

9431 – Design & Access Statement

Proposed Sports Redevelopment - Ratby Sports Club, Desford Lane, Ratby
Leicestershire, LE6 0LE



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Company Biography

HSSP Architects Ltd was established in 1966 and is a professional Company which has always prided itself on its quality service and client relationship. Based in Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire we work throughout the East Midlands and UK

Issue Record

Revision	Date	By	Checked	Admin	Note
PL1	11/03/2026	KES	JCB/YT	AJR	First planning issue.

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The format and content of this statement has been based upon the guidance supplied by CABE in their publication “Design and access statements - How to write, read and use them”

0.0 Executive Summary

This request for detailed planning approval relates to the site of Ratby Sports Club, Ratby, Leicestershire.

The proposal is for the upgrade of the existing sports site, to provide the following:

- Two artificial grass football pitches, an 11-a-side and a 7-a-side
- A new football clubhouse, designed to current Football Foundation requirements, enabling the existing clubhouse to become a dedicated building for the cricket clubs.
- Three padel courts, with covered roof, again allowing the courts to be used all-year round.
- 500-person covered stand overlooking the new 11-a-side pitch, including 250 seats.
- New gated and turnstile access to the pitches.
- New steps and platform lift up to the site, enabling accessible use of the site.
- A new 96-space car park plus disabled parking, coach parking and turning, cycle parking, and improved access from Desford Lane.

This document and associated plans are accompanied by the following consultants' reports:

- Topographical Survey, by Ramowski Banner Ltd
- Highways Report, by Edwards & Edwards Consultancy Ltd
- Biodiversity Net Gain report & calculations, by Croft Ecology
- Pitch design by PST Sport
- Lighting design by Halliday Lighting
- Drainage design by Diamond Wood & Shaw

This document sets out:

- The principle of design for the site
- The proposed development layout
- Compliance with design specific local and national plan policy
- Summary of 3rd party reports



1.0 Introduction

1.1 Brief and aspirations

HSSP Architects have been working with our client for a number of years to realise a long-term vision for the Ratby Sports Club site.

This application relates to the south-west area of the site, currently used for football training and matches for a wide range of teams of varying ages, including mixed and girls' teams.

Our client is very proud to have this strong community of mixed gender and girls' teams, as well as being a diverse club with children of all backgrounds and ethnicities that travel from across Leicestershire to play football.

This application seeks to build on the robustness of the club, through upgrading its facilities to more appropriately accommodate existing demand for teams and spectators who are currently 'making do' with pitches that are liable to flooding, informal parking and a shared football and cricket clubhouse.

Alongside the upgrades of the football club, this application also seeks permission for 3 no padel courts under a covered portal roof. Padel is a sport which has hugely grown in popularity over the last couple of years, and its popularity is continuing to thrive.



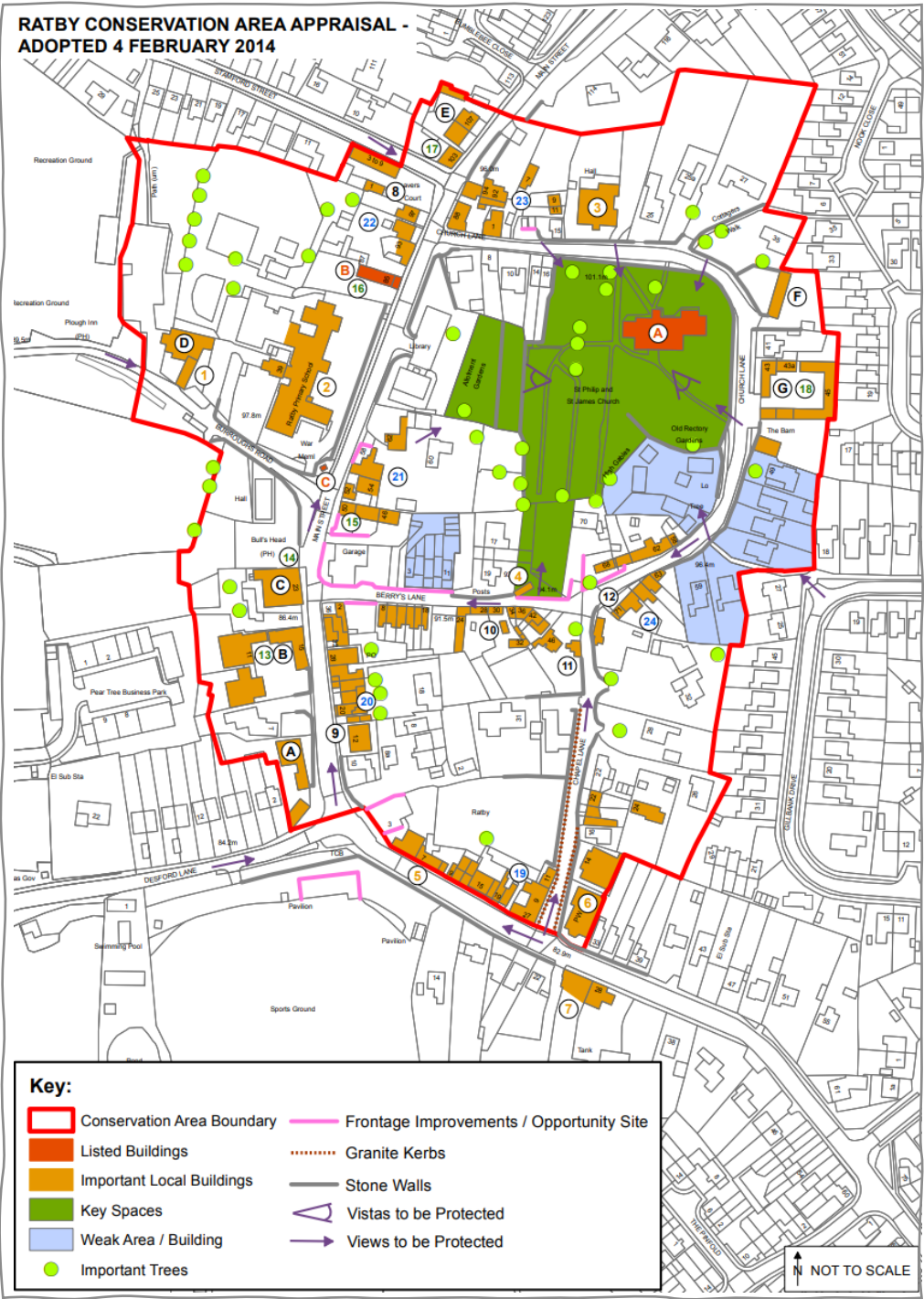
2.0 Site Assessment

2.1 Site Location

The site is located at Ratby Sports Club, Desford Lane, Ratby. The site sits outside of the village Conservation Area.



