



Planning and Design Statement

Mapledurham Playing Fields Pavilion Works

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1. Introduction

This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a planning application for the refurbishment and small extension of the pavilion at Mapledurham Playing Fields on behalf of Reading Borough Council in its capacity as the Trustees of Mapledurham Playing Fields (MPF), located at 129 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 7LH.

The charitable purpose of MPF is: “the provision and maintenance of a recreation ground for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Parish of Mapledurham and the Borough of Reading without distinction of political, religious or other opinions.”

In August 2018 the Local Planning Authority (LPA) approved the location of The Heights Primary School with subsequent approval by the Trustees, which instigated the development of the landscape master plan and proposed refurbishment of the existing pavilion.

This Planning and Design Statement assesses the proposals against the policies in the Development Plan and other material considerations and should be read in conjunction with the associated drawings.

2. The site and Pavilion

Mapledurham Playing Fields is approximately 11ha in size and consists of a community car park accessed from Upper Woodcote Road, leading to a pavilion with a small hall which serves as a local social venue and changing rooms for the tennis and football clubs; 4no floodlit tennis courts; a children’s play area, a community orchard and wooded area, and open areas of sports pitches which are in high use. A new primary school being currently being built adjacent to the existing pavilion

The Pavilion

The proposal concerns the refurbishment and a number of small extensions to the pavilion. This works is set to be carried out in two phases. Phase one is to refurbish the pavilion to ensure it is ‘wind and water tight’, to re-configure the internal layout for more efficient use of the space and to allow future small extensions of the building to better support community use. The phase one works includes a small 10m² in-fill at the existing entrance and re-locating the sports changing to the west side of the pavilion with a small 22m² side extension. Phase two is to provide a new main entrance, and two small extensions at the rear of the building.

3. Planning history and pre-application advice

The following is a summary of the relevant planning history of the site:

Date	Ref	Description
10/01/1990	890904	Single storey flat roof extension to the pavilion’s changing rooms / permitted
28/04/1994	930614	Creation of a tennis court / permitted
19/10/1995	940439	Erection of floodlighting to two tennis courts / refused
08/04/1999	981046	Provision of floodlighting to two tennis courts / allowed on appeal
01/07/2013	130613	Replacement and extension of roof, installation of new roof lights and construction of a veranda on east elevation / permitted. These works have been started and therefore the planning approval is extant.
14/08/2018	171023	The Heights Primary School construction / permitted
25/02/2019	182200	A minor material amendment to the Heights Primary School / permitted
16/04/2019	190240	Landscape master plan for Mapledurham playing fields / permitted
06/08/2019	182140	New floodlights to the existing tennis courts / permitted

The planning approval for works to the pavilion in 2013 is still extant with the construction of the veranda for the tennis club.

Pre-application advice

Pre-application planning advice from the LPA was sought and an informal response provided advising the need to submit a planning application due to the small extensions in the scheme.

Community engagement

The proposals were developed from consultation with the key users of the pavilion, Caversham Tennis Club, Caversham Trent Football Club, Warren and District Residents Association, and the user's representative of the Mapledurham Playing Fields Management Committee.

These proposals have subsequently been reviewed by and feedback formalised through the MPF Management Committee with representatives of stakeholders and users of MPF on 29th September 2019. The scheme has also been considered by the Trustees of MPF through the MPF Trustee Sub-Committee on 15th October 2019. Details and minutes can be found on the Reading Borough Council website: <https://democracy.reading.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=175>

4. Planning policy context

Introduction

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In this instance the Development Plan comprises the following Reading Borough Local Development Framework documents relevant to this application:

- Core Strategy (CS): adopted January 2008; updated 27 January 2015
- Sites and Detailed Policies Document (SDPD): adopted October 2012; updated 27 January 2015

The National Planning Policy Framework (revised July 2018) is also a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications.

RBC has reviewed its main planning policies which will replace the CS and SDPD documents above (as well as the Reading Central Area Action Plan). Consultation took place on issues and options in early 2016 and on a full Draft Local Plan (dLP) between 1 May and 14 June 2017. This will in due course be submitted for approval in November 2019.

National planning policy

National planning policy is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2018). At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In making decisions on planning applications: *“Local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.”*

Local planning policy

Local development plan policies for the area are contained within:

- Core Strategy (adopted January 2008; updated 27 January 2015)
- Sites and Detailed Policies Document (adopted October 2012; updated 27 January 2015)
- Draft Local Plan (May 2017)

The relevant policies from the CS, considered in this document:

- CS1: Sustainable Construction and Design
- CS5: Inclusive Access
- CS7: Design and the Public Realm
- CS28: Loss of Open Space
- CS30: Access to Open Space

- CS36: Biodiversity and Geology
- CS37: Major Landscape Features and Strategic Open Space
- CS38: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands

The relevant policies from the Development Policies, considered in this document:

- SD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- DM1: Adaptation to Climate Change
- DM2: Decentralised Energy
- DM3: Infrastructure Planning
- DM4: Safeguarding Amenity
- DM17: Green Network
- DM18: Tree Planting
- SA16: Public and Strategic Open Space

The site is the subject to two designations: Public and Strategic Open Space (SDPD Policy SA16 refers) and Air Quality Management Area along Upper Woodcote Road (SDPD Policy DM19). At the eastern end of the MPF site, a major landscape feature (North Reading Dry Valleys, CS Policy CS37) and a local wildlife site (CS Policy CS36 and SDPD Policy DM17).

5. Proposal Assessment

As mentioned previously the application concerns the refurbishment and small extension of the existing pavilion and this is considered against the following:

- Loss of open space
- Sport England policy
- Design
- Ecology and trees
- Flood risk
- Noise
- Transport

Loss of open space

The whole site is a designated open space and thus CS policy CS28 applies which reads as follows: *Development proposals that will result in the loss of open space or jeopardise its use or enjoyment by the public will not be permitted. In exceptional circumstances, development may be permitted where it is clearly demonstrated that replacement open space, to a similar standard, can be provided at an accessible location close by, or that improvements to recreational facilities on remaining open space can be provided to a level sufficient to outweigh the loss of the open space. The quality of existing open space should not be eroded by insensitive development on adjoining land.*

The first part of this policy is restated in SPD policy SA16: *Important areas of Public and Strategic Open Space, as shown on the Proposals Map, will be protected from development. Proposals that would result in the loss of any of these areas of open space, or jeopardise their use or enjoyment by the public, will not be permitted.*

The small extension to the west side of the pavilion plan results in the loss of a very small strip of grass used as an informal access route to the wider playing fields between the existing pavilion and new school. A new vehicle and pedestrian access route being built between the school and the pavilion as part of the new school development which will establish a more formal access route through this area to the benefit of users. Two small extensions to the rear of pavilion are utilising space that currently forms the existing patio for the pavilion. These small extensions will also form an area directly linked to the pavilion to distinguish it from the more informal open space of the wider playing fields.

This small loss of space is seen as insignificant in the context of the wider playing fields improvements taking place and is considered acceptable when set against the wider context to improve the pavilion and its immediate landscape.

Sport England policy

Sport England is a statutory consultee on planning applications affecting playing fields under the terms of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure, England Order 2015). Sport England considers proposals affecting playing fields in the light of the NPPF (in particular para 74), and its Playing Fields Policy: 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England'. Its policy is to oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or prejudice the use of, all or any part of a playing field, unless one or more of the five exceptions stated in its policy apply:

- E1: An assessment has demonstrated that there is an excess of playing fields in the catchment and the site has no special significance for sport
- E2: The development is ancillary to the principal use of the playing field and does not affect the quantity/quality of pitches
- E3: The development only affects land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and would lead to no loss of ability to use/size of playing pitch
- E4: Playing field lost would be replaced, equivalent or better in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility
- E5: The proposed development is for an indoor/outdoor sports facility of sufficient benefit to sport to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of playing field

The improvements to the pavilion can be assessed under exceptions E2 as the proposals do not affect the quantity / quality of pitches. Exception E3 also applies as the small strip of grass lost in building the small extension would not be capable of forming part of a playing pitch with the new school being built adjacent to the pavilion.

Design

A number of local policies encourage good design, centred principally around CS Policy CS7, which reflects current national policy on good design: *"The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people."*

The pavilion refurbishment and small extensions as shown in the drawings, illustrates a sustainable designed approach to the future longevity and use of the pavilion.

The proposed robust cladding panels as well as facing brickwork to the extension will improve the aesthetic appearance of the pavilion. The existing materials are starting to tire so the new robust cladding will provide a fresh appearance and longevity to the pavilion using these materials. The proposed trussed roof with cladding will improve the thermal performance of the building as well as renewing the water tightness of the structure.

The materials to be used will be robust and of low maintenance and where cost effective be installed by local contractors, reducing the carbon footprint of the refurbishment of the pavilion.

The revised location of the main entrance door will allow more efficient use of the facilities in the pavilion. Moving the entrance will allow the meeting rooms and kitchen to be accessed without having to walk through the hall which will optimise the use of the building.

The remodelling of the interior layout to the tennis club side of the pavilion allows a more space efficient use of the WC provisions. The revised layout will allow additional WCs to be installed, allowing the building to meet current building regulations for toilet provisions.

The changing rooms are designed in accordance with Sport England guidance for the use of football team changing. The proposal also allows for the extension to facilitate referee changing facilities for two referees.

To minimise heat loss from the proposed development and to maximise efficiency, the proposal will incorporate the upgrading of the fabric of the building to better insulate the building. The proposed

Kingspan KS100 RW will drastically improve the levels of insulation, retaining heat in the building, and reducing energy output of the pavilion.

The proposal will also incorporate the upgrading of the lighting to LED lighting and electric showers to reduce the carbon footprint of the building. To minimise the use of water the proposal will incorporate water saving devices such as dual flush / low flush toilets.

This reflects the requirements of CS Policy CS7.

In summary, the works to the pavilion is the product of detailed consideration in its design and has been scrutinised by members of the MPF Management Committee and the MPF Trustees Sub-Committee. It will have very little direct impacts on adjoining residents. The design thereby meets the requirements of CS Policy CS7 and SDPD Policy DM4.

Ecology and trees

CS Policy CS36 seeks to protect features of biodiversity interest. Development which would have a direct or indirect impact on the site will not be permitted unless the need for the development outweighs that interest or if appropriate mitigation is incorporated. SDPD Policy DM18 promotes tree planting as part of development proposals. CS Policy CS38 protects trees, hedges and woodland.

The site is not statutorily designated for its wildlife interest and the proposals will not affect land designated for its wildlife interest or habitats of principal importance for conservation. The grassland around the pavilion directly affected by the works is regularly mown grass of negligible ecological value.

The two mature Norway maple trees to be removed and replaced at the front of the pavilion appear to have been pollard in the past, are of poor quality and misshapen and as a result are assessed as of no significant ecological value to the site. The proposed replacement trees will be Scots pines to enhance the ecological value of the playing fields by adding to the number of native evergreen trees, without crowding the pavilion with a broad canopy. These will compliment the ornamental trees (Cornus 'Norman Hadden') to be planted on the periphery of the pavilion outdoor area as part of the wider landscape plan.

In summary two Norway maple pollards would be removed to be replaced with two Scots pines.

In order to ensure the successful integration of retained bushes at the rear of the pavilion adjacent to the tennis courts, during the construction works a tree protection zone will be incorporated into the design which is intended to maintain the bushes in a safe and healthy condition.

In ecological terms, the scheme will accord with CS Policy CS36. Tree planting and tree protection measures will be carried out in line with SDPD Policy DM18.

Flood Risk

As the application site is less than 1ha in size, a flood risk assessment has not been carried out. The site is located in a Flood Zone 1 area, is at a low risk of fluvial flooding with a similarly low risk of surface water or groundwater flooding.

Noise

SDPD Policy DM4 seeks to safeguard residential amenity, including in relation to noise. External noise levels on-site are generated mainly by the school, tennis courts, users of the sports pitches, children's playground and aircraft and traffic on Hewett Avenue. There is no proposed change to the existing users of the site. The scheme is unlikely to result in any significant noise impacts above existing noise sensitive receptors and there is no risk of significant adverse impacts on health; and in this context a noise assessment is considered as not required. The design therefore reflects the noise requirements of SDPD Policy DM4.

Transport

The pavilion refurbishment works will look to re-provide facilities within the pavilion for existing users and clubs of the pavilion and playing fields. The pavilion is accessible by pedestrians and cyclists from Upper Woodcote Road and surrounding local roads by footpaths into and through the playing fields. Works to improve the existing car park will re-provide the existing cycle stands at the front of the pavilion. There is a bus stop close to the entrance to the car park providing access to the local transport network from / into Caversham and Reading. The current car park and the small overflow carpark in the approved landscape plan caters for the proposed pavilion usage and with the agreement with the school to use their staff car park at weekends, provides sufficient parking for pavilion users.

6. Conclusion

This Planning and Design Statement is submitted in support of a planning application made by Reading Borough Council for works to the pavilion at Mapledurham Playing Fields. The whole playing fields site including the pavilion is being held in trust for the provision of recreational facilities to the benefit of local people. The proposals set out a scheme that meets these requirements and provides an opportunity for the improvements to the pavilion without any adverse impacts in planning terms.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1: Tree Report

Appendix 1: Tree Report

The following arboricultural information has been compiled by the Reading Borough Council Arboricultural Unit to assess and demonstrate acceptability of the proposal in relation to trees as follows:

- Trees removed to enable the landscape plan to be implemented
- Trees to be planted
- Retained trees with root areas affected by the groundwork
- Retained trees that are unaffected by the work

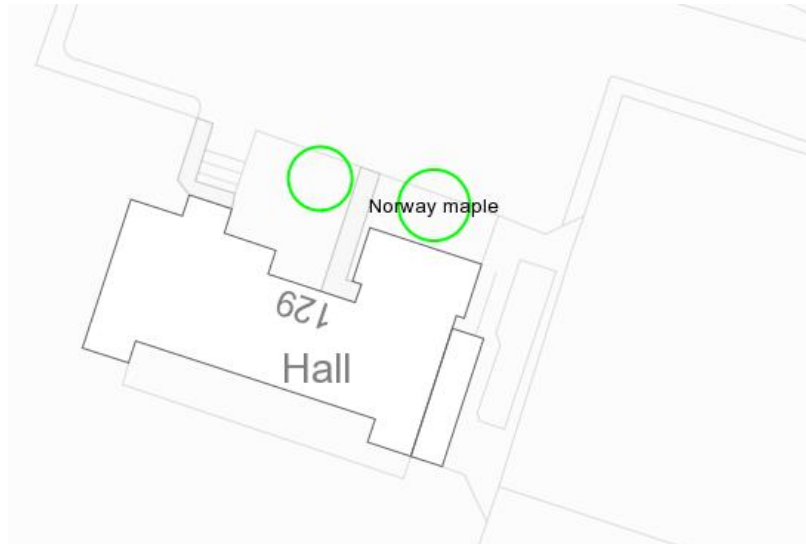
Trees removed to enable the pavilion works to be implemented

For the small extension at the front of the pavilion to take place, two mature Norway maple trees at the front of the pavilion are proposed to be removed. These trees are of poor condition and do not enhance the ecological value of the site.

Species	Height (M)	Stem Diameter (cm)	Life Stage	Observation	Category*
Norway maple	7m	34cm	mature	Stem unusual kinked form. Possible root decay due to raise in ground level	U
Norway maple	10m	41cm	mature	Split in lower stem. Major deadwood in canopy	C1

*Trees are graded to the categories as prescribed in BS5837:2012 (U,A,B & C)

Location Plan



Trees to be planted

Two Scots pines are to be planted which improves the visual and ecological value of the area immediately in front to the pavilion

Retained trees with root areas directly affected by the works

There are no retained trees directly affected by the pavilion works

Retained trees that are unaffected by the work

The small area of bushes adjacent at the rear of the pavilion adjacent to the tennis courts will be protected from accidental contact with machinery by heras fencing.

Summary of tree planting details

Tree Species	Specification	No planted
Pinus sylvestris (Scots pines)	12-14, CG	2

Planting will occur during the planting season following completion of main works unless otherwise agreed.

Planting method statement, consistent with BS 8545:

- Dig pits 4x the volume of the root ball and the same depth
- Backfill with excavated material
- Install irrigation tubing around root ball top with end exposed for watering
- Quadruple-staked
- Apply mulch to 100mm depth and 500mm radius around each tree
- Top up the mulch until the tree is established
- Weed and irrigate for two growing seasons