplicity to these large, heavily serviced volumes. In order to avoid the elevations becoming overbearing through the use of one material, the cladding has been deliberately designed to be broken up as follows:

- The pool hall will have glazing to two sides, which allows views in / out of the swimming pool.
- The reception hub is to be faced with double height curtain walling, recessed into the face of the main cladding line. This will allow easy visibility of the reception from a distance.
- The recessed reception hub will therefore have a strip of cladding above this curtain walling. This will be supported by timber struts, acting both as a brise soleil to the glazing behind, and repeating the pattern of the new tree planting lining the route to the statue.
- Glazing slots are introduced at first floor level to the main volume of the fitness suite. This glazing will act as shop windows to the activities within, and allow views out over the surrounding parkland / facility.

The material palette and elevations have been reconsidered and further developed, in order to address concerns raised during the Pre-Application on the building's sensitive setting, and so that the scheme would not have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of Palmer Park. The existing building consists of large elements of glazing at first floor level sitting on red brick cladding to the ground floor. The colour of the cladding panels has been selected to tie in with the overall colour of the existing. Selecting a copper coloured composite cladding panels achieves this aim, whilst ensuring that the new extension is of a high quality appearance. This colour also creates a calm backdrop for the park in terms of materiality, being of a constant colour.

To “ground” the building, the ground floor will consist of either glazing addressing the public realm in front of the building, or dark grey brick cladding.

Another design theme is to allow the new extension to act as a quality clad “gem” at the reinstated heart of the park, meeting one of the aims of the development framework. Replicating the architecture of the existing building would not present as high a quality appearance to the new extension.

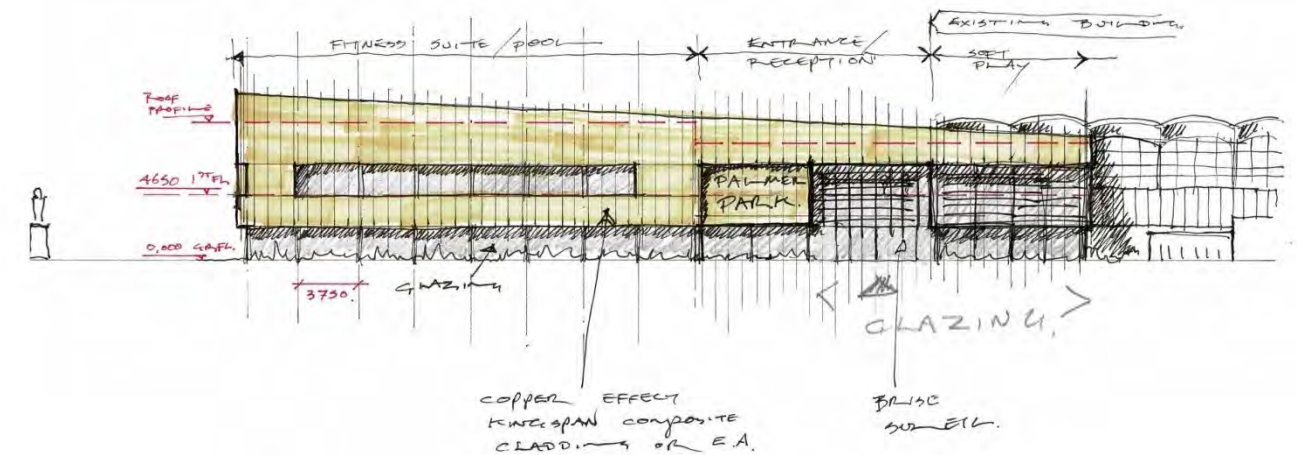


Figure 22: Design Exploration Sketch of the South-west Elevation

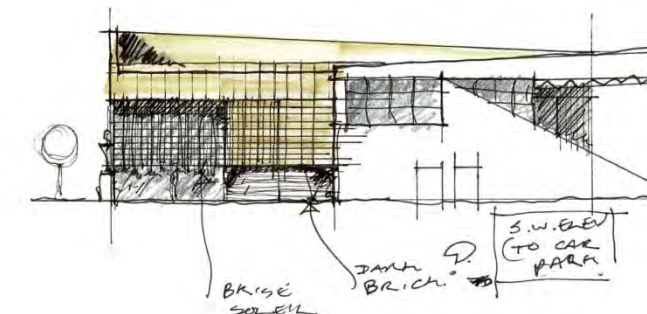


Figure 23: Design Exploration Sketch of the South-east Elevation

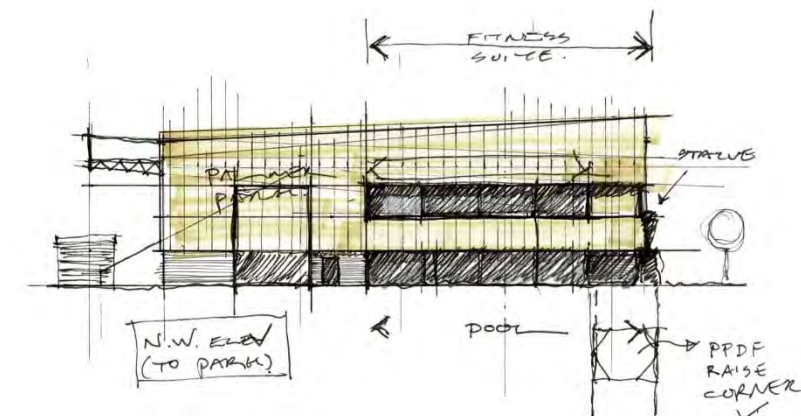


Figure 24: Design Exploration Sketch of the North-west Elevation

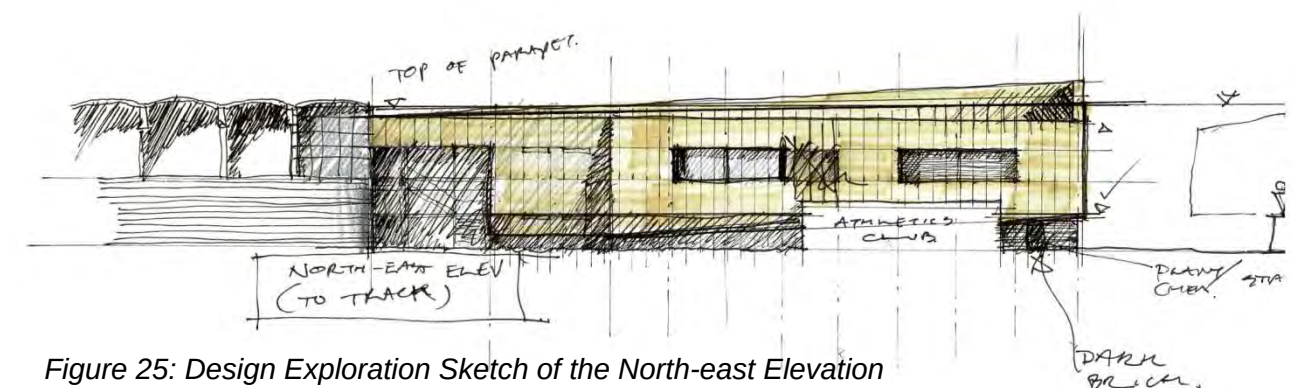


Figure 25: Design Exploration Sketch of the North-east Elevation

Pool Hall / Fitness Suite:

- The pool hall / fitness suite will be a simple volume, double height, containing swimming and gym activities, along with wet and dry change areas and plantrooms.
- West elevation:
 - o The west elevation of this volume faces onto the new pedestrian plaza, and further on to Wokingham Road. In order to provide dynamic street frontage on this elevation, glazing has been included at ground floor. This allows glimpses of activities within, and views out for the swimmers. This glazing will also require shading (tbc) to prevent glare on the surface of the pools
 - o Along this elevation, the ground floor glazing will be faced with defensive planting, to aid in this solar shading, and to maintain a degree of visual security for pool users. Visual security will also be provided by lifeguards / staff on duty within the centre.
 - o The main cladding to this elevation above ground floor will be copper coloured cladding, falling from the north corner down to the existing building.
 - o This cladding will be broken up by the insertion of picture windows, allowing activities within to be seen from a distance, and allowing gym users to exercise with views of the surrounding parkland.
- North elevation:
 - o The north elevation of this volume faces directly onto the George Palmer memorial statue, and further on to the northern playing fields of Palmer Park.
 - o Access to the ground floor pool plantroom and chemical stores is located in this elevation, closest to the cycle track. The escape stair / first floor plantroom access stair will also be accessed from this elevation, along with the first aid room. The first aid room is located to service the pool hall, in line with Sport England Design Guidance, and allowing ambulances to collect casualties from the overflow car parking.
 - o Dynamic street frontage is again provided by the inclusion of glazing to the pool hall which will be faced with defensive planting.
 - o Dark grey brick cladding is included to the height of this glazing, to provide a robust finish to the plantroom areas.
 - o The main cladding to this elevation above ground floor will be the copper coloured cladding, falling from the north corner down towards the athletics field to the east.
 - o The fitness suite at first floor will have picture windows looking down onto the statue, and onto the parkland beyond.
 - o The cladding will also present a calm backdrop to the statue, as highlighted in the development framework.
- East elevation:
 - o The east elevation of this hall faces on to the velodrome and athletics field lying to the east of the existing stadium building.
 - o The existing athletics club building will be retained at ground floor level, trackside of the cycle track.
 - o The dark grey brick cladding wraps around the building at ground floor level, to provide a robust finish to the village change area where glazing is not required.
 - o The main cladding to this elevation above ground floor will be the copper coloured cladding. This will be broken up louvres and windows to the fitness suite, looking over the top of the athletics club.
 - o The reception area is defined by double height curtain walling to the vertical circulation core, allowing building users to view activities on the athletics field and separating the new building from the existing stadium.



Proposed South-West Elevation

Figure 26: Proposed South-west elevation



Proposed South-East Elevation

Figure 27: Proposed South-east elevation



Proposed North-West Elevation

Figure 28: Proposed North-west elevation



Proposed North-East Elevation

Figure 29: Proposed North-east elevation

Entrance Hub:

- The entrance hub is a simple volume, located facing onto the pedestrian plaza and newly laid out car park. The hub will also be the closest part of the facility to Wokingham Road, providing visibility of the centre from the this Road.
- In order to define this volume as the entrance, the design intent has been to open this volume up through the use of double height glazing on the corner. This allows views into the double height activity zone, acting as a shop window to the centre.
- This glazing / curtain walling will be recessed back from the face of the cladding to the pool hall, defining the entrance further.
- As noted previously, solar shading will be provided by external timber columns acting as a brise soleil. As these will be located along the face of the main cladding line to the pool hall, this allows a walkway between the columns and the curtain walling, adding further interest to the active elevation.
- This walkway will also provide a maintenance / cleaning route for the glazing and timber, with the soffit of the canopy over at high level being lined in timber to match the brise soleil.
- Building signage can also be provided over the main entrance, further drawing people into the reception hub.
- Towards the rear of the entrance hub, facing onto the cycling track and athletics field at the rear, further double height curtain walling will be installed. This will define the junction between the new extension and the existing stadium building. It will also allow show the main stair case, and will allow views out over the athletics field.

Existing Stadium Building:

Parts of the existing building will be altered as part of these proposals. The existing reception foyer currently projects out from the face of this building, onto the car park. As the main entrance will now be in the hub of the new extension, this foyer is to be demolished back to the line of the existing face of the stadium.

A new infill external wall will be created in the opening left by this demolition. This wall will match the “plinth” brick of the new extension, and will also frame a small element of curtain walling. This curtain walling has been incorporated to allow some natural light into the existing vertical circulation core, and allows for a fire escape to be created for occupants of the stadium building.

To link the new extension to the existing building, it is proposed to frame the top of this new infill wall with the same copper coloured cladding used on the new extension. The intent is to “anchor” the new extension to the existing stadium.

Glare:

- Good natural lighting provision of the pool hall is essential to provide an attractive swimming environment. The intent is provide users with natural light, and allowing glimpses of the external landscape for swimmers and views in from a distance for the general public, all the while aiming to reduce energy consumption. Solar gain (and the need for ventilation demand to increase) comes with larger extents of glazing, which is to be avoided.
- However, there is also a balance between natural lighting provision and avoiding glare on the water surface (this prevents lifeguards seeing people in trouble under the water, and is considered a major health and safety risk).
- Natural lighting is therefore controlled through limiting the amount of glazing at ground floor level, with direct sunlight controlled through the use of solar shading (blinds etc.) Further investigation of the different methods will be carried out at the next detailed design stage.
- A sun path analysis will be carried out at the next stage to determine the solar gain and glare levels.
- Some soft landscaping will be included directly outside of the pool hall, in order to limit visual access to the interior of the main pool hall as well as providing a visual interest from the swimming pools, and offering additional solar shading.
- To conclude, visual security and glare have been addressed by:
 - o Analysing the amount of glazing both in length and height
 - o Reduced visibility and increased shade by the use of solar shading (tbc) and soft landscaping



Figure 30: Proposed North-east elevation



Figure 31: Precedent Images for Palmer Park

4.3.5 Passive Design

The proposed extension to Palmer Park sports stadium off Wokingham Road in Reading has been designed to be a low carbon sustainable development, to reflect current Council Policy. Elements of Passive Design measures have been incorporated to ensure the proposed extension is a low energy, comfortable sustainable building.

Various Passive Design elements of the scheme have been included as follows:

- Climate analysis (including site location, weather / climate, building orientation and layout)
- Passive design (building envelope, fixed building services including ventilation and lighting)
- Ventilation strategy

Dynamic simulation modelling has been undertaken to confirm that the orientation of the building has been designed to provide adequate daylight whilst minimising solar gains. For example, the café / seating area of the building is located to face south-west, therefore taking advantage of solar gains, thereby passively reducing the energy usage for heating in the café / seating area.

When assessing the efficiency of the building envelope, the following percentage improvement rates were determined in how efficient the current internal building environment is, over baseline Limiting Fabric Parameters:

Roof	-	60%
External Walls	-	57%
Ground / Exposed Floor	-	40%
External Glazing	-	46%

The design also uses a Metsec structure, which in turn allows a cost-effective yet flexible building.

Airtightness of the building is also improved over and above that rate used in current Building Regulations, achieving a 70% improvement.

Building services are also to be designed to incorporate heat recovery in ventilation units where possible along with low energy lighting and passive lighting controls.

All of these factors are contributing to a comfortable, low energy and sustainable extension to the existing stadium. The low design u-values, stringent lighting design and high heat recovery rates all help to reduce the energy usage of the building passively. The dynamic simulation has shown that carbon emissions from the proposed development have been reduced through the inclusion of passive design measures, and furthermore the energy demand of the proposed development has been reduced.

4.4 Proposed Development of the Sports Stadium Site

4.4.1 Approaches

The key approach to the existing sports stadium site is from Wokingham Road, with the majority of customers coming from the direction of the town centre to the west of the Park. The existing access road off Wokingham Road, Palmers Way, will be retained.

A new pedestrian avenue will be created across the face of the new extension, leading from the George Palmer statue to the north down to Palmer Park Avenue to the south of the park. Other existing footpaths through the parkland will be retained, and in the case of the setting of the George Palmer statue, will be realigned slightly to improve the statue's setting. Please see following drawing for existing building location plan in its setting.

Building directional signage and advertising to the new centre on Richfield Avenue will be the subject of a future separate Planning Application.

4.4.2 Public Realm & Public “Face”

As the existing stadium building is located at the centre of Palmer Park, the new extension will be highly visible to park users. The intent is that the south-west elevation will be the main public “face” of the new extension, with the north elevation forming a calm backdrop to the George Palmer statue.

To emphasise the new entrance to the enhanced, extended facilities, the existing entrance foyer to the stadium will be demolished. A new dark grey brick infill wall with glazing will be installed in its place, tying in with the “plinth” to the new extension.

Creating a new public, pedestrian plaza in front of the new extension reintroduces a “heart” to the Park, as outlined in the Development Framework. The intent is that the new extension will link into this new public realm through outdoor seating serviced by the reception café, and by creating visual links into / out of the pool hall.

The new extension is separated from the new car park by this public space / plaza. This space, and the enhanced facility behind, will frame the car park to the north east.

The glazed reception hub sits at the junction of the new extension and the existing stadium, with the double height activity zone deliberately located here to act as a visual attraction to park users, and people in the new pedestrian plaza. Use of vertical timber columns, echoing the pattern of new tree planting on the pedestrian avenue, further links the new extension to the public space in front.

Creation of a new tree-lined avenue linking George Palmer statue to Palmer park Avenue to the south, running across the face of the new extension and existing stadium, also creates a strong visual and physical public route into the Park. Cycle parking will be included off this avenue, overseen from the reception area.

4.4.3 Palmer Park Development Framework

The Local Plan, through Policy ER1j, identifies Palmer Park as a site for a new swimming pool. Reading Borough recognised that any development needs to be well integrated and pose no negative impact on the park.

RBC subsequently commissioned Urban Place Lab Limited to produce a development framework for the Park, setting out design principles for this new pool along with ideas and principles for other spaces within the Park.

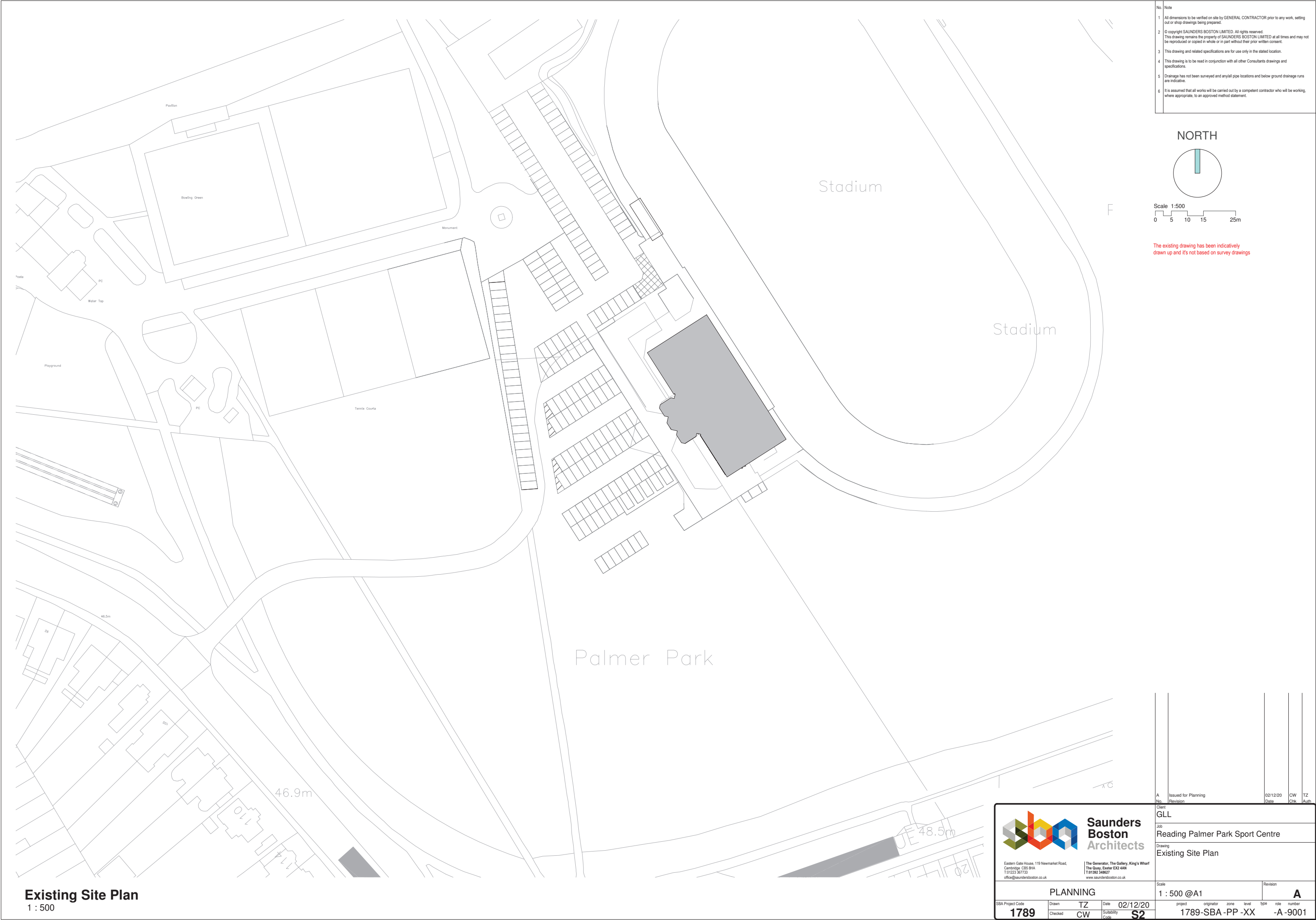
The key design drivers identified within the Framework are as follows:

- **Retain the character of the northern part...**as open parkland for sports pitches surrounded by a mature tree line.
- **Reinstate the heart of the park...**around the monument and space in front of the stadium and use the new swimming pool as a desirable destination. Make reference to the historic design by re-introducing a key focal space and place for orientation and wayfinding.
- **Strengthen the active core...**and introduce new layers into the park to create renewed interest and structure. Re-establish George Palmer monument as a focal point of converging routes and axes. Reinvigorate interest around Huntley & Palmer and use this history to give the park a unique sense of place and pride.
- **Confluent paths and re-discover historic links...**to create a network of convenient routes along desire lines. Draw people into the park and increase footfall... make it easy and pleasurable to walk, cycle, run or stroll in the park.
- **Consolidate car parking...**into a single more effective whole close to building entrances and the vehicular access point. Make pedestrian movement the priority with careful landscape and urban design.

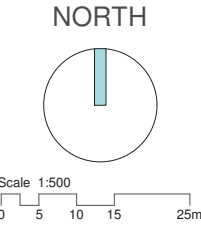
The master plan recognised the importance of the active centre and proposes a sequence of events and spaces to connect the uses into a coherent structure. The key components of this concept are as follows:

- 1. The New ‘Heart’ Space:**
 - o A new public space and key node in the centre of the park. This space will act as the entrance to the pool and stadium and link to other key spaces of the park.
- 2. The New Car Park:**
 - o A consolidated car park area to the south of the HEART space and away from key pedestrian movements. This car park should be designed to be as green as possible and be well integrated into its landscape setting.
- 3. Sequence Of Events:**
 - o Recommending key spaces that can play an active role of strengthening the main route through the active core. These spaces include entrances, movement nodes and places of activity.
- 4. Further Ideas For Spaces:**
 - o Identifying additional opportunities and ideas to add ‘layers’ to the functionality of the park in order to create a vibrant, varied and multifaceted experience.

The proposals outlined in this Statement have been designed to incorporate and reflect the key components of the Development Framework as outlined above. A new “Heart” space has been created through the pedestrian plaza; the new section of car parking has been designed to be as “green” as possible, with further emphasis of reinstating pedestrian routes such as the north-south tree-lined pedestrian avenue.



- | No. | Note |
|-----|---|
| 1 | All dimensions to be verified on site by GENERAL CONTRACTOR prior to any work, setting out or shop drawings being prepared. |
| 2 | © copyright SAUNDERS BOSTON LIMITED. All rights reserved.
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| 3 | This drawing and related specifications are for use only in the stated location. |
| 4 | This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all other Consultants drawings and specifications. |
| 5 | Drainage has not been surveyed and any/all pipe locations and below ground drainage runs are indicative. |
| 6 | It is assumed that all works will be carried out by a competent contractor who will be working, where appropriate, to an approved method statement. |



The existing drawing has been indicatively drawn up and it's not based on survey drawings

Existing Site Plan
1 : 500

 Saunders Boston Architects Eastern Gate House, 119 Newmarket Road, Cambridge CB5 8HA T:01223 367733 office@saundersboston.co.uk		The Generator, The Gallery, King's Wharf The Quay, Exeter EX2 4AN T:01392 348627 www.saundersboston.co.uk			
SBA Project Code 1789		Drawn TZ	Date 02/12/20	project 1789-SBA-PP-XX	
Checked CW		Suitability Code S2	Scale 1 : 500 @A1		Revision A

Client	Job	Drawing
GLL	Reading Palmer Park Sport Centre	Existing Site Plan

No.	Revision	Date	Chk	Auth
A	Issued for Planning	02/12/20	CW	TZ

4.4.4 Parking

The existing parking lies in two distinct zones:

- The main car park in front of the existing stadium building
- Overflow car parking located to the north of the stadium, and to the east of the George Palmer statue

Further overflow parking is created during events on a section of the parkland lying to the south of Palmer's Way.

The existing main car park is to be relined to provide a slightly new arrangement, and the existing overflow car park to the north will be retained but with reduced numbers. New car parking will be provided to the south of the existing through a mixture of permeable parking bays and tarmac access roads. This corresponds to the principles laid out in the development framework.

The main access road to the sports complex, new car parking and existing overflow car parking remains unchanged, off Wokingham Road via Palmer's Way. The flow from Palmer's Way will be laid out as follows:

- Coach access will be through a turning point located at the junction of existing parking / new permeable paved spaces. This will allow coaches to enter into the site, turn and park on a new parking bay back along Palmer's Way. This allows coach drop-off and parking away from the main car park, with passengers using an extended pedestrian crossing leading to an existing footpath taking people to the main entrance of the new facility
- Blue Badge and family parking spaces will remain in their current location, with direct access to the new pedestrian avenue in front of the existing building.
- Left turn into the main car park body
- Right turn to the new permeable parking bays.
- Overflow car parking will be accessed through the "shared" zone of the pedestrian plaza in front of the new building. This access will be carefully managed, with pedestrians being given priority.
- Careful consideration has been given to the surfacing around the George Palmer statue to clearly demarcate pedestrian priority here, and to enhance its setting.
- The above arrangements should keep the access road from Wokingham Road as clear as possible, minimising the risk of traffic backing up on to the Road

The development framework for Palmer Park identifies that the existing main car park in front of the stadium has 185 spaces (including 5 disabled spaces). The new parking numbers are as follows:

- Relined main car park:
 - o 49 no. standard bays
 - o 6 no. Blue Badge holder bays
 - o 4 no. family parking bays located by the Blue Badge bays
 - o 11 no. electrical vehicle charging bays opposite the Blue Badge / family bays
- New car park to the south of the main car park:
 - o 38 no. bays
- Overflow car park to the north of the stadium:
 - o 23 no. bays
- TOTAL number of parking bays will be 131 spaces
- There will be space for 2 coaches to park / drop-off along the southern edge of Palmer's Way.

All Blue Badge and family parking bays will be linked directly to the new pedestrian avenue being created in front of the existing building, leading to the main reception hub. This is an approx. distance of 50, and is lined with bench seating to offer resting places.

Cycle parking will be provided directly outside the existing stadium building, monitored from the new reception area. This parking will be on the pedestrian avenue with space for future parking available, if demand should dictate the need. New cycle parking numbers will be for 26 bicycles on 13 Sheffield stand. All of these stands will be covered.

4.4.5 External Lighting

Thornley and Lumb have produced a lighting strategy to support the Application for the new extension. The external lighting scheme will consist of the following:

- Lux Levels:
 - o designed to 10 lux average (Max 31lux – min 3lux) with an overall average uniformity of 0.4U_o which is out-performing the recommendations of BS EN 12464-2 of 0.25 uniformity for parking areas. Please see figure 32
 - o Individual areas colour coded and identified on drawing E801 with an overview of the average / min / max & Uniformity levels.
- Luminaire selection:
 - o directional optics minimising the impact of nuisance glare, overspill lighting, haze reduction & zero upward light.
- Back Spill:
 - o Luminaire consideration, lens optic selection & backlight spill shields reduces back spill with minimal impact on neighbouring surroundings.
 - o Lighting layout identifies contour lines at 1 and 2.5 lux respectively.
- Column Heights:
 - o 6m as standard
- Wall mounted Lights:
 - o 2/3m AFFL
- Palmer Park site specifics:
 - o particularly avoiding lighting the tree lined margins.
- Extent Of lighting:
 - o coverage of existing carpark, new car park, DDA, family & EV spaces, cycle racks, new seating areas, new walkway, coach parking pick up / drop off point, listed monument.
 - o NB: Existing 3 no 4m Lantern Columns lighting to access road, 8m column scheme to 3 no. outdoor MUGA pitches and 10/12m column scheme to the running track lighting all to be retained.
- Avoidance of UV lamps:
 - o Low intensity, Low UV emitting LED lamps (Warm White LED 3000k)
- Consideration of species such as bats:
 - o Yes, Designed in accordance with Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (produced by John Wenman)
- Design Overview:
 - o Careful consideration has been given to the immediate & surrounding environment. The external lighting scheme has been designed in accordance with Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, the relevant CIBSE Lighting Guide LG6 - (2016) The Exterior Environment, current British Standards, Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light GN01 (2020) and Society of Lighting Institute (SSL)
- Design Standards:
 - o The proposed external lighting installation shall be designed in accordance with the environmental zone classification E3 that is set out within ILE guidance for reduction of light pollution. The table opposite is an extract from the ILE guidance notes and sets out the environmental zone classifications for different environmental conditions. We have adopted the obtrusive light limitations for this external lighting installation as prescribed for an E3 classification. (See Figure 33)

- Control Measures:
 - o Central time controlled to ensure that the lighting installation only operates within the specified operating hours & Photo cell override controlled to prevent the lighting installation operating during the hours of daylight, thus conserving energy and minimizing carbon emissions.
 - o The external lighting design will not incorporate any luminaires that have aiming angles beyond the horizontal working plane.
 - o The design shall incorporate measures to prevent light spillage onto adjacent land - backlight spill shields.
- Compliance:
 - o Full compliance with Reading Borough Council Local Plan Policies:
 - CC8 Safeguarding Amenity
 - EN9 Provision of Open Space

Table 5.9 — Parking areas

Ref. no.	Type of area, task or activity	$\bar{E}_m$ lx	U_o –	GR_L –	R_a –	Remarks
5.9.1	Light traffic, e.g. parking areas of shops, terraced and apartment houses; cycle parks	5	0.25	55	20	
5.9.2	Medium traffic, e.g. parking areas of department stores, office buildings, plants, sports and multipurpose building complexes	10	0.25	50	20	
5.9.3	Heavy traffic, e.g. parking areas of schools, churches, major shopping centres, major sports and multipurpose building complexes	20	0.25	50	20	

Figure 32: Extract from BS EN 12464-2

TABLE 1 – OBTRUSIVE LIGHT LIMITATIONS FOR EXTERIOR LIGHTING INSTALLATIONS							
Environmental Zone	Sky Glow U.L.R [Max %]	Light into Windows E_w [Lux] (1)		Source Intensity I [kcd] (2)		Building Luminance Before curfew (3)	
		Before curfew	After curfew	Before curfew	After curfew	Average, L [cd/m ²]	Maximum L [cd/m ²]
E1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
E2	2.5	5	1	20	0.5	5	10
E3	5.0	10	2	30	1.0	10	60
E4	15.0	25	5	30	2.5	25	150

Figure 33: Environmental Zone Classification

4.4.6 Landscaping Statement

The proposed new leisure centre extension enhances the parks existing sports facilities and re-orientates the parking and statue surrounds to provide an opportunity for ecological improvements and pedestrian access requirements.

The new extension's footprint has utilised the existing parking and hard landscaping areas, this enables a minimal impact on the site's current landscaping and large specimen native tree species.

The proposed areas of landscaping have sympathetically retained existing key landscape features and trees/vegetation where reasonably possible and created opportunities for significant enhancements both visually and ecologically to its surrounding boundaries and parking areas.

The principle of the landscaping proposals will focus on integrating within the surrounding Palmer Park setting. The aim of the landscaping is to improve existing on the current parkland tree species whilst softening the proposed leisure centres façade within its proposed environment.

The proposed development has placed great emphasis upon new open sightlines and gathering points around the existing Lord Palmer statue and main entrance to the facility. The new plaza setting to the south of the statue will create an open access and gathering point with the proposed landscaping seeking to frame and enhance these areas whilst emphasising un-obstructed views on the Lord Palmer Statue. This reflects the stated aims of the development framework produced for Palmer Park.

Primary Objectives:

- Provide a visually incorporated landscaping approach to the existing / proposed building and grounds features, whilst focusing on open views of the Lord Palmer statue.
- Provide new landscaping environmental enhancements and functional pedestrian facilities to its surrounds.
- Retain key landscape feature trees, and vegetation to soften its impact on the surrounding landscape.
- Retain and improve access for major events or grounds maintenance vehicles to the site.
- Provide low maintenance seasonally interesting landscaping features integrated around car and coach parking areas.
- Retain and improve views with additional tree planting, in keeping with a parkland environment.
- Provide landscaping that facilitates pedestrian connectivity throughout the site.
- Provide access to cyclists with secure parking.
- Provision of seating/gathering locations to plaza and café areas.
- Provision of environmental enhancements or features within the existing and proposed vegetation.

Landscape Strategy:

- The new pedestrian pathway approach from Palmer Park Avenue will provide an opportunity to increase the avenues of native trees within the park setting increasing its carbon environmental offset potential and providing a direct framed view of the existing Lord Palmer statue.
- The proposed car and coach parking extension to the south of the existing car park will consist of two types of parking surface utilising new environmentally friendly parking surface materials.
- The proposed parking extension to the south will also benefit from an overflow informal parking area to the west and this will benefit parking congestion during busy periods in the summer months.
- The new parking extension will provide restricted pedestrian access using a new hedgerow and line wire support fence. This will also help to reduce its visual impact within the parkland setting, creating filtered views from the park.
- The existing Palmer Park stadium facility will be provided with rejuvenated landscaping planting beds and hard landscape features with specimen trees to soften and incorporate its façade within the parkland setting, provision for cyclists and pedestrian seating will be provided for respite purposes.
- The front of the proposed leisure centre extension will benefit from an open plaza area with seating locations strategically placed to provide gathering points for pedestrians or space to hold events around the sports centres main entrance. The landscaping within this location will seek to provide some screening to the windows of the proposed pool area whilst providing minimal impact on the views to Lord Palmer statue and main entrance.
- New fastigate form dense crown trees will provide some softening of the building's façade above eye level with ambient shading potential for both the building and pedestrian areas.
- The Lord Palmer statue area will benefit from new seating locations, specimen trees of seasonal interest and shrubs with bulb planting to provide a communal space that encourages pedestrian gathering or meeting locations within the park setting.

4.4.7 Landscaping Proposals:

The New Pedestrian Pathway Approach From Palmer Park Avenue:

- Pathway to be lined with an avenue of native trees in keeping with its local surrounds.
- New trees with upright or fastigate growth habit, semi - mature form 16-18cm girth

Car Park Areas Soft Landscaping:

- Expanse of hard landscaping to large car park to be softened.
- Suitable 'fastigate form trees' 16-18cm girth planted to locations shown
- Single species hedges to car park perimeter: 10ltr stock, 40-60cm high, with protective line wire support system.
- Ornamental planting 3ltr stock at high density of 6 no. plants per m²
- Ornamental bark mulch finish to all planting areas.

Ecological Considerations:

As described in John Wenman Ecological Appraisal August 2019, allowances given to:

- Use British Native woody tree species
- Dismiss use of invasive snowberry

Car Park Areas Hard Landscaping:

- Expanse of hard landscaping to car park to be an informal parking surface such as Tobermore Turfstone seeded with grass finish
- Product type Concrete Paving Block
- Manufactured to BS EN 771-3: 2011
- Surface Finish Low Maintenance Grass Seed Mix

Overflow parking area:

- There is a need for overflow parking during summer months for event parking.
- The surface of grass would need to be reinforced using heavy duty grass protection mesh to create an informal parking zone.

Pedestrian Area To West Of Existing & Proposed Building:

Planting Proposals To Soften Appearance Of Building And Hard Landscaped Areas:

- Trees in hard landscaping with 1.2 x 1.2m Tree grilles design T.B.C
- Tree pit volume subject to species of tree chosen
- Tree locations to be checked against proposed and existing underground services to avoid conflicts and positioned, as necessary.

Planting To Either Side Of Paved Area And Ends Of Parking Bays:

- Low level ornamental ground cover planting: 5ltr stock at high density of 4 no. plants per m²
- Larger specimen plants at intervals: 10ltr 60-80cm height
- Low growing hedge to rear of proposed bench seating.

Seating Area To Southwest Of The Existing Building:

- Some seating benches will be provided to ends of the parking bays & next to the proposed cycle stands.
- Seating to be the same timber as the cladding to the new extension canopy soffit with the RAL colour of the metal feet to match the cladding of the proposed extension.

Existing Hedgerow To The West Of The Car Park:

- The existing hedge will be pruned into sections to allow for transition points for pedestrians.
- Prune gaps in the existing hedge to ground level approx. 2m width and finish with bark mulch
- Rationalise existing hedgerow to an A shape form and remove deadwood.

Existing Trees – Generally:

- Impact of the development on the existing trees needs to be considered
- BS5837:2012 Tree Survey + Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been carried out and accompanies this Application.
- The above report assesses the impact of the development on the existing retained trees in relation to the proposed development. Please refer to separate Report for details.

Seating Area To Plaza Area Of The New Building:

- Proposed timber seating
- Timber robust street benches.
- Seating to be the same timber as the cladding to the building.
- The RAL colour of the metal Feet will match the cladding of the proposed building.
- Possible location for small children's play area (to be confirmed with RBC / GLL).

Lord Palmer Statue Area:

- Mixed native bulbs
- Bulbs planted side of avenue to create seasonal colour display from spring to autumn
- Proposed new semi mature trees
- Proposed timber benches
- Bulbs planted side of avenue to create seasonal colour display from spring to autumn.

4.4.8 Compensatory Tree Planting:

A tree survey and arboricultural impact assessment has been produced in Nov. 2020. This identifies that one category “B” tree and seven category “C” trees are to be felled to achieve the proposed layout, with another 6 trees of low quality (potential health & safety risk) to be felled as part of the development.

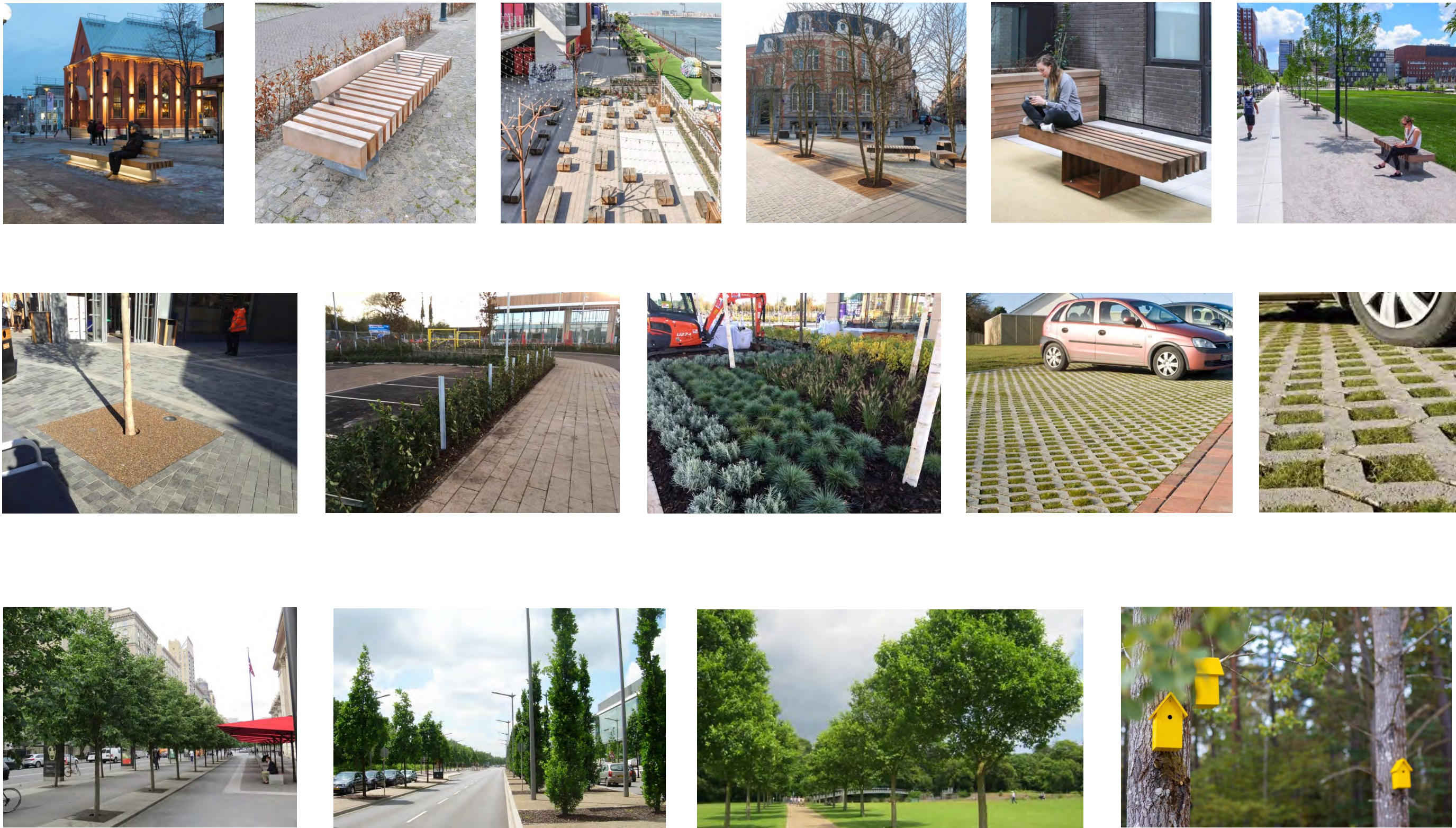
The loss of these 14 no. trees to allow the construction of the new extension will impact on biodiversity of the site. However, the intention is to plant trees at over a 2:1 replacement planting strategy along the main entrance pathway, around the George Palmer statue and the remaining around the car parking / access road.

Exact tree numbers will be confirmed in a planting schedule to be produced at the next design stage.

It is intended that the new leisure centre will be visible to park users and encourage people to use the building – the new tree planting will frame the south-western elevation and will continue into the new pedestrian plaza.

Suitable fastigated species will be specified for all new trees to ensure the building is not screened from view. Further planting has been proposed within the proposed car park to break this area up visually.

4.4.9 Landscape Precedent Images



4.4.10 Hard Landscaping

Hard landscaping has also been included as follows:

- The new internal roads leading from the access road off Wokingham Road
- Car parking bays and pedestrian footpaths / public plaza are to be in concrete paving as part of the sustainable urban drainage strategy (SUDs), and for BREEAM.
- There is potential for certain parts of this surfacing to be substituted with open cell type pavers as part of the SUDS strategy for the site. This could be the new south section of the car park in open parkland. This will be dependent on further investigation on car and coach tracking exercises / analysis, and the subsequent loading o the road surface.
- There is also the potential of using coloured tarmac within the car parking areas to distinguish certain sections of footpaths from the rest of the car parking zone and consequently raise the awareness of the drivers and the safety of the pedestrians. These will be mainly for pedestrian crossings
- Paved areas are included around the perimeter of the building for both pedestrian access and for maintenance.
- An outdoor paved area for staff will be included along trackside to the north east of the rear elevation, directly outside of the main stair core. This will allow access for staff in the building to easily use this seating, located at the junction with the existing grandstand seating.

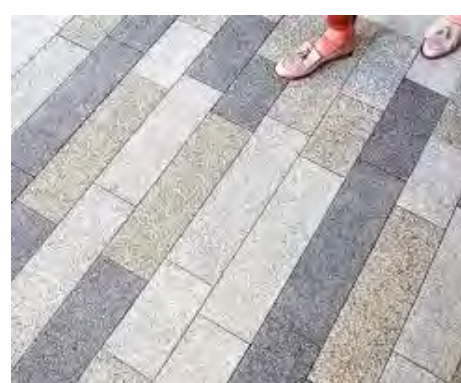
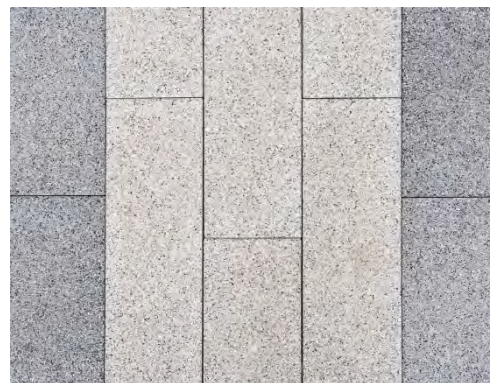


Figure 34: Precedents for hard landscaping and paving by AG

4.5 Drainage

Surface Water Drainage:

The surface water discharge from the new leisure centre will be made up from run-off from the following elements of the development:

- Building roof area
- Paved areas around new development (permeable concrete paving)
- Access roads (tarmac)
- Car parking bays (permeable concrete paving)

Furness Partnership, in their accompanying drainage strategy, have considered discharge of surface water in accordance with the Ciria SuDS Manual discharge hierarchy as follows:

- A soil investigation report by Soils Ltd included soakaway tests and advised that infiltration to the gravel layer is feasible
- As such, the use of soakaways can be used as the main surface water strategy.
- Furness Partnership are proposing that surface water drainage will be to a new 30 x 10 x 1.2m deep cellular soakaway situated 1m below ground level in the new car park area.
- Existing retained hardstanding and car park areas will continue to drain to the existing drainage network.
- Furness Partnership have also concluded that small areas of low risk car parking can be drained into areas of permeable paving, providing the 2-stage treatment required to remove pollutants prior to discharge, in accordance with Environment Agency and Ciris SuDs Manual Guidance.
- Furness Partnership have confirmed that the design criteria for the surface water drainage design will be:
 - o 1 in 100 yr + 40% climate change
 - o Infiltration rate at soakaway to be min. 1×10^{-5} m/s

Foul Drainage:

New foul drains will be provided to serve all foul producing appliances within the proposed leisure centre. These foul drains will be designed in accordance with BS EN 752:2008, to discharge into the existing foul sewers that connect to the Thames Water network. These existing foul sewers will be refurbished where required. The new foul drains will be subject to Thames Water approval.

The swimming pool within the new extension will contain a suitably sized backwashing facility which will have a separate foul network prior to connecting to the main extension foul drainage. It is proposed that the trade effluent network flow will be limited to 6 l/s subject to a Trade Effluent Notice being agreed with the chosen retailer and Thames Water. Any excess trade effluent will be stored within a backwash tank prior to making a connection to the foul network.

4.6 Accessibility

The proposed new extension will be DDA Compliant, with links through to the existing stadium at first floor, allowing full access to the existing building as well. The intention is for all users and staff alike to be able to use this enhanced facility irrespective of their age or ability. Presentation of the scheme, and measures below, was held with Reading's Access and Disabilities Working Group on 5th March 2020.

All areas of the new extension will be designed to meet the requirements of Building Regulations, in compliance with Approved Document Part M Volume 2 2015 (Access and use of buildings other than dwellings), with the design also referencing:

- BS 8300 (design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people)
- Sport England's Design Guidance Note, Accessible Sports Facilities 2010
- Dementia Friendly – Environmental Assessment Tool (from Swim England).
<http://www.swimming.org/>

An accessibility strategy has been produced for the scheme, described as follows:

- Well-lit level footpaths through to the main entrance, with dropped kerbs and blister paving where required. Resting benches will be provided no more than 50m apart along these routes to the entrance.
- 10 dedicated accessible car parking spaces
- Drop-off points with dropped kerbs right outside the main entrance
- Level access into the building through the main reception
- The new extension will be also be linked to the existing stadium at first floor with an accessible-compliant ramp allowing for any level changes.
- Level access within the existing stadium is retained, with an existing 8 person lift to first floor and a platform lift from first floor to top of grandstand seating
- Level access from fire escape routes around the building
- Automatic entry doors within the lobby area
- Clear circulation widths suitable for wheelchair users.
- Induction hearing loops and dropped counter sections will be included at the concierge and server counters
- Accessible toilets are included for off the main reception area at ground floor, and off the circulation hub at first floor, by the dry change areas
- 1 no. 8 person minimum lift is included in the new extension
- Pool water access will be a mixture of shallow accessible steps into the main pool, with handrails either side, and via Poolpod wet side wheelchair lifts
- All stairs (access and escape) will be designed to be accessible for ambulant disabled, with wheelchair refuges to be included at the head of each fire escape stair.
- Visual contrast will be allowed for in terms of wall / floor finishes and leading edges of doors and ironmongery
- A detailed review of Swim England's Dementia Friendly design guidance will be undertaken at the next workstage to ensure that the new extension is Dementia Friendly
- Brail Signage will also be allowed throughout the scheme.

- Accessible changing facilities (all detailed to Sport England Accessible Facilities Design Guidance note) include:
 - o Village change (wet area):
 - a Changing Places room
 - accessible changing cubicle
 - accessible WC cubicle
 - ambulant disabled WC cubicles within toilet blocks
 - ambulant disabled shower cubicle within shower block
 - drop down seat to pre-swim shower area
 - o Dry change:
 - 1 nos. accessible changing cubicle (first floor)
 - drop down seats to shower areas (first floor)
 - two rooms within the existing stadium building at ground floor will be converted into 2 no. accessible changing rooms

Special attention will also be made to:

- Floor finish specification
- Proposed colours
- Tactile surfaces

4.7 Site Access

4.7.1 Cars

Cars will access the site off Wokingham Road retaining current access arrangements to the site.

4.7.2 Servicing Access

Service access for the new centre will continue to be via the existing access road off Wokingham Road.

A new shared zone will be created through the new pedestrian plaza in front of the new extension. Priority will be given to pedestrians, with traffic access carefully managed and timed to avoid busy periods. This will allow service access to the plantroom and chemical stores. This will also provide access for plant replacement / lay down areas, and ambulance access to the pool hall first aid room.

Consumable deliveries to the new centre (e.g. food etc.) will also be from the main car park.

The existing substation to the south of the existing stadium building centre will be retained, lying off the emergency access route to the cycle track / athletics field.

4.7.3 Emergency Access

Fire tender (pump) access will be available along 15% of the new centre's perimeter, along the west and north elevations. Pump access will also be made available to the east elevation by allowing pumps to the overflow car parking to the north.

The pool hall first aid opens out onto the northern overflow car parking, as described above. Ambulance access will also be maintained to the southern side of the existing stadium, allowing access to the athletics' facilities.

4.7.4 Pedestrian / Cycle routes

A new footpath / avenue will be created leading from Palmer Park Avenue to the south, all the way up to George Palmer's statue. This will create new pedestrian access from the south of the site. Other footpaths will be retained, with the footpath leading to George Palmer statue from the north slightly realigned to improve the statue's setting.

Cycle parking will be provided outside the existing stadium building, on the footprint of the demolished entrance foyer.

4.8 Site Waste Disposal Strategy

4.8.1 Bin Store

The bin store for the new extension is proposed to be located within the overflow car park to the north west of the new building. This has been deliberately sited away from the building to allow access to plantroom and chemical stores.

The bin store is located within an existing section of car parking, accessed by the shared zone of the pedestrian plaza. The timing of refuse lorries will need careful management to minimise removals during busy periods. Turning circle for the refuse lorry will be within the existing car parking.

It is anticipated waste will be taken from the kitchen area in the entrance hub, through to the rear elevation via the stair core. The waste will then be taken along the northern elevation facing onto the athletics field to the bin store, avoiding the general public.

The bin store has also been located away from the main building for fire precaution purposes.

This bin store will be enclosed in a robust enclosure and roofed over to further minimise vermin access to the bins, and for security purposes.

The minimal size of this store will be 15m² and will have space for separate recycling bins.

This store will also be provided with a tap for wash down purposes.

4.8.2 Refuse Lorry Route / Tracking

The bin store for the new leisure centre will be accessed by a refuse lorry. Hydrock, as transport consultants, have produced a route through the new pedestrian plaza and on into the existing overflow car parking. Tracking diagrams have also been produced to show how this lorry will manoeuvre by the bin store for collections. Both of these are included within the accompanying Transport Assessment.

4.9 Building In Operation

4.9.1 Staffing

Staffing levels (existing and proposed) are as follows:

- Existing:
 - o 10 full time
 - o Approximately 50 flexible workers with hours dictated by season, activity programming and business needs
- Proposed:
 - o 13 full time
 - o Approximately 50 flexible workers with hours dictated by season, activity programming and business needs

Staff deployment will be reviewed regularly in line with industry trends & guidance and changing technology.

4.9.2 Hours Of Operation

Proposed hours of operation will be as follows:

- Monday to Thursday: 07.00 to 22.30
- Friday: 07.00 to 21.30
- Saturday and Sunday: 09.00 to 18.00

GLL and Reading Borough Council will review opening hours on an annual basis (or more frequently if required) based on industry trends and changes in demand. In addition, both seasonal and activity specific opening hours will be reviewed as and when required.

4.9.3 Existing Stadium Facilities

The current stadium and supporting facilities (changing rooms etc.) will continue to be available to the current local sports clubs and organisations, with pedestrian access to the stadium predominantly coming via the new reception/hub area.

Cycle and emergency access to the athletics field and cycle track will be on the south-west of the existing stadium with access direct to the track through a re-configured vehicle entrance

On certain match/competition days there may well be dedicated stewards / marshals providing separate entry/exit points as required on an event-to-event basis, but the new reception/hub area will be the primary access route.

Teams using the external football pitches will be able to use a separate dedicated access point that leads directly back to their allocated changing room within the stadium.

4.10 Security

Final exit / entry doors have deliberately been limited within the design, in order to improve security of the external elevations. The following are the anticipated doorsets within the external elevations:

- Main entrance doors
- Fire escape doors from:
 - o Pool hall (tbc)
 - o Ground floor circulation
 - o Village change (tbc)
 - o Escape stair

Other external doors include:

- First aid room access
- Chemical store access doors
- Plantroom access doors

Existing stadium external doors include:

- New fire escape door to main elevation
- Cycle store
- Internal circulation access / escape door

Proposed CCTV coverage will cover the following areas:

- Building Entrances
- Circulation routes (internally)
- Building Perimeter
- Car Park (also replicating existing regime of automatic number plate recognition and free use for a set period of time)

This CCTV installation will be monitored from the manager's office located within the existing stadium building, with the ability for remote connection to also monitor the system offsite. Switches, hard drives etc. will be located within a dedicated CCTV rack, location to be confirmed.

5.0 CONSTRUCTION

Minimising disruption and ensuring continuity of leisure provision is an important driver for the Reading Borough Council. It is often the case where if a leisure centre is closed for development that members will go to other facilities and not return.

5.1 Phasing

There are a number of constraints associated with construction of the new extension at Palmer Park stadium. These include protection of existing trees, protection of George Palmer statue, maintaining access for the sub-aqua club building to the north, maintenance access to the telecommunications mast and sub-station etc.

Construction will involve closure of the existing stadium to provide the alterations and refurbishments listed out elsewhere in this statement. Phase 1 of construction will involve creating temporary car parking to the south of the existing main car park. Phase 2 will consist of constructing the new extension, and refurbishment of the existing stadium. Phase 3 will involve planting, soft landscaping and widening Palmer's Way access road to create coach parking.

5.2 Site Set-Up

Phase 1:

Phase 1 will consist of hoarding off the south side of the main car park as shown in Appendix C. This will enclose the area required for the temporary car parking. Access into this enclosed parking area will be off Palmer's Way.

Existing access routes into the overflow car parking / sub-aqua club / telecommunications mast to the north, and to the substation to the south, will be retained / protected. This will also allow fire brigade access to the stadium.

Phase 2:

Phase 2 will consist of construction of the new extension, along with the demolition of the existing building's entrance foyer. The existing building will be refurbished, with new sections of roofing as well. The whole of the construction site will need to be hoarded off as shown in Appendix C. The main access into this compound will then be in the south-west corner of the hoarding line, directly opposite Palmer's Way. Site cabins will be sited on the main car park.

Safe access will need to be maintained to the following, detailed discussions to occur at the next detailed design stage:

- Athletics field
- Cycle track
- Substation
- Telecommunications mast
- Grounds maintenance / sub-aqua club building to the north.

The site compound will need to be large enough to allow both construction and demolition, and to enclose / protect the George Palmer statue. Further discussion will be required over safe and managed access for the above items, that may have to be through the site compound.

Public parking will be available in the temporary car park created in phase 1.

Phase 3:

Phase 3 will consist of site tidy-up, making the temporary car park permanent through installation of permeable paving, widening Palmer's Way to create coach parking, and finalising soft landscaping.

5.3 Construction Access

For phase 1, the contractor will need use Palmer's Way access from Wokingham Road to create the temporary parking area. This will be accessed from the entrance to the main car park.

The actual temporary parking zone will also require a secure perimeter line (Heras fencing). This hoarding line will be kept as close as possible to the boundary of the parking, in order to minimise impacting the surrounding parkland.

During phase 2, the existing building will be closed, and hoarded off from the general public. This hoarding line will follow the boundary of the main car park, around George Palmer statue, and the northern overflow car park. Vehicle access to the construction compound will be from Wokingham Road via Palmer's Way.

The temporary car parking will be retained.

With phase 3, the new car park will have been installed and in operation. The works at this phase will be small-scale, not requiring site compounds / fencing. Temporary measures will be put in place where required to complete the works.

5.4 Construction Waste

The separation and disposal of waste during the construction phase will be the responsibility of the contractor. They will be required to produce a CSWMP (contractors site waste management plan) highlighting how they control and segregate the different types of construction wastes and how they intend to dispose of it.

Cut and fill exercise. This is currently being reviewed and will be implemented in detail at the next design stage. The construction of the new extension itself will generate a volume of excavated spoil (piling, foundations, and pool tank). The intent is to potentially re-use this spoil (subject to contamination tests) elsewhere within the Park. It is intended to minimise this off-site disposal of excavated material through using this material for landscaping purposes where possible. Further discussions will be scheduled with Reading Borough Council over possible locations within the Park.

A Discovery Strategy should be implemented by the contractor for the proposed development during demolition and excavation phases. In the event of finding contaminated soil the contractor needs to report this to the Local Authority and notify a third party environmental consultant. All members of the workforce on site need to be aware of this strategy.

Re-use of excavated material on site needs to follow EPR guidelines or follow the CL:AIRE voluntary code of practice

6.0 SUSTAINABILITY

6.1 General Strategy and Sustainability Statement

One of the key aims of Reading Borough Council is to deliver sustainable development within the borough. The proposed leisure centre has been specifically designed to address this aim.

Ecoteric have been appointed as BREEAM and Energy Consultants for the project, and have produced a Sustainability Statement which accompanies this Application. This Statement references Local Plan Policies and Reading's Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document. This Statement is included in Appendix E.

The scheme uses the BREEAM Excellent requirement as a framework to deliver the required outcomes as outlined in these Policies and within the SPD. A Life Cycle Costing exercise has been undertaken allied to a Life Cycle Analysis model which looks at the Whole Life Cost of the construction options.

The Sustainability Statement covers a number of topics such as Energy Efficiency, Water Conservation and Flood Risk, sets out the measures included within the design to address these topics, and how these measures relate to the Local Plan Policies. Please refer to the Sustainability Statement for details.

6.2 Low Zero Carbon (LZC) Feasibility Study

A Low Zero Carbon (LZC) Feasibility has been produced by Thornley Lumb, incorporated into their Energy Strategy and within the Sustainability Statement by Ecoteric Consulting, in support of the proposals. This Energy Strategy is included in Appendix F.

The LZC Study details low energy design relating to energy and carbon emissions of the proposed development in Reading. This has been done through consideration of items such as sustainable low-carbon design, building envelope and fabric, analyses of decentralized energy and the use of renewable technology, and carbon emissions reductions energy.

The study concludes that the leisure centre development is a sufficiently low energy use sustainable development. The study also discusses the use of LZC equipment to obtain a 31% carbon reduction using dynamic simulation modelling (DSM).

The design has been assessed as having a 31% reduction in emissions from the Target Emissions Rate of 110.4 kgCO₂.m⁻² to 76.2 Building Emissions Rate kgCO₂.m⁻².

6.3 Energy Strategy

Thornley and Lumb have also produced an Energy Strategy to support the Application for the new centre. This strategy is included in Appendix F.

The Energy Strategy details aspects of sustainable building design relating to energy and carbon emissions of the proposed leisure centre. The building fabric first design philosophy and efficient building services analysis are combined with the available Low and Zero Carbon LZC technology to achieve a sustainable low energy use development and to exceed a BREEAM rating of 'Excellent'. Please see the Strategy for details of the methodology to achieve this.

The proposed extension has followed the Greater London Authority's (GLA) energy hierarchy to qualify the carbon emissions reduction targets have been met and has shown that the design is exceeding the target of a BREEAM rating of 'Excellent'.

The following measures have been incorporated within the design to achieve this rating:

- Low external element u-values
- Low air permeability
- Low energy LED lighting with lighting controls
- Metering of operational energy via BMS
- Mechanical ventilation with heat recovery
- Air Source Heat Pump ASHP space heating to Gym, Studios, Offices, Café, and associated areas
- High efficiency Air to Water CO₂ Air Source Heat Pump ASHP hot water services
- Solar Photovoltaic panels generating on site zero carbon electricity

The Energy Strategy also proposes an all-electric hot water services strategy. This is due to the adverse effect on local air quality proposed by decentralised or on-site combustion building services.

The Strategy concludes that the overall development's carbon emissions will be reduced 45% below the Part L 2013 baseline, and when assessing the development using current electricity grid SAP 10 carbon factors a carbon reduction of 72% is achieved. This confirms the effect of electrification of building services.

The energy hierarchy carbon reduction methodology has minimised energy usage, exceeding the target of a BREEAM rating of 'Excellent', with reduced carbon emissions of the proposed leisure centre to provide a sustainable low energy building. Inclusion of 11 electric vehicle charging bays will also contribute to reducing carbon emissions.

7.0 PLANNING

7.1 Planning Considerations

This section considers the planning policies and legislative framework, which together, provides the context against which the Application for the proposed new extension will be considered. A snapshot of the Local Planning Policies Map has also been included to illustrate those identified policies specific to the site and area. A summary of the relevant Planning History for the site has been included for information purposes.

Reading Borough Council's Local Plan was adopted by Full Council on 4th November 2019 and provides the detailed policies shaping development in the Borough in the period up to 2036. This Plan contains Local Plan Policies applicable to this site and project. These relevant policies have been separated into five main groups which are applicable to the design as follows and are explored in detail further on:

- Cross Cutting Policies
- Built and Natural Environment
- Transport
- Retail, Leisure and Culture
- Area Specific Policies (West Reading and Tilehurst)

Reading UK, the economic development and marketing company for Reading, has also launched a 2050 vision for the town as a smart and sustainable city by 2050. It is not a statutory document but provides a vision for all in the town to participate in and a context for the Local Plan and its policies. It will be the basis for influencing Government, stakeholders, investors and funders to support the Vision, and has informed both the design of the new centre and this Design and Access Statement.

It is also appropriate to consider Government guidance that will be a material consideration in the decision process.

7.2 Local Planning Policies Map

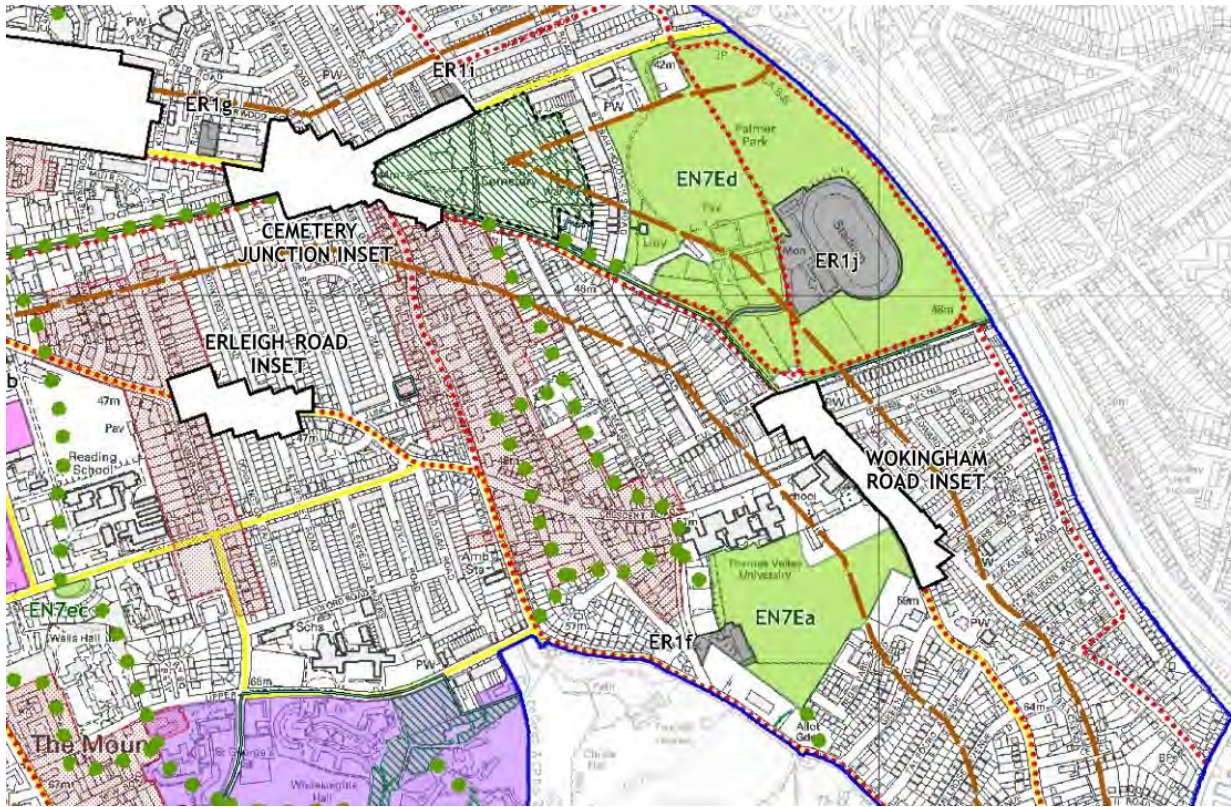


Figure 35: Planning Policies Map Extract

PROPOSALS MAP KEY



Figure 36: Planning Policies Map Key

7.3 Relevant Planning History

Following are the recent and relevant applications made for the site:

- **85/TP/871** – Redevelopment of existing stadium to provide new grandstand, grounds maintenance buildings and extension to existing bowls pavilion at Palmer Park, Wokingham Road, Reading – Approved 10/1/1986
-
- **95/00887/REG3 (950607)** - Erection of detached storage building. Installation of enclosed lobby to entrance to stadium. REGULATION 3 – Approved 22/1/1996
-
- **09/01248/REG3 (091758)** - Insertion of window openings to south-west elevation – Approved 15/9/2009
-
- **09/002214/FUL (090257)** - New clubhouse for Reading Athletic Club – Approved 9/2/2010
-
- **10/00488/NMC (100464)** - Non-material change to planning application 09/02214/FUL for alterations to windows – Agreed 7/5/2010
-
- **11/00707/FUL (110179)** - Erection of vent stack and temporary site access (drop kerbs), forming part of larger underground sewer improvement/replacement works which are permitted development – Approved 5/7/2011

7.4 National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

National planning guidance is available through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG). These documents aim to encourage high quality design and sustainable development.

The NPPF illustrates the Government's vision of sustainable development which should be interpreted and applied locally. The NPPF contains a number of general policies, which are relevant to the proposed development and introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Certain National Policies as noted within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF February 2019) are also relevant to these proposals. Some of those are included below:

7.4.1 NPPF 2 Achieving Sustainable Development

8. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of 'sustainable development', and sustainable development has a social role to provide accessible local services that reflect the community's needs.

- The proposed design of the new extension to the existing stadium building will achieve two of the three objectives under para 8 NPPF, these being the social and environmental objectives. The design incorporates the principle that sustainable development has a social role to provide accessible local services that reflect community needs. Leisure services will continue to be provided for the local community in the new enhanced facility.
- The proposals sit on the site of the existing car park, and will provide fit-for-purpose leisure facilities for the local community for over 15 years.
- Through this well-designed and environmentally sustainable proposal, the design will meet these two objectives of para 8 NPPF, as well as complying with the Palmer Park Development Framework

7.4.2 NPPF 8 Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities

92. The NPPF seeks to promote healthy communities with paragraph 92 emphasising the importance of the planning system "...to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs..."

97. In paragraph 97 the NPPF states that "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 recreation provision, the benefits for which clearly outweighs the loss of the current or former use."

- The new extension to the stadium building enhances and extends the range of facilities being offered to the public. As such there should be no overall loss of amenity in terms of building or land.
- Better designed facilities, incorporating flexible use of space, and an overall improved and efficient layout of these facilities, will result in an overall increase of amenity within the enhanced facility.
- A wider range of activities will be provided from the new extension such as swimming and the double height activity area.
- The enhanced facility will encourage the local community to participate in physical exercise and sports and therefore increase health and wellbeing and promote a healthier community, and will remain flexible enough to change for future leisure provision.

7.4.3 NPPF 9 Promoting Sustainable Transport

Section 9 of the NPPF notes that Planning Decisions should take account of whether opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site; safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people; improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development; and development should be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.

- The current centre is located on the outskirts of Reading town centre, and is easily accessible by foot, cycle paths and public transport routes (close to train station, bus station and stop). As the sports stadium already exists within the parkland of Palmer Park, these methods of transport are already well-established.

7.4.4 NPPF 11 Making Effective Use of Land

Under section 11 of the NPPF, local planning authorities are encouraged to support proposals that make more effective use of sites that provide community services, providing this maintains or improves the quality of service provision and access to open space.

- Creating a new extension to the existing stadium building will broaden the range of sporting activities available in Palmer Park, improving the service provision.
- Through building on existing car parking, access to the surrounding open space is not impeded. The scheme has substantial improvements to access routes to the parkland through the creation of new pedestrian avenue and plaza.

7.4.5 NPPF 12 Achieving Well-Designed Places

124. Paragraph 124 states that “Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development...” and recognises the importance of planning positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development. Decisions should aim to ensure that projects will; function well and add to the overall quality of an area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping; are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities); establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangements of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit; optimise site potential, create and sustain uses and support local facilities and transport networks; and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and wellbeing, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users, and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

- The new extension is to be located on a section of existing car park.
- The architectural language, detailing and materials have been used to create an exemplar project, sympathetic to its parkland setting and reflecting the requirements of the Development Framework for Palmer Park.
- Care has been taken to link all buildings on the site (new extension and existing stadium building) through a pedestrianised plaza area.
- The proposed centre will be of high quality design, providing a landmark building in the park. The design intent is to create a high quality building, capable of both addressing the existing stadium building and standing on its own in terms of visual appearance.
- Visual links through to the surroundings from the dry side activity zones, and through the building, linking internal spaces, have been deliberately introduced to make the scheme attractive and to encourage the general public to use the facilities by offering glimpses of the activities inside.
- Visual links are also created to the pool hall, allowing views into the hall from the central hub / seating area, and giving glimpses from a distance of swimming within.
- Outdoor seating areas are also included, creating active zones in front of the building.
- The proposed centre has been designed for all the members of the community, creating an inclusive environment. It promotes health and wellbeing and will encourage a healthier community.
- The building will be easily accessible by foot, cycling or public transport, encouraging the use of more sustainable means of transport.
- The proposed centre has also been designed to integrate with the parkland setting of Palmer Park with a well-thought through landscape strategy.
- Through exemplar design and use of sympathetic materials, and by keeping the massing to a two-storey building, the argument exists that the new proposals will meet the objectives of para 124 NPPF 12.

7.4.6 NPPF 14 Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change

Flooding and Coastal Change

155. Paragraph 155 of the NPPF directs inappropriate development away from areas at the highest risk of flooding, and that local Planning Authorities should not increase flood risk elsewhere.

- A flood risk assessment has been completed and will accompany and support this Planning Application.
- According to the report, the site is identified as having a low-risk susceptibility to flood from fluvial, tidal and surface water sources, and is located within Flood Zone 1.
- The development is classified as “less vulnerable” with respect to flood risk using Table 2 of the NPPF, without the need for an Exception Test.
- Less vulnerable developments are considered acceptable within Flood Zone 1, and the proposals are in accordance with the principles of the Sequential Test.

7.4.7 NPPF 15 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

170. Paragraph 170 of NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

- The landscape strategy and proposals have been designed to both preserve and enhance the natural environment.
- Various areas of new planting have been identified within the landscape strategy. These include:
 - o Around the George Palmer memorial statue.
 - o Around the face of the pool hall
 - o In planting beds in and along the perimeter of the relined main car park
 - o Along the new pedestrian avenue to Palmer Park Avenue
 - o South of Palmer’s Way
 - o South of the new permeable paved car park to the south of the main car park.
- Please see previous landscape section for details of these enhancements.

7.4.8 NPPF 16 Conserving And Enhancing The Historic Environment

185. Paragraph 185 of the NPPF encourages a strategy to be developed for conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. This can be achieved through new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

- The proposals at Palmer Park include reinstatement of the ‘heart’ of the park around the George Palmer monument and public plaza in front of the new extension, making the new swimming pool a desirable destination.
- This also re-establishes the monument as a focal point of converging routes and axes, with new landscaping and pedestrian avenue from Palmer Park Avenue now leading to the monument.
- The historic route through the Park running from north to south is recreated by the new tree-lined pedestrian avenue leading from the monument to the Palmer Park Avenue on the south of the park.
- All of these reinstate certain elements of the historic environment of Palmer Park, and meeting the aims of this section of the NPPF.

7.5 Other National Policies and Guidance:

7.5.1 Sport England Strategy 2016-2021 and Onwards:

Sport England's vision for everyone in England regardless of age, background or level of ability is to feel able to engage in sport and physical activity. Some will be young, fit and talented, but most will not. Sport England recognises the need for a sport sector that welcomes everyone – meets their needs, treats them as individuals and values them as customers.

This strategy is in the process of being revised, to be published early in 2021. This strategy will focus on the following major themes, all of which the design of the new centre will address:

Recover and reinvent

- o Recovering from the biggest shock to the status quo in a lifetime, Covid-19, and reinventing as a vibrant and sustainable network of organisations providing sport and physical activity opportunities that meet the needs of different people.

An active life for a healthy life

- o Strengthening the connection between sport and physical activity and health and wellbeing, to enable more people to live an active life so they can live and age well.

Positive experiences for children and young people

- o Unrelenting focus on positive experiences as the foundations for an active life.

Strengthening communities

- o Focusing on sport and physical activity's ability to create greater community development and social integration.

Active environments

- o Creating the places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active.

7.5.2 Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Single Departmental Plan (2019):

DCMS published their Single Departmental Plan June 2019. This plan acknowledges that culture, media and sport enriches community lives and helps make Britain unique. Wherever people live in the country and whatever their background, DCMS promotes the want to be able to enjoy and participate in these sectors.

The driving remit of DCMS is the government's long-term economic plan to build a stronger, more competitive economy and secure a better future for Britain. DCMS accounts for just 0.18% of total central government spending yet the above sectors contribute 16% of the total Gross Value Added to the UK economy. Central to this will be the DCMS work throughout the country to support the creative industries, digital economy, intellectual property rights, soft power, sport and tourism. This is reflected in their following objectives:

- Support people of all ages to thrive, connect with each other, and give back to their communities, including a commitment to using Office for National Statistics' recommended measurement package as government's standard way of measuring loneliness (contributes to SDG 10)
- Increase participation in, engagement with and access to sport and physical activity (contributes to SDG 10)

The new leisure centre extension at Palmer Park will align with both the wider Sport England and DCMS strategies to promote wider participation in sport and healthy lifestyles, and will start addressing the growing priority of loneliness. The location and accessibility of the new enhanced facilities to all (embedded throughout the design) supports these objectives within an area historically recognized as being for sport and leisure, and which is intended as the same use for the local community for years to come.

7.6 Reading Borough Council Local Plan Policies:

Relevant policies to the site and proposed development can be split into those found within the various chapters of Reading Borough Council Local Plan published in November 2019.

7.6.1 Cross-Cutting Policies:

The first set of policies applicable to the site are those applicable to the whole of Reading. These include the following:

CC1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development:

- o The Council will take a reasonable and positive approach to any development proposals that reflect the resumption in favour of sustainable development as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- o As noted in section 6.4 National Planning Policy Framework above (item 6.4.1), the proposals meet two of the three key objectives for sustainable development, namely the social and environmental objectives. This is through continuing to provide accessible local leisure services to the local community, on a site currently in the same use.

CC2: Sustainable design and construction:

- o This Local Plan policy calls for sustainable design and construction to reduce climate change, and trying to achieve zero carbon development by the Council's target date of 2030.
- o Whilst E(d) (Indoor sport and recreation) planning class use facilities are not explicitly stated within this policy, GLL are committed to achieve BREEAM Excellent for the new extension to the stadium building.
- o This intent is also reflected in the Pre-Application Report for this development, where it has been noted that an initial pre-assessment document has already been submitted for obtaining BREEAM Excellent accreditation.

CC3: Adaptation to climate change:

- o This policy dictates that all developments will demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. With the new development these measures will include:
 - use of renewable forms of energy such as solar thermal for heating water and photovoltaic panels
 - energy saving measures such as CHP, fabric upgrades to improve environmental performance (including triple glazing), use of LED lighting
- o The proposals have also been designed in order to utilise natural ventilation for the main reception hub
- o Solar shading has been provided for large areas of glazing through the use of external brise soleil
- o Careful selection and location of planting along the new pedestrian avenue and within the pedestrian plaza will provide shading of external amenity areas.
- o A surface water drainage scheme has been designed to minimise surface water run-off.
- o Further details are included in the Energy Strategy by Thornley Lumb and the Sustainability Statement by Ecoteric, accompanying this Application.

CC4: Decentralised energy:

- o With any non-residential development of over 1,000m², the inclusion of decentralised energy provision should be considered within the site, unless it can be demonstrated that the scheme is not suitable, feasible or viable for this form of energy provision.
- o The opportunity to investigate decentralised energy has also been encouraged in the Pre-Application Report.
- o As noted in the accompanying Energy Strategy, Reading Borough Council have commissioned studies for decentralised energy schemes within the borough and have identified the most suitable locations.
- o The leisure centre is not in one of these areas and hence will not be able to connect to a district energy centre.
- o The Energy Strategy recommends that on-site LZC is the best method of reducing carbon emission from the enhanced facility, with the proviso that this decision is to be made once a heat network is available, and the annual carbon emission of the network can be calculated.
- o This analysis should take the form of a lifecycle cost analysis and balance the lifecycle costs with the annual carbon emission calculations to determine the most sustainable method of providing hot water services

CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage:

- o This policy calls for demonstration of measures to minimise the generation of waste in the construction, use and life of buildings
- o Cut and fill analysis of excavated spoil (depending on contamination testing) will minimise the amount of spoil taken off-site and disposed of.
- o Detailed analysis of the functional adaptability of the new extension is currently being undertaken through section Wst 06 of BREEAM.
- o This highlights items such as the following:
 - the building can be adapted for future uses
 - ability for expansion of the building
 - replacement of major plant
 - recycling of structure and cladding
- o The target is to achieve a BREEAM rating of “Excellent”
- o As such, careful consideration has been, and will continue to be given to, minimising waste.

CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development:

- o The Local Plan dictates, in this policy, that any new development must be at a scale, density and intensity appropriate to that level of accessibility.
- o The new building is an extension to the existing stadium building, will be located within the site of the existing centre, and will provide a better, more flexible leisure offering to the local community.
- o The new extension is of a similar height to the stadium, and has been designed to marry in with the existing stadium building.
- o Therefore, the new extension is of a scale suitable to the site, and to the existing building.

CC7: Design and the Public Realm:

- o This policy calls for high quality design of all new developments, responding to the local character of the areas in which it is situated.
- o New development should contribute to an improvement in the quality of the environment, being safe, inclusive and attractive and incorporating principles of sustainable development.
- o The addition of a well-designed extension to the existing stadium, the proposals will create a landmark building with active street frontage, encouraging views of the activities within the building.
- o This principle creates a place with its own identity and sense of place.
- o Designing a fully glazed, two storeys, reception hub also allows public legibility of the building, with the main entrance hub located closest to the access road.
- o The main entrance itself is highlighted by recessing the entrance, and framing it with both copper coloured cladding and timber brise soleil.
- o The design is also fully accessible to users.
- o Including flexibility of internal spaces and pool water, will allow the building to change and adapt over time, to reflect the leisure needs of the local community.

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity:

- o This policy is included within the Local Plan to ensure that any new development does not reduce the quality of the environment for others, particularly where it would affect residential properties.
- o A noise assessment of the proposals will accompany this Application, and will assess sound levels of the proposed plant.
- o It should be noted that all louvres have been designed away from the public face of the building, the south west elevation. This is the elevation closest to any surrounding residential properties, lying on Wokingham Road.
- o Large louvres have been designed to face onto the athletics field, facing on to the railway line.
- o A Construction Method Statement to highlight the measures to be taken to control the following during demolition and construction:
 - Dust, dirt and airborne pollutants
 - Noise breakout from the site
 - Pest control measures
- o As the complex site is in a sensitive location, a Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment / Heritage Statement will be submitted in support of the Application.

CC9: Securing Infrastructure

- o As the new centre will be constructed on the site of existing car parking to the north of the stadium building, there will be “minimal damage, loss and impact upon existing infrastructure and environmental assets.”
- o However, there will be certain commitments made by GLL to Reading Borough Council through the use of a section 106 agreement.
- o Discussions have been initiated with the Planning Authority on the heads of terms for the s106 agreement.

7.6.2 Built and Natural Environment:

EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

- o The George Palmer monument is a listed statue.
- o Care has been taken to improve its setting by keeping the new extension as far away from the statue as possible given the site constraints
- o A calm backdrop for framing the statue when viewed from the north has been created through the use of a high corner to the new extension, clad in a simple copper-coloured composite panel system
- o A Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment / Heritage Statement will be submitted in support of the Application.

END: New Development in a Historic Context:

- o A Development Framework for Palmer Park has been produced, analysing the historic context and sensitivity of the Park. This Framework calls for reinstatement of the heart of the park (pedestrian plaza) and the historic north-south route through the Park.
- o The new development respects and responds to the Framework with introduction of the pedestrian plaza, and the new tree-lined avenue linking through to Palmer Park Avenue to the south.
- o A Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment / Heritage Statement will be submitted in support of the Application.

EN7Ed: Local Green Space and Public Open Space:

- o As the proposed development will be located within designated Local Green and Public Open Space, this policy has to be taken into account, with any loss of space mitigated by equivalent replacement provision (in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility)
- o Minimal land has been lost to the development of the new extension, being the new car park introduced to the south of the existing. However, this area has been identified within the Development Framework as being for car parking, and care will be taken to detailing to ensure permeability of the surface.

EN10: Access to Open Space:

- o This policy is concerned with creating / improving access to parks and open spaces.
- o The new proposals involve recreating a north-south pedestrian avenue, linking the George Palmer memorial to Palmer Park Avenue to the south.
- o Improving the setting of George Palmer memorial is also key to the proposals with the existing northern footpath leading to the statue realigned.
- o These measures will improve public connectivity to both the enhanced facility and the surrounding parkland.
- o A Transport Assessment has also been carried out by Hydrock in support of the Application. This demonstrates further connectivity of the site in terms of car, cycle and pedestrian access.

EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network:

- o Opportunities to conserve and enhance are required through this clause to ensure that there is no loss of biodiversity, and to support the Green Network of Local Green Spaces and open green spaces.
- o An accompanying Ecological Appraisal supports this Design and Access Statement. This Appraisal notes key mitigation measures for the proposals will include vegetation protection/management, sensitive lighting, and sensitive removal of vegetation, fox dens and buildings. Key compensation measures will be the inclusion of bird, bat and bee provisions around the facility in the surrounding soft landscape. Landscape planting for the new leisure centre will consist of wildlife attracting native broad-leaved hedge and/or tree species.
- o Please refer to the landscaping layout and strategy for the site.

EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland:

- o This policy covers existing tree protection, retention and enhancement.
- o The new extension will involve the removal of a mature Alder (category "B") at the north-west corner of the existing stadium; along with a group of category "C" trees (catalpas and birch) to permit construction of the new extension.
- o The new landscaping scheme will involve the planting of over 2:1 replacement new trees, enhancing tree numbers on the site.

EN15: Air Quality:

- o This policy states that proposed developments should "have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality".
- o An Air Quality Assessment has been carried out by Syntegra, along with a Transport Assessment carried out by Hydrock. Both of these will be submitted in support of the Application.
- o The TA concludes that the new proposals, will generate fewer than one new vehicle movement every two-minutes in either direction (arrivals/departures) which dilutes further once on the local highway network.
- o The Air Quality Assessment concludes that there is a risk of:
 - Dust emissions during construction
 - Road traffic exhaust emissions from vehicles travelling to and from the site during operation
- o However, with good practice dust control measures, the risk of dust emissions during construction was predicted to be not significant.
- o An air quality assessment of road traffic emissions during operation is not required, using the IAQM indicative criteria. Therefore impacts on air quality are considered not significant.

EN16: Pollution and Water Resources:

- o This policy is concerned with development of land affected by contamination.
- o A site specific Contamination Statement will be produced, outlining the testing / re-use of excavated material.

EN17: Noise Generating Equipment

- o Noise control from a site which is faced by residential properties on three sides, and in such a sensitive location, is vital. This policy highlights those developments that will be permitted having careful consideration and control / mitigation of noise impacts.
- o Noise breakout from the centre will be minimised through detailed design of the main elevational enclosure, and by locating plant away from facing directly onto residential properties (i.e. through locating louvres onto the main railway line)
- o A noise assessment has been carried out by Syntegra and accompanies the Application.
- o This assessment concludes that plant noise at the site would not be expected to cause any adverse impacts on the health or quality of life of the nearest noise sensitive receptors (the residential properties on three sides), meeting the requirements of this policy.
- o The change in road traffic will result in a negligible change to noise levels.

EN18: Flooding and Drainage:

- o The site sits within Flood Zone 1 and a Flood Risk Assessment has been produced to address the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- o This Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out by Furness Partnership who have also produced a drainage strategy for the site.
- o Please see accompanying Assessment for details.

7.6.3 Transport:

TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy:

- o This clause calls for assessment of measures to promote and improve sustainable transport facilities
- o Hydrock, as transport consultants, have been engaged to produce both a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan to support the Application.
- o The TA concludes that the site is situated in a highly sustainable location benefiting from bus and rail services within walking/cycling distance.
- o The site is well connected by a network of existing pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, and offers a wide range of non-car transport opportunities for both patrons and staff.
- o It concludes that there are no significant highways or transportation matters that should impact on the local Planning Authority's decision.

TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities

- o The proposed development site is surrounded by a network of local on and off-road cycle routes which provide a link to local residential areas.
- o The R3 route is a locally signed cycle route connecting Newtown to the University of Reading Bulmershe Court, running through Palmer Park
- o Other local cycleways (including the R20 and the R30) provide connections to other parts of Reading.
- o As such there are continuous cycle connections provided from the site to the various surrounding residential areas.
- o All of these routes will be maintained and unaffected by the proposed development

TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging:

- o This policy, in combination with Reading Borough Council's Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document, guides developments in terms of parking provision and charging points.
- o The following are the overall car parking numbers to be provided in the car park at Palmer Park, and as assessed by Hydrock in their Transport Assessment:
 - 88 standard car parking bays
 - 6 dedicated Blue Badge parking bays
 - 4 family / toddler spaces
 - 11 electric vehicle charging points. There will be capacity to increase this number by extending supply to the other spaces as all spaces are close to the substation serving the site.
- o Existing overflow car parking to the north will be retained, but reduced in number to 23 standard parking bays.
- o Hydrock, in their Transport Assessment, have assessed levels of additional cycle parking at Rivermead to be 13 hoops, providing parking for 26 bicycles. All are proposed to be covered. This number also complies with the BREEAM standards

7.6.4 Retail, Leisure and Culture:

RL2: Scale and Location of Retail, Leisure and Culture Development:

- o This policy provides for up to 34,900m² of retail and related facilities in Reading to 2036, together with new leisure facilities.
- o The supporting text to this policy also identifies the need for swimming facilities in Reading, expected to be partly met at Palmer Park
- o As such, the new extension containing a community swimming pool complies with this policy.

RL6: Protection of leisure facilities and public houses

- o This policy supports the retention of existing leisure facilities.
- o As the new development at Palmer Park is for the extension of the existing stadium building, on the same leisure complex site, the proposals comply with this policy.

7.6.5 Area Specific Policies:

ER1J: Other Sites for Development in East Reading

- o This policy notes the need for additional leisure development for a new swimming pool at Palmer Park, so long as the proposals address the following:
 - car parking to be lost can be replaced on or off-site, or is no longer required
 - Ensure that there is no adverse impacts on the use of the park and its sport and leisure facilities
 - Ensure that there is no adverse impact on the listed monument and its setting
 - Take account of potential archaeological significance
 - Retain public rights of way across the site.
- o All of the above have been addressed by the proposals and described elsewhere in this Statement.

8.0 CONSULTATIONS

During the process to develop these proposals a number of consultation events have been held. These are listed out as follows.

8.1 Pre-Application Council Engagement

A Pre-Application submission was made to Reading Borough Council on 3rd February 2020. Three subsequent Pre-Application meetings were held on the following dates:

- 12th February 2020
- 26th February 2020
- 19th March 2020 (held by video conferencing)

Feedback from these meetings included:

- The principle of the development and use is acceptable
- The scheme presented at the time was considered to address many aspects of both the Local Plan allocation policy and the Palmer Park Development Framework.
- Further development of the design would be required in terms of creating active frontage onto the heart public space through further use of glazing, creating a more calmer backdrop through elevational treatment, and review of the north facing elevation
- High quality landscaping and a bio-diversity scheme would also be required, along with a means of some screening of the site from more sensitive areas, and to enable biodiversity enhancements

The current proposals have been amended in accordance with this feedback as follows:

- Internal design reviews have been carried out to compress the footprint of the new extension, bringing it closer to the stadium building.
- The setting of George Palmer statue has been improved through moving the new extension further away from the statue, new planting around the statue, and introducing pedestrian paving material around it.
- Elevations have been comprehensively redesigned to create more active frontage to the main elevation fronting on to the pedestrian plaza, through more glazing to the pool hall and reception hub.
- Elevation materials and volumes have been simplified with just one colour of cladding on the building. This will be copper coloured composite cladding, tying in with the red brick of the existing stadium building.
- A strategy for screening and reducing the visual impact of the new car parking to the south of existing has been carried out through use of careful location of low level planting. This will partly screen the area whilst not competing with the dominance of the park's perimeter tree belt.
- A detailed landscaping strategy has been produced which addresses the sensitivity of the site
- Bio-diversity of the site and surroundings has been assessed in the Ecological Appraisal Report produced by John Wenman Ecological Consultancy and which accompanies this Application.
- Biodiversity enhancements to be introduced to the project include:
 - Making use of native plant species of local provenance
 - Introduction of bird and bat boxes
- Please refer to separate Ecological Appraisal which accompanies this Application.

Pre-Application minutes are included in Appendix B.

8.2 Stakeholder Consultation

8.2.1 NGB and Sports Club Engagement:

Needs Assessment and Options Appraisal:

In 2015 the Council produced an Indoor Sports facilities strategy (Needs Assessment). This highlighted local strategic outcomes that will be delivered through a partnership with leisure providers and other key stakeholders. This strategy involved, and took into account, consultation with 89 individuals and organisations, including facility users, clubs, facility operators, council officers and National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs).

The strategy aims to deliver the following key objectives which have been identified as common themes following research and stakeholders consultation:

- Protect and maintain strategically important existing facilities;
- Improve access to meet demand;
- Provide new facilities;
- Improve viability of facilities.

Accompanying the needs assessment, an Options Appraisal was undertaken which identified the mix and locations that facilities should be provided. In addition to the needs assessment, support was provided by Sport England and information identifying levels of sporting/leisure provision was determined through their Facilities Plan Model which informed the 2015 options appraisal.

Following the report to RBC's Policy Committee in November 2016, clearly setting out the Council's intentions to upgrade the Borough's leisure facilities, a number of stakeholders communicated their aspirations for the quality and specification of new provision, including swimming, diving and basketball clubs. The aspirations of local clubs formed part of the information that bidders for the leisure provision contract received and subsequently considered in developing proposals.

Emerging Strategic Outcomes Planning Model:

Following on from this needs assessment and options appraisal, a Sport England Strategic Outcomes Planning Model was commissioned by RBC to set out exactly what outcomes the Council requires from letting of the leisure services contract in late 2020. As part of this strategic review, a number of NGBs and local sports clubs have been consulted. A list of these is included in Appendix G.

Consultation:

In addition to designing facilities to encourage participation in physical activity generally, to best meet formal sporting need, consultation was undertaken with individual NGBs as summarised below.

Swim England were notified of the new pool design through the Pre-Application consultation process. Feedback from this NGB included locating the entrance to the pool hall from the village change area at the shallow end of the pool. Swim England will be consulted during the next detailed design stage to ensure that the design complies with their recommendations.

The Football Association and England Athletics were also consulted during the Pre-Application process, with the FA having no comments to make. England Athletics have yet to respond. Both of these NGBs will be consulted during the detailed design stage following the Application.

Sport England, and their design advisors, will also be consulted over the detail of the design, especially on the design of the pool and surround. This is to ensure compliance with the various Design Guidance Notes published by Sport England.

8.2.2 Access and Disability Working Group:

Designs of Rivermead and Palmer Park leisure centres were physically presented to the Access and Disability Working Group on 5th March 2020. These designs were reflective of the schemes at that time, it should be noted that these projects have been developed further and have taken on board a number of items that were discussed at the presentation.

The accessibility strategy reflecting these discussions is described in detail in section 4.6 Accessibility and includes items such as the following:

- Well-lit level footpaths through to the main entrance
- 10 dedicated accessible car parking spaces
- Drop-off points with dropped kerbs right outside the main entrance
- Automatic entry doors within the lobby area
- Clear circulation widths suitable for wheelchair users, with sports wheelchairs being considered at the ground floor.
- Induction hearing loops and dropped counter sections will be included at the reception and servery counters
- Accessible toilets are included for off the main reception area at ground floor, and off the circulation hub at first floor, by the dry change areas
- 1 no. 8 person minimum lift is included in the new extension
- Pool water access will be a mixture of shallow accessible steps into the pool, with handrails either side, and via Poolpod wet side wheelchair lifts
- All stairs (access and escape) will be designed to be accessible for ambulant disabled, with wheelchair refuges to be included at the head of each fire escape stair.
- Visual contrast will be allowed for in terms of wall / floor finishes and leading edges of doors and ironmongery
- Brail Signage will also be allowed throughout the scheme.
- Accessible changing facilities (all detailed to Sport England Accessible Facilities Design Guidance note)

8.2.3 Statutory Consultees:

Statutory Consultees including Thames Water and the Environment Agency have been engaged during the Pre-Application process to ensure the principle of the proposed development is acceptable and to confirm compliance with the technical requirements that will be required on this site.

Details of their comments are included within the Pre-Application Report contained in Appendix B.

8.3 Statement of Community Involvement

In 2019 the Council commissioned the production of a Strategic Outcome Planning Model (SOPM). This Planning Model reinforces and updates the research and findings of the 2015 Facilities Strategy. The development of the SOPM involves three elements of consultation, online questionnaire, face to face interviews and focus groups and reflects the standards identified in the leisure service specification.

An on-line leisure survey was conducted in July and August 2019 to which there were 628 online survey completions. This research was designed to investigate attitudes and behaviour around physical activity and exercise in general. Further and more specifically, to find out the barriers to being active and what would encourage them to use Reading Borough Council leisure facilities in the future.

Interviews were also conducted within the centre of Reading. The sample was chosen to reflect the age, gender and occupational profile of the district as closely as possible and was selected as “those who have lived / worked in the area for at least 6 months”. These were conducted concurrently with the online survey.

In-depth focus groups were held with under-represented groups during October/November 2019 to identify particular service/ facility requirements that the preferred leisure service bidder will be expected to address. The results of these in-depth focus groups are listed out as follows:

8.3.1 Inactive Adults:

- Multi Sports Area – consider astro turf and MUGAs that could be used for multi-sport
- Incentives – The research shows that inactive Reading residents would be receptive and respond well to incentives to encourage them to use the leisure facilities e.g. focused discounts / price reduction
- Loneliness – the research revealed that loneliness and social isolation is often a factor preventing residents from being active. Help reduce loneliness and social isolation by introducing community activities
- Competition – the participants talked positively about how a limited amount of competitiveness in a physical activity would encourage and motivate them
- Volunteer Buddy scheme – a common theme in the research was that those questioned are inactive because they don't have somebody to exercise with. Consider a volunteer buddy scheme to help residents become more active. This has worked well in other areas for 50- age group
- Mixed Age Groups – the research indicated that some residents feel they get stuck in one age group e.g 60+. Opportunity to mix age groups and not pigeon hole people into one category

8.3.2 Older People:

- As the number of “older people” and lifespan increases it will be necessary to differentiate between different age groups within the 50 plus population, not just because of the age differences but also a variety of attitudes towards life and different levels of fitness/health
- Transport to leisure centres and other places where people can be active needs to be reviewed as the perception is that this is a strong barrier
- The perception of quality of provision needs to be addressed as this is currently putting people off even visiting and trying
- The whole experience needs to be considered when programming/planning for this group, for example how can we make it more social rather than functional

8.3.3 Disability:

- The reasons for inactivity in this group are even more complex than the general population, as transport, accessibility on site and personal support are quite often critical.
- A more specific approach to design and building in opportunities for people with disabilities is required
- The wide range of disabilities and special needs must always be born in mind.
- Consultation with and involvement by this group at an early stage could address many issues, for example, outdoor gyms being positioned in inappropriate places within parks
- There is a lack of awareness which means sometimes mainstream initiatives are introduced without thinking about how they could include people with disabilities e.g. walk a mile at school
- You Reading card – although a great scheme it has significant restrictions which inflict on its effectiveness; it can only be brought at the central library, heavily benefits those wanting to swim versus other activities (e.g. gym) and Rivermead is not suitable
- Cost – due to the requirements for assistance, financing an activity for both a child and their carer can be difficult, subsidies need to be available as specialist activities can be expensive
- Accessibility is one of the biggest factors which prevents involvement from disabled children as they are unable to enter the venue easily or find suitable parking facilities
- Parents of autistic children need safe and secure areas; for example, slide catchers on play area gates, fenced in areas are important to ensure safety of children and allow parents to relax
- Visual disabilities are often overlooked e.g. lots of bright colours used to engage children are ineffective, alternatives are not well explored

8.3.4 Physical Disability and Sensory Needs Network (PDSN):

- Support – need a lot of personal support to go places
- Accessibility at centres is very poor, more equipment needs to be adapted
- Cost – used to be more support available
- YRP – 75% awareness
- Cuts have defiantly had an effect
- Transport is always key
- Being on benefits related to my disability – I am worried about being seen as active as it may affect my benefits
- Need to find activity that I can build into everyday life
- Lack of interpreters for deaf people that want to use the leisure centres
- Need to be more signposted activities
- Need to allow for different levels of motivation
- Swimming – Changing rooms are bad & toilets as well, Pools have closed - Council boundaries things like YPR need to work across boundaries
- Communication has to be better between groups
- Lack of Gym staff
- Music – need to be appropriate
- Interpreters for classes with deaf people

8.3.5 Feedback and Design Development:

Following on from the initial design brief and design development site and building plans have been developed. These plans are to meet the key leisure outcomes, and address items from the public consultations / in-depth focus groups such as:

- improved transport links to the stadium (better disabled parking bay layouts and drop-off points)
- making the building more attractive and fit-for-purpose, addressing and improving quality of service provision
- including a large social area to encourage older users
- care has been taken to ensure that the centre is easily accessible, legible and easy to use for those with disabilities

An on-line planning exhibition is to be initiated due to current restrictions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic on access to those buildings where normally the exhibitions would be displayed i.e. the leisure centres. Once the leisure centres are able to re-open, displays of the design will be on view for users.

This will include a planning exhibition video on both GLL and RBC webpages with direct links to the planning portal for residents to leave comments on the design. A review of these comments will then be undertaken, with results fed back to the Council.

The Council and GLL are also intending to hold a club user group on-line session to brief clubs on the design detail to help explain the new facilities specific to their individual sports.

To ensure wide information of the designs, established social media channels will also be used (Twitter, FaceBook) to engage with residents and again providing the link to the planning documents to leave their comments.

It is anticipated that further consultation will occur with user and focus groups, such as the PDSN, the Access and Disability Working Group, and various NGBs / Sport England, as the design progresses through to the next, detailed design stage. The ultimate aim is to create a well-designed, attractive building, supporting the needs of the various stakeholders.

8.4 Conclusions

In conclusion, consultation with key stakeholders has been carried out as part of the work to develop the indoor sports facilities strategy, including a range of sports clubs and operators. This consultation has also involved the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA, now Swim England) and Sport England to ensure that lead governing bodies for a variety of sports have been able to directly influence the strategy and are confident that it reflects their interests and input.

The design of the new enhanced facility reflects this strategy, and further consultation will occur with the National Governing Bodies and Clubs over the design at the next stage.

The results from the online consultation will also be reviewed, and discussed in detail with the Council to reflect feedback received from the general public.

The new extension at Palmer Park stadium will secure significant improvements to the current leisure provision and will be a key driver in delivering a number of Council priorities and community outcomes. These include:

- Increased participation in physical activity by residents, including disadvantaged and inactive groups
- An outreach and engagement service to help to secure the Council's objective to improve health and wellbeing by increased physical activity
- Physical activity development programmes covering a wide range of sports and activities, above and beyond key commercial areas
- Improved sport and physical activities and targeted Sports Club programme
- Improved opportunities to promote local employment including new apprenticeships
- Exercise referral as part of the base specification for the service

This presents the Borough Council with an opportunity to create a step change in the quality and standard of the leisure offer available to residents and visitors to Reading and will support the Council's ambitions around public health and increasing participation in physical activity.

9.0 SUPPORTING SURVEYS, ASSESSMENTS & REPORTS

The following are surveys, assessments and reports produced to support the Planning Application for the extension and refurbishment of the existing stadium building at Palmer Park. These will be submitted as separate documents to this Integrated Planning, Design and Access Statement.

9.1 Air quality assessment:

- An Air Quality Assessment has been produced by Syntegra Consulting.
- The Air Quality Assessment concludes that there is a risk of:
 - o Dust emissions during construction
 - o Road traffic exhaust emissions from vehicles travelling to and from the site during operation
- However, with good practice dust control measures, the risk of dust emissions during construction was predicted to be not significant.
- These measures will be set out in the Construction Method Statement
- An air quality assessment of road traffic emissions during operation is not required, using the IAQM indicative criteria. Therefore impacts on air quality are considered not significant.

9.2 Contaminated land survey:

- An intrusive ground investigation has been carried out by Soils Limited.
- This ground investigation notes the following:
 - o Soil contaminants harmful to human health did not exceed those values set for Commercial or Public Open Space land use.
 - o No asbestos was found on site but if discovered during the works must be separated and disposed of using suitably licensed contractors.
 - o groundwater chemical analysis did not record any harmful substance concentrations in excess of the chosen groundwater screening values
 - o The results from the limited soil gas monitoring undertaken to date indicate a site gassing regime representative of CS1, for which no protection measures are required.
 - o A Discovery Strategy is to be implemented by the contractor. On finding any contaminated soil the contractor will report this to the Local Authority and notify a third party environmental consultant.
 - o Re-use of excavated material on site needs to follow EPR guidelines or follow the CL:AIRE voluntary code of practice

9.3 Ecological survey:

- A Preliminary Ecological Assessment has been produced by John Wenman Ecological Consulting.
- The Assessment recommends the following:
 - o Minimise tree and shrub removal where possible
 - o Any tree / shrub removal necessary for the development to be completed outside of bird nesting season (March to August incl.)
 - o Shrub clearance to be cleared using hand tools, to minimise impacts on mammals and reptiles
 - o Prevention of silt and pollution entering the drainage culvert, all to Environment Agency guidelines
 - o Action required to prevent spread of Japanese Knotweed through construction activities.
 - o Cotoneaster weeds to be removed from car park planting beds
 - o Retained tree and shrubs to be adequately protected during construction
 - o External lighting period to be controlled, light fittings to be directed downwards and bulbs to be low or non-UV type
 - o Encourage planting of native woody planting to enhance site bio-diversity
 - o Inclusion of bird and bat boxes
- A Bat Survey will be carried out of the existing stadium building PRIOR to refurbishment / demolition works commence, and PRIOR to construction of the new extension.
- Any demolition to be carried out either outside of bird nesting season (March to August incl.) or the building re-surveyed to ensure there are no nesting birds.

9.4 Energy efficiency statement:

- An Energy Strategy has been produced by Thornley and Lumb.
- This Strategy concludes the following:
- The building fabric first design philosophy and efficient building services analysis are combined with the available Low and Zero Carbon LZC technology to achieve a sustainable low energy use development and to exceed a BREEAM rating of 'Excellent'.
- The following measures have been incorporated within the design:
 - o Low external element u-values
 - o Low air permeability
 - o Low energy LED lighting with lighting controls
 - o Metering connected to BMS with auto monitoring and targeting of energy
 - o Mechanical ventilation with passive heat recovery MVHR
 - o Air Source Heat Pump ASHP space heating to Gym, Studios, Offices, Café, and associated areas
 - o High efficiency Air to Water CO² Air Source Heat Pump ASHP hot water services
 - o Solar Photovoltaic panels generating on site zero carbon electricity
- The Strategy concludes that the overall development's carbon emissions will be reduced 46% below the Part L 2013 baseline
- When assessing the development using current electricity grid SAP 10 carbon factors a carbon reduction of 72% is achieved

9.5 Environmental impact assessment screening:

- Gillings Planning have produced a Screening Opinion for an Environmental Impact Assessment for the new extension.
- The Screening Opinion analyses the proposals as follows:
 - o Characteristics of development:
 - The retained building and the extension will share very similar 'leisure' characteristics and functions, and the new enhanced leisure centre will benefit from a much-improved building that will provide the necessary floor space to optimise the use of the facilities by the community it serves.
 - The proposed development is of an appropriate scale in relation to the site and the surrounding area and would not give rise to significant environmental effects.
 - o Vehicle and cycle parking:
 - The proposals reflects a more sustainable modal shift away from the use of the private petrol/diesel motor vehicle and reflects the greater use of more sustainable travel options
 - The characteristics of the development are not considered to be likely to give rise to significant environmental effects.
 - o Location of development:
 - As the site lies within an established urban area and comprises a previously developed site, it is not considered that the site is sensitive and the location of the development is not likely to give rise to significant environmental effects.
 - o Types and characteristics of the potential impact:
 - The effects of the proposed development are not considered likely to extend beyond the immediate environs or be of a scale or complexity likely to give rise to significant effects on the environment.
 - o Conclusion:
 - The likely impacts of the replacement leisure centre on the same site are not considered to be significant and so it concludes that the proposal is not EIA development.

9.6 External lighting details:

- Thornley and Lumb have produced both a lighting impact statement and a site external lighting layout to support the Application for the new extension to the stadium building.
- This report confirms that the impact of the external lighting has been carefully assessed to ensure that the existing environment can coexist with the proposed new build extension.
- The external lighting installation for the development has been designed to ensure minimal impact on the immediate, neighbouring surroundings and beyond the boundary of the site.
- The proposed external lighting will consist of:
 - o 6m columns with LED luminaires
 - o LED wall mounted luminaires
- The external lighting, will be controlled via a time clock & Photo Cell daylight sensor
- Precautions have been undertaken at all stages of the design to mitigate the effect of the lighting installation.

9.7 Flood risk assessment:

- A Flood Risk Assessment has been completed by Furness Partnership.
- This Assessment's findings are as follows:
 - o The site is within Flood Zone 1
 - o As such there is little risk of flooding for the proposed development
 - o The existing Palmer Park stadium is functional and there are Thames water sewers in close proximity. These sewers will be connected into for the new development and Thames Water will be consulted on the discharge volumes.
 - o The existing ground is suitable for soakaway design and it is proposed to install a soakaway attenuation tank below the proposed car park extension.
 - o The proposed drainage strategy will use the existing surface water drainage outfall which discharges into a local land drain:
 - Attenuation structures will be sized to attenuate the 1 in 100 year storm event with a 40% allowance for climate change.

9.8 Noise & vibration impact assessment:

- A Noise Impact Assessment has been carried out by Syntegra Consulting.
- This assessment concludes that:
 - o Plant noise at the site would not be expected to cause any adverse impacts on the health or quality of life of the nearest noise sensitive receptors (the residential properties on three sides), meeting the requirements of this policy.
 - o The change in road traffic will result in a negligible change to noise levels.

9.9 Open space statement:

- As a pre-condition of entering into a Lease with the appointed Leisure Operator, Reading Borough will advertise the Lease as a disposal of open space under S123 of the Local Government Act 1972 in a local paper for two consecutive weeks. Any objections will be considered by a future meeting of Policy Committee for final decision.
- It is anticipated that the notices for this will be advertised in December 2020 on two separate occasions, after the Planning Application has been submitted.

9.10 BREEAM Pre-Application / Sustainability statement:

- A combined Sustainability Statement and BREEAM Pre-Assessment have been carried out by Ecoteric Consulting.
- The Statement analyses the design to date in terms of items including the following:
 - o The need to build the project and its location
 - o Energy efficiency and carbon emissions
 - o Water conservation
 - o Community impacts
 - o Transport
 - o Health and Wellbeing including daylighting analysis and thermal comfort
 - o Visual comfort
 - o Indoor Air Quality
 - o Life Cycle Analysis
 - o Design for Disassembly and Adaptability
 - o Pollution issues
 - o Best practice management of the site
- This assesses that the scheme has a target BREEAM rating of "Excellent" achieved through a number of measures.

9.11 Sustainable drainage strategy:

- A Sustainable Drainage Strategy has been produced by Furness Partnership, and incorporated in their Flood Risk Assessment.
- The surface water discharge from the new leisure centre will be made up from run-off from the following elements of the development:
 - o Building roof area
 - o Paved areas around new development (permeable concrete paving)
 - o Access roads (tarmac)
 - o Car parking bays (permeable concrete paving)
- The proposed drainage strategy will be to discharge surface water to a 30 x 10 x 1.2m deep cellular soakaway tank situated 1m below ground level in the new car park area (more than the minimum 5m away from any building foundations).
- Attenuation structures will be sized to attenuate the 1 in 100 year storm event with a 40% allowance for climate change.
- Infiltration Rate Required at soakaway location: min. 1×10^{-5} m/s (BRE Digest 365 soakaways tests need to be carried out to confirm this figure)

9.12 Townscape and visual impact assessment:

- A Built Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (HTVIA) has been produced by Neaves Urbanism.
- The Appraisal assesses the potential effects of the proposed development on historical assets (HAs), townscape character assets (TCAs) and visual amenity
- The Appraisal concludes the following:
 - o Heritage Assets (HAs):
 - There is 1 no. HA on the site itself (George Palmer statue) and there are a number of HAs around the site
 - It assesses that there would be no harmful effect on the setting or significance of any heritage asset in the surrounding area, when regarding the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and that the Proposed Development is in line with the policy set out in Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and the guidance in the national PPG (2019).
 - It assesses that the new landscaping around the George Palmer statue would have a moderate and beneficial effect on this HA, enhancing its setting.
 - o Townscape Character Assets (TCAs):
 - Three TCA receptors have been established as part of this appraisal. These are based on a combination of the dominant land use, built form, layout and vegetation
 - The proposals would result in a new and improved focal space for the park with the scale and architectural detailing helping with legibility for the park's users.
 - The public realm strategy for the plaza in front of the Palmer Park Stadium building improves the scenic quality of this area of the park.
 - The layout incorporates the majority of the trees, which would help to assimilate the new extension into the park.
 - The Appraisal concludes that there would be minor beneficial effects on two of these TCAs from these proposals
 - o Visual amenity:
 - The Appraisal considers that the visibility would broadly remain the same.
 - The views from some of the visual receptors (Palmer Park Avenue, Wokingham Road) would change, ranging from moderate and beneficial, through to having a neutral effect.
 - o The Appraisal concludes that the proposals would be visually appreciated at a local scale.

9.13 Transport assessment:

- A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan have been produced by Hydrock Consultants
- The Transport Assessment provides the necessary information for the local planning authority to consider the merits of the development in terms of accessibility, sustainability, highway safety, and the impact of the new facility on the local road network.
- The Transport Assessment concludes that:
 - o The site is considered to be situated in a highly sustainable location benefiting from bus and rail services within walking/cycling distance.
 - o The site is also within walking and cycling distance to large residential areas.
 - o The site is well connected by a network of existing pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, and consequently offers a wide range of non-car transport opportunities for both patrons and staff.
 - o A new area of public realm and a new footpath connection are also proposed as part of the development, further enhancing the sustainable transport connections.
 - o A review of Personal Injury Accident data over the last five years has not identified any overriding highway safety issues which would be exacerbated by the proposals
 - o The development proposals are to provide a total of 131 car parking spaces for the enhanced facility which is sufficient to accommodate predicted average peak parking demand of circa. 80 spaces.
 - o Disabled, family/toddler, EV charging bays and cycle parking spaces are provided in line with Reading Borough Council's Local Plan policies.
 - o Swept path analysis confirms that the development site can be serviced appropriately by a refuse vehicle and leave the site in a forward gear.
- The main conclusion of the Assessment is that there are no significant highways or transportation matters that should preclude the Local Planning Authority from approving this planning application.
- The Travel Plan has been prepared to set out a strategy for informing future employees for accessing the site using sustainable transport choices and to meet the requirements of BREEAM Assessment of "Excellent".
- The objective of the Travel Plan is to achieve the following outcomes:
 - o Minimise single occupancy car travel to and from the development
 - o Identify which measures are needed to maximise the use of non-car travel
 - o Lead to a change in the travel behaviour of individuals to a sustainable mode of travel and then maintain that change
 - o Identify ways of reducing the need to travel to and from the development
- This corresponds with one of Reading Borough Council's strategic aims of achieving a carbon neutral Reading by 2030.

9.14 Tree survey / arboricultural impact assessment:

- A Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been produced by Hayden's Arboricultural Consultants.
- This Assessment recommends the following:
 - o One category "B" and seven category "C" trees are to be felled to achieve the proposed layout, along with two category "C" hedges
 - o Another 6 trees of low quality (potential health & safety risk) to be felled as part of the development
 - o Mitigation of tree loss is to be offset through enhanced replacement tree planting
 - o Root protection zones to be included during construction
 - o A detailed Arboricultural Method Statement & Tree Protection Plan should be provided at the next design stage, to include:
 - fencing type
 - project phasing
 - an auditable monitoring schedule
 - o All trees and landscape features that are to remain as part of the development should suffer no structural damage
 - o The structural engineer is to be consulted over foundation design to ensure that retained trees and landscape features do not suffer this structural damage.

9.15 Utilities surveys and proposals:

- A Utility Assessment, A New Service Connections Layout and a Service Diversions Layout have been produced by Thornley and Lumb.
- The Assessment notes that pre-development enquiries were submitted to the following statutory undertakers:
 - o Electricity - Scottish & Southern Electricity (SSE)
 - o Gas - Scotia Gas Networks (SGN)
 - o Water - Thames Water (TW)
 - o Telecoms - BT / Virgin
- The following summarises the current utilities and proposed works:
 - o Electricity:
 - There is an existing 315kVa substation on the Wokingham Road stadium site
 - This will be replaced with a new 500 kVa Substation required to serve the enhanced centre
 - Associated cabling works
 - o Gas:
 - An existing gas supply is located to site
 - This supply is to be disconnected and a new connection to be made to the mains located in footpath of Wokingham Road
 - o Water:
 - There is an existing water service derived from Wokingham Road. This is to be disconnected (not sufficient for enhanced facility).
 - Thames Water to confirm new clean water supply connection detail
 - The water meter will be located below ground within the boundary of the site. Final location TBA.
 - o Fire Hydrant:
 - 1 no. existing single fire hydrant lies on St. Bartholomew's Road.
 - 1 new no. hydrant is to be located on site.
 - Thames Water to provide details.

9.16 Vent, flue and ventilation details:

- A Ventilation and Extract Statement, along with ventilation, heating and cooling layouts and plantrooms layouts, have been produced by Thornley and Lumb.
- The Statement notes that there will be 12 no. systems serving the new centre. These are broken down as follows:
 - o Pool Hall
 - o Village Change, Male Change & Female Change
 - o Café / Seating
 - o Activity Zone & Viewing
 - o Kitchen & Served
 - o GF WC & Accessible WC
 - o Circulation Spaces
 - o Fitness Suite / Gym
 - o 1F Male Change, Female Change & Toilets
 - o Party / Meeting Room
 - o Functional Studio / Group Cycling (existing stadium)
 - o Fitness Studio (existing stadium)
- The accompanying drawings show these systems in detail, and will be submitted separately, to support the Application.

9.17 Odour Assessment:

- o It should be noted that the anticipated food offerings will be limited to warm-up of light meals such as paninis and jacket potatoes.
- o As such, with kitchen louvres discharging towards the north east and the main railway line, there will be very limited odours emanating from the site. Odours will discharge towards the athletics field and should have no impact on the nearest residences on Wokingham Road and Palmer Park Avenue.

9.18 Archaeological Assessment:

- o Berkshire Archaeology were consulted about the proposals at Palmer Park Stadium.
- o They have reviewed the Historic Environment Records (HER) for the site.
- o This review showed that there is little information recorded on the HER which can indicate the archaeological potential, but that there is some record of "mase-holes" being present, function and date unknown.