Approximate site location – refer to submitted Site Location Plan drawing



2.0 Site Assessment

2.2 Site description

The site currently includes grass pitches, an existing access and informal car parking. The site includes a steep level change of around 5m up to the larger pitches, which will be made accessible as part of this application through provision of steps and a passenger lift.



2.0 Site Assessment

2.3 Site context

A Reserved Matters application for a development of 225 dwellings by Bellway Homes was approved in 2025 on land adjacent to the application site. Application references: 21/01295/OUT, 24/01090/REM.

As part of this application, Bellway are required to make improvements to Desford Lane, including traffic calming features including a reduction in the speed limit down to 40mph and to provide a footway/cycleway on the application site side of Desford Lane. Consideration of this has been given in the submitted Highways Report by Edwards & Edwards Consultancy Ltd.

A lighting layout has been prepared by Halliday Lighting on behalf of PST, which ensures floodlighting will not disturb surrounding context, including this future development.



N ↙



2.0 Site Assessment

2.4 Site history

- Ratby Sports Club was formed in 1979 by merging Ratby Town Cricket Club and Ratby Rovers Football Club. For many years the site has hosted junior football and cricket matches, and training for teams such as Anstey Nomads, of whom our client is a manager.
- The site was rented by our client from 2020, and then purchased by them in 2022, and they have spent several years working toward delivering a positive vision for its future.
- The Club is already embedded in the community, and a variety of different user groups already access the site throughout the year, including local schools, community groups and summer events in addition to sport.

2.5 Local character

- Houses in the vicinity are a combination of red brick and/or render, with pitched roofs. The recent GP Surgery takes materials and details from neighbouring dwellings into account.
- Stone walled boundaries line the sports grounds and some houses.
- The mix of housing styles and periods along Station Road give evidence of a growing and changing town.

3.0 Planning Policy

3.1 National planning policy framework

We believe the proposed development complies with all relevant parts of the NPPF.

Regarding Section 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities:

Improved pitch facilities will enable young people to have access to sport all year round.

A higher quality of amenity will help to attract and retain players as part of the local clubs.

There is sufficient existing demand amongst the club to justify improved football facilities, and a proven national demand and county-wide ‘gap’ in padel facilities.

Improved access to sports and recreation will ultimately improve the health and wellbeing of the local community, both children and adults alike through promoting parents and families to be able to spectate and socialise during and after matches.

Regarding Section 12: Achieving well-designed places:

As noted this promotes an inclusive and accessible community through high standard of amenity.

The proposals are a clear betterment of the existing site, including improving traffic safety through designated parking.

National Planning Policy Framework

8. Promoting healthy and safe communities

96. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve **healthy, inclusive and safe places** which:

a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;

b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and

c) enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill-health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities – **for example through the provision of** safe and accessible green infrastructure, **sports facilities,** local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

98. To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, **community facilities** (such as local shops, meeting places, **sports venues, open space,** cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local **services to enhance the sustainability of communities** and residential environments;

b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies **to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;**

...

d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; ...

Open space and recreation

103. Access to a network of high quality open spaces and **opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities,** and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date

assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.

104. Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and formal play spaces, should not be built on unless:

...

c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, **the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.**

12. Achieving well-designed places

131. The creation of **high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places** is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

135. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) 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);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, 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.

Extract from National Planning Policy Framework December 2024

3.0 Planning Policy

3.2 Local plan

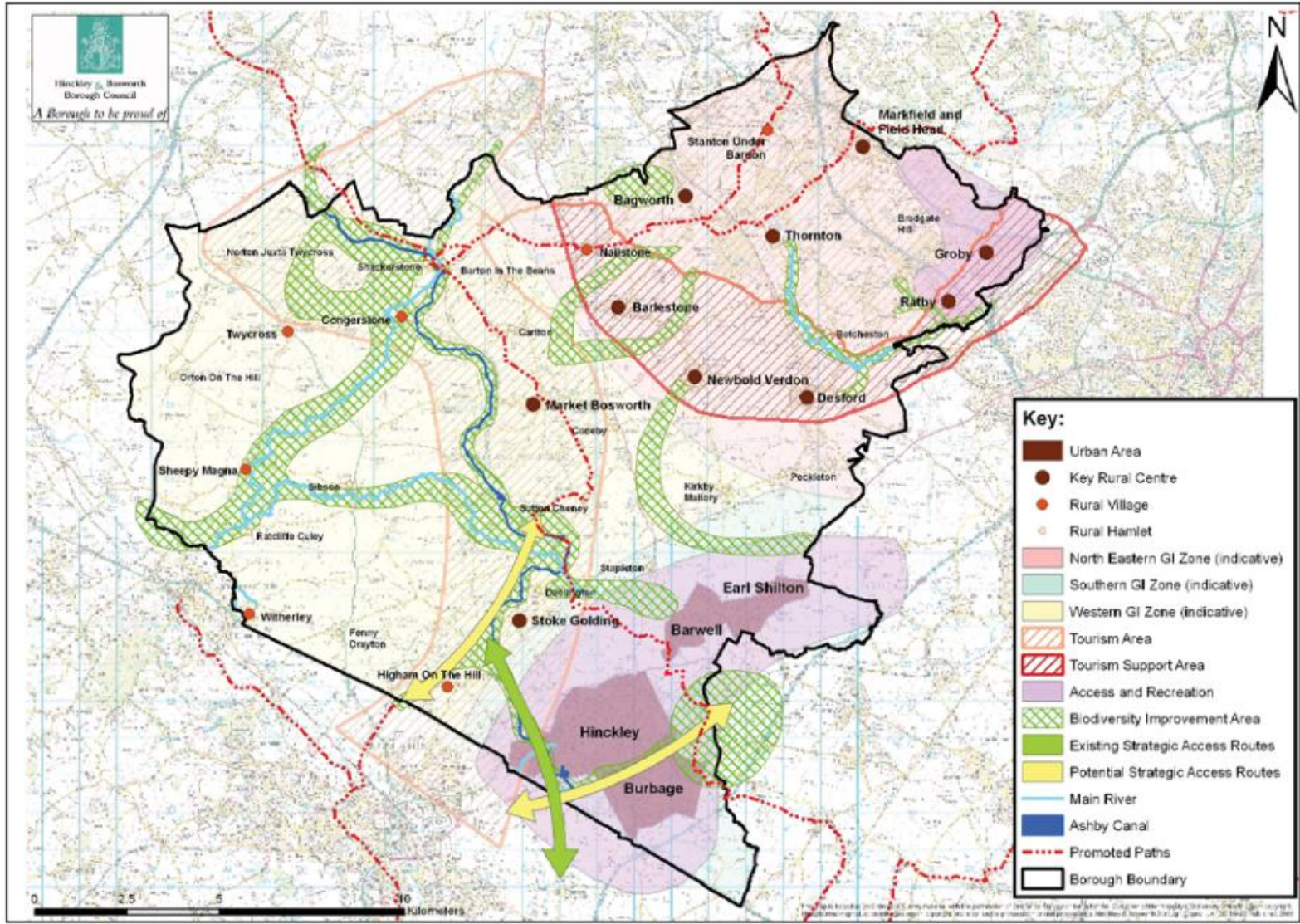
- Ratby is designated a 'key rural centre' in the HBBC Local Development Framework Core Strategy.
- Similarly to the NPPF, the application meets Spatial Objectives 3 (Strong and Vibrant Communities) and 7 (Healthier Active Communities).

3.3 Ratby Village Design Statement

- The application site is on the cusp of Zone B of the Village Design Statement, but the guidance is not relevant to this proposal.

3.4 Application site planning history

- Change of use of existing north sports pavilion (F2 Local community) to educational facility (F1 Learning and non-residential institutions) - 24/00980/FUL
Validated 01 November 2024 – Awaiting decision
- Proposed change of use of existing sports pavilion (F2 Local community) to educational facility (F1 Learning and non-residential institutions) – 24/00720/FUL
Withdrawn
- Siting of a shipping container for equipment storage (retrospective) - 25/00446/FUL
Validated 07 August 2025 – Awaiting decision



Map from the HBBC Local Development Framework Core Strategy

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy

Spatial Objective 3: Strong and Vibrant Rural Communities

To ensure rural communities have access to a range of shops, education, community, leisure facilities and employment opportunities in the Key Rural Centres to support, enhance and improve the sustainability, vibrancy and vitality of our rural areas.

Spatial Objective 7: Healthier Active Communities

To develop healthier and stronger communities by improving access to, and the provision of, community, sports and cultural facilities, green infrastructure and walking and cycling routes integrated with local public transport. Whilst there are localised areas where additional community, sports and cultural facilities are required, overall, provision is generally sufficient across the borough, but the quality of these facilities needs to be improved.

Extracts of relevant planning policy from Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council Core Strategy

4.0 Consultation

4.1 Professional consultation

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5.0 Design Concept

5.1 The need for new facilities - Padel

Padel is a sport which has increased significantly in popularity over the last couple of years; it has been described as 'the fastest-growing sport in the world' by the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) (BBC, 2024), put down largely due to being fast-paced, accessible for beginners, and social. The UK is experiencing a 'padel boom' which is not expected to slow down any time soon.

Currently there are a number of padel facilities in Birmingham and Nottingham, but none in or around Leicester. In upgrading the Ratby site, an opportunity presents itself to incorporate padel into the scheme.

Padel is considered a leisure sport, and this reinforces the ethos of the Ratby site as being an inclusive, welcoming, and community-driven destination.



Map source: The Padel Directory, 2026

5.0 Design Concept

5.2 The need for improved facilities - Football

By 2028, The FA's ambition is to increase the quality and quantity of grassroots football pitches and facilities across England.

The FA states that 'developing high quality, sustainable football facilities is essential for helping clubs grow, attract players, and create thriving community environments.'¹

Ratby is already embedded as a community asset, with an existing diverse range of football teams of varying age ranges, including mixed and girls' teams. The site is used by schools in the local community, including Woldale School, who are based within the wider site, and other local primary schools in the area.

Provision of new artificial grass pitches will mean they can continue to be used all-year round in wet and winter weather conditions. Matches and training are frequently called off due to insufficient ground conditions and this is ultimately limiting the quality of access to sport for young people in the area.

The provision of a new Clubhouse is crucial to the success of the site. At present, there is an existing pavilion to the east of the site, which is used by both football and cricket teams. However, the popularity of the site means that neither team has a guaranteed 'base' due to



overdemand for this accommodation.

Additionally, the existing pavilion is situated overlooking the cricket ground, relatively distant from the proposed 3G pitches. The current arrangement does not cater for disabled access or take into account spectators who may be less able to walk, such as parents or grandparents who may wish to show support. A new Clubhouse will enable direct access from the pitch-side, with the added benefit of refreshment/clubroom facilities being able to spill outside during summer months.

Furthermore, walking to the existing changing rooms/toilets also involve walking over different grass pitches, and the Football Association have advised that this can result in cross-contamination, and should be avoided.

¹ <https://www.Englandfootball.com/participate/leagues-and-clubs/Facilities-Guidance>

5.0 Design Concept

5.3 Opportunities and constraints

Opportunities

- The site is well established for sports use; this application provides an opportunity to upgrade existing facilities for its current diverse user groups.
- The site is located in an area which has a clear lack of Padel facilities, a sport which has seen an exponential growth in popularity, as outlined on page 13.
- The scheme provides an opportunity to provide a dedicated, purpose-built Football Foundation-compliant Clubhouse for football and padel use.
- Established site access and informal parking are already present on the site – opportunity to formalise and increase parking provision.

Constraints

- Improvements to access will be required, these improvements have been designed upon the advice of our Highways consultant
- Biodiversity net gain improvements are also required; please also refer to the BNG report provided by Croft Ecology

5.4 Client brief

- Provide a scheme for a new clubhouse with clubroom, BTEC classroom/meeting room, reception/office area and two no team changing provisions. Prepare a scheme for a 3-court padel facility. Upgrade the wider site to be compliant to the relevant (Step 3) Football Foundation guidance, such as through spectator stands and turnstile access.

5.5 Proposed design strategy

Look at options for:

- Full planning application
- Grouping the football and padel facilities within the site to create a vibrant community hub at the centre.

6.0 Proposed Design

6.1 Use

F2 Local Community

6.2 Layout

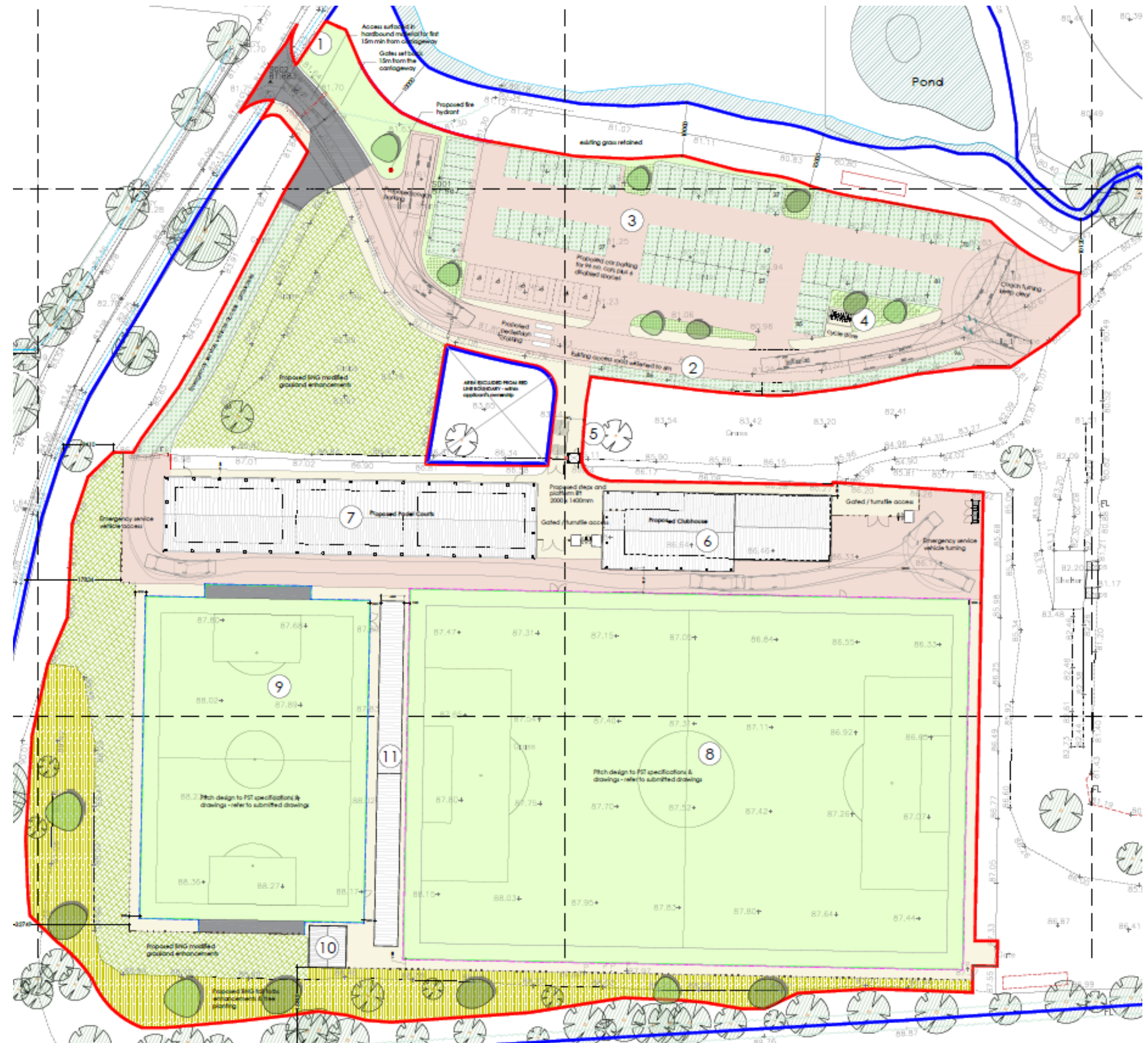
The proposed site layout utilises the existing access from Desford Lane to the west of the site. The proposed artificial grass pitches will be located in place of existing grass pitches to the south-west, with the Clubhouse, Padel, and spectator stands located in close proximity.

6.3 Scale

The proposal seeks to develop an 11-a-side pitch, a 7-a-side, single storey Clubhouse and covered Padel courts. The spectator stands will also be kept low, at a height of under 4.4m.

6.4 Landscaping

A mixture of on and off-site enhancements will be made to comply with BNG. We have worked with our Client and Ecologists to develop an appropriate solution which enhances the site as far as possible. This will have a positive impact on the site, which is in a rural location and benefits from its naturalistic context.



6.0 Proposed Design

6.5 Appearance

The buildings have been tastefully designed to ensure that from within the site, they act as a beacon for high quality community infrastructure across Ratby and surrounding villages. Due to their location centrally within the site, the buildings will not visually disrupt neighbouring buildings.

The two buildings have been designed in unison using similar forms and materials, demonstrating a coherent aesthetic for the site and serving as a model of community unity.



6.0 Proposed Design

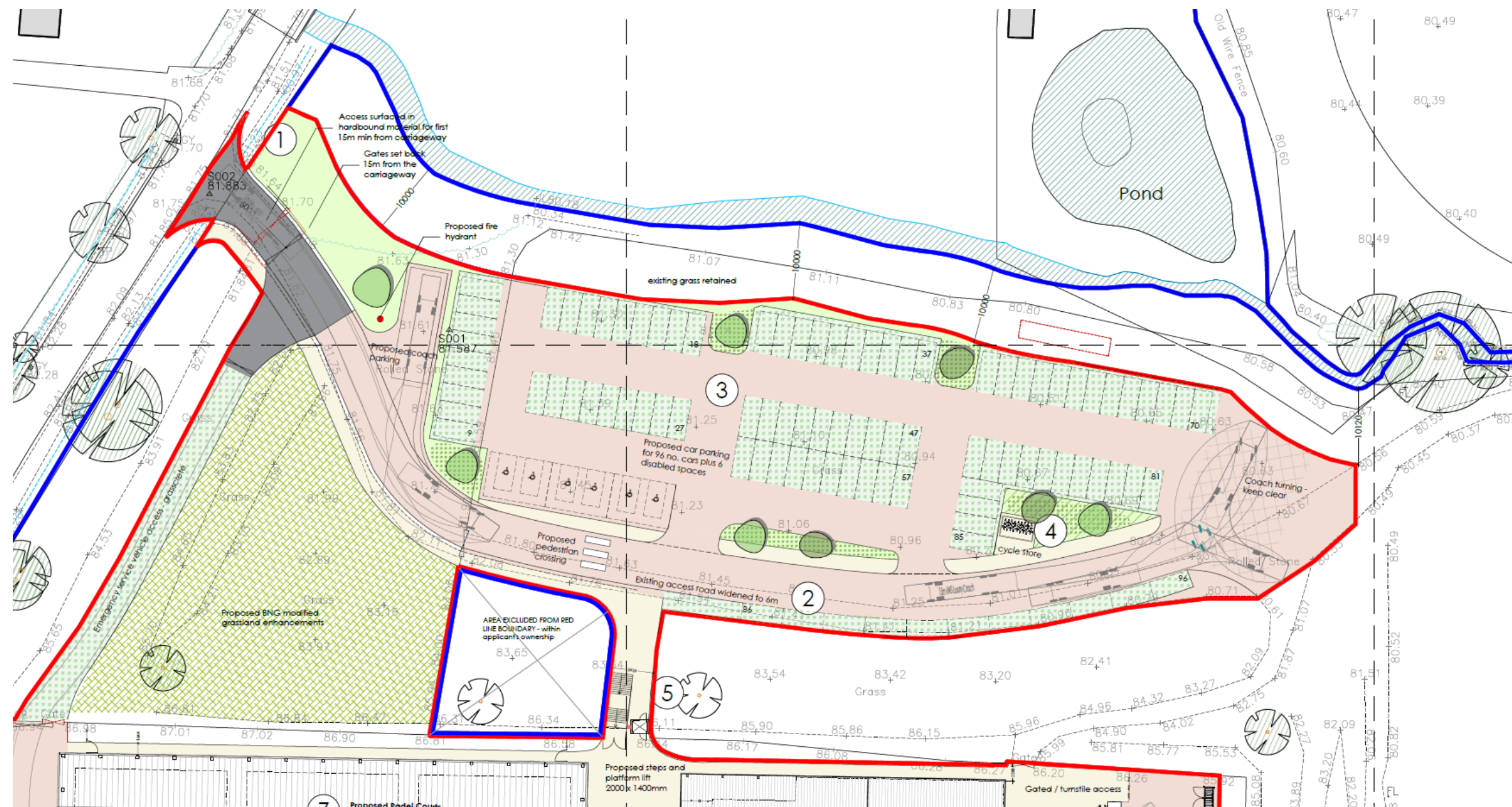
6.6 Car, Cycle & Coach Parking

Currently there is an existing access and car park, albeit informal using gravel and grassed areas, which have been lawfully used by the Club for over 10 years.

The proposal seeks to upgrade this existing access and car parking. This will allow for safer parking with appropriate surfacing, dedicated parking bays, and an increased number of spaces which will cater for use by padel players and staff in addition to the current football club usage. In the current arrangement, there is space for 54 cars, based on LCC's standards for parking bays and aisle widths, with no disabled provision. The proposal allows for 96 spaces, plus 6 disabled spaces, cycle parking, and 1 no coach space and turning.

The improved access features an improved turning head, allowing for greater visibility splays. The existing gates will be set back to 11m from the highway, allowing a coach to come off the highway while awaiting access. The access will be surfaced in tarmac for the first 15m minimum.

Please also refer to the accompanying Highways Report by Edwards & Edwards Consultancy Ltd.

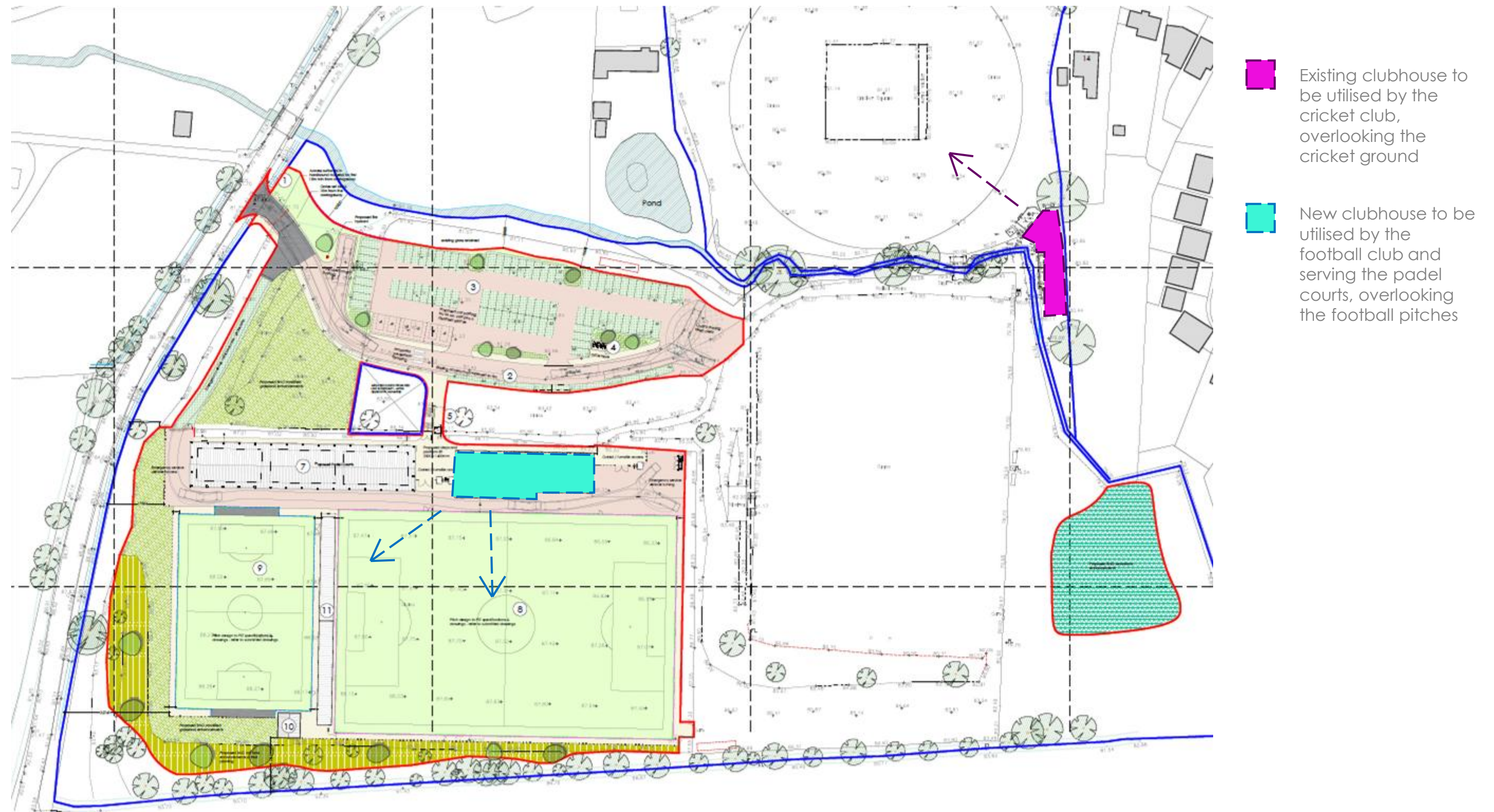


6.0 Proposed Design

6.7 Clubhouse

The current clubhouse on the Ratby site is designed to an extant planning permission from 2000. Our clients have spent substantial time and money in completing this building, which will continue to be used by the cricket teams. A new clubhouse will enable each sport to have their own dedicated base, allowing each team to feel at home on the site, and giving sufficient space to each of the teams.

The existing clubhouse does not meet current Football Foundation requirements, due to its shell being constructed in the early 2000s. As such, and due to its location on the site overlooking the cricket pitch, it is appropriate for the existing building to be dedicated to cricket, and for a new building to be dedicated for football and padel.



6.0 Proposed Design

6.7 Clubhouse

The proposed Clubhouse has been designed to current Football Foundation requirements for Step 3 football. It will be dedicated for use by the football teams and padel players.

The building includes two standard changing rooms (home and away) with associated WCs, showers, officials' rooms, and storage.

There is an 85 sq.m clubroom which can be used by parents, players and the wider community before, during, and after matches. It could also be hired out outside of football fixtures, for example for birthday parties.

There is a 45 sq.m meeting room/classroom, which can be used for BTEC Football courses, and again rented out for wider community use.

Padel players will be able to access the Reception space for any queries

during usage. The building is designed in such a way that it can be 'zoned' through selected locked doors to enable use as required. For example, access to the players' corridor and out via the lobby can be restricted, but padel players can still gain access to the WCs via Reception.



6.0 Proposed Design

6.7 Clubhouse

Externally, it has been designed to a simple but tasteful aesthetic, with a red-brick and timber clad exterior, picking up on the predominantly red-brick buildings in the local vicinity, as well as the timber picking up on the naturalistic quality of the site.

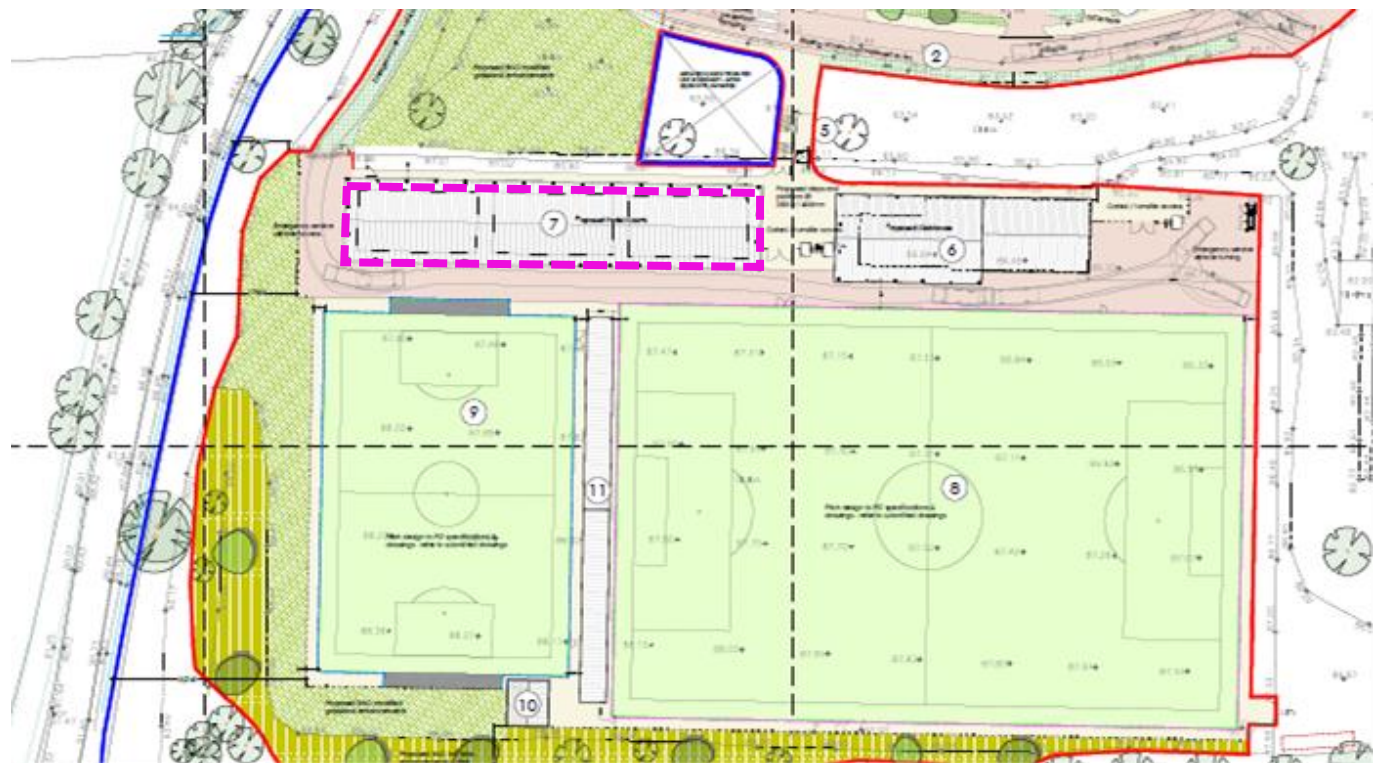
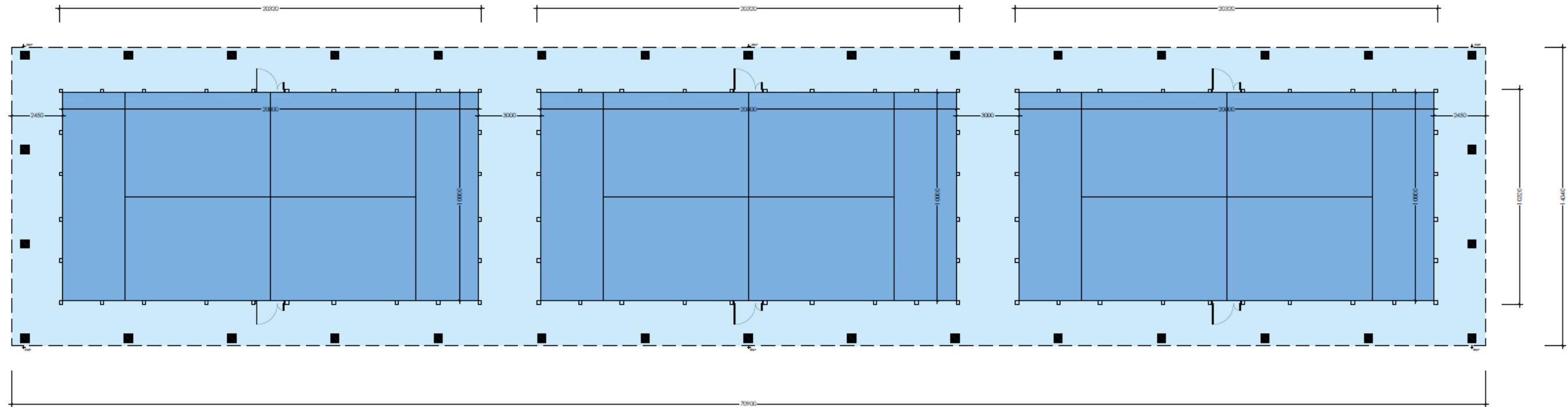
The covered canopy provides space for spectators to stand under on particularly hot or rainy days, with bifold doors opening out from the clubroom. Due to the gated access, the area will be locked out of hours.



6.0 Proposed Design

6.8 Padel

The proposed padel facility includes three courts, each 20m x 10m, with a 3m walkway in between. A covered portal canopy will remain open-air at the sides, but provide shelter from the rain, to enable the courts to be used all-year round and again building on this ethos of developing a resilient and viable site.



 Padel location on the site

6.0 Proposed Design

6.8 Padel

Externally, timber cladding will match the clubhouse, demonstrating a coherent aesthetic for the site and serving as a model of community unity.

The padel courts are located adjacent to the Clubhouse, to enable players to utilise WC and refreshment facilities, and to access Reception if assistance is needed. Users will be given an access code when booking the courts online, which will grant access to a particular court.

The site plan has been designed such that access can be 'zoned' through gates and fencing to enable use as required. For example, on some match days, turnstile access to the pitches will be required, but this does not prohibit use of the padel courts. As noted, the clubhouse will also be zoned to prevent the general public accessing player accommodation. Please refer to the submitted drawings.



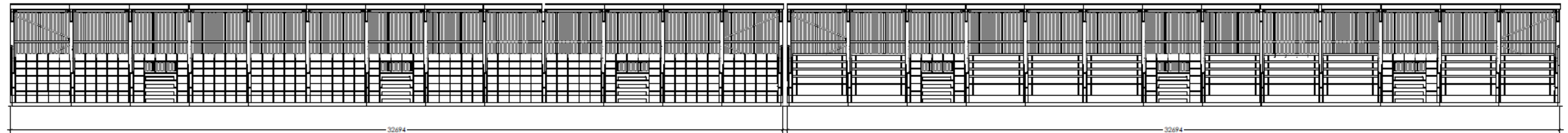
6.0 Proposed Design

6.9 Spectator Stands

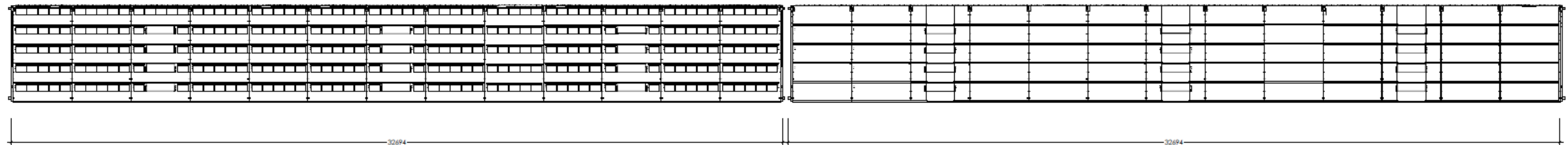
Covered spectator stands will enable parents, grandparents, friends, and the wider community to show support on match days and during training sessions.

The proposed stands will allow for 250 seated spectators, and provides standing accommodation for an additional 250 people, in line with Football Foundation guidance.

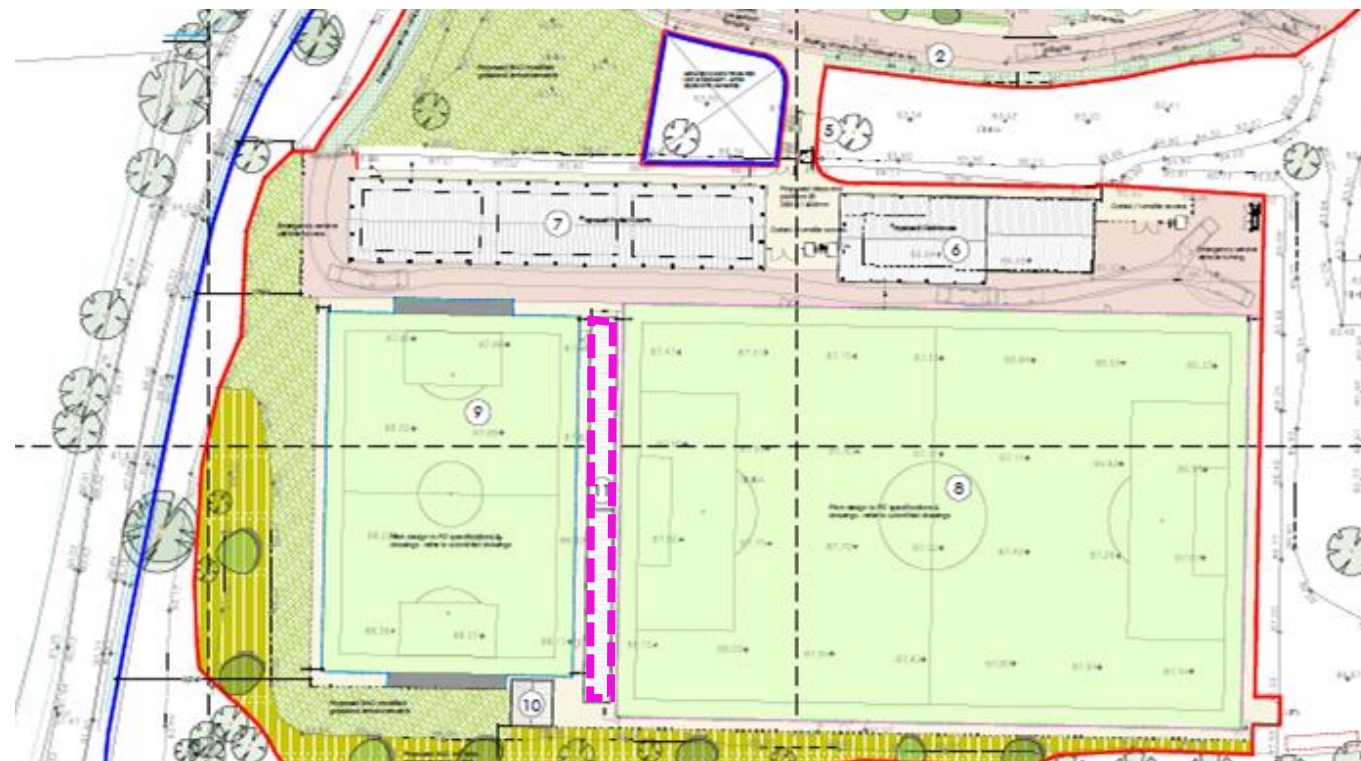
The stands overlook the main 11-a-side pitch and are in reasonable proximity to the clubhouse's WC and refreshment facilities.



Proposed Spectator Stands - Elevation



Proposed Spectator Stands - Plan view



 Spectator stands location on the site

6.0 Proposed Design

6.10 Artificial Grass Pitches

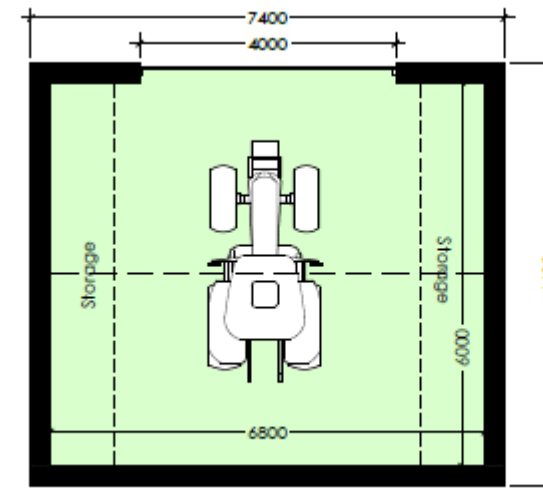
The pitches themselves have been designed by pitch specialist PST Sport. As noted, the provision of Artificial Grass Pitches on the site will provide a safe, high-quality surface which enables the site to be used all-year round, offering higher durability and lower maintenance than traditional grass pitches. Please refer to the submitted drawings by PST, including the fencing and lighting layouts.



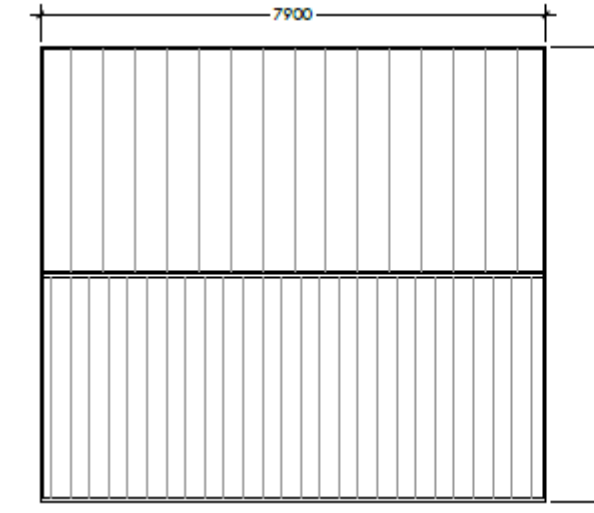
6.0 Proposed Design

6.11 Tractor Store

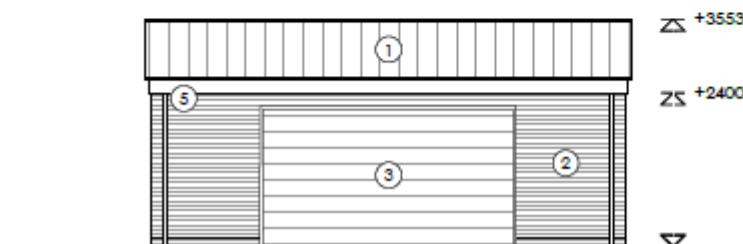
The Tractor Store can accommodate a standard astroturf maintenance tractor and provides additional storage space for ground maintenance tools and equipment.



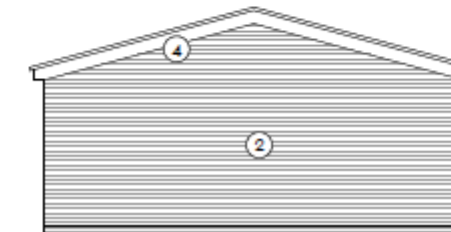
Proposed Floorplan



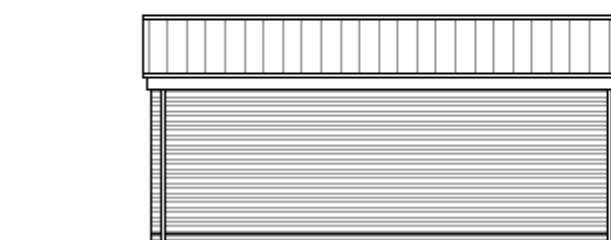
Proposed Roof Plan



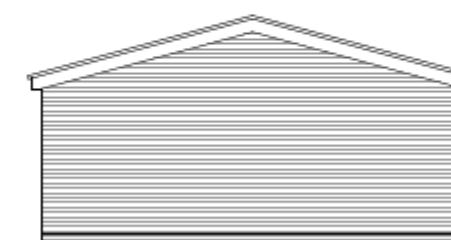
Front (East) Elevation



South Elevation



West Elevation



North Elevation

Materials key:

1. Dark grey single lap concrete roof tiles
2. Red facing brickwork
3. Galvanised steel roller shutter door
4. UPVC eaves
5. UPVC gutters and downpipes

7.0 Access

7.1 Design and policy approach

- The proposed development will comply with the Leicestershire Highways Design Guide.

7.2 Consultation

- We have been working with Edwards & Edwards Consultancy Ltd to develop proposals for improved existing access, and an upgraded/formalised car park.

7.3 Vehicular access

- The existing site access will be utilised.
- Good levels of visibility are achievable in both directions and the access has been used by the Club for a number of years.
- Please refer to the accompanying Highways Report.

7.4 Pedestrian access

- There is no direct pedestrian access to the site as Desford Lane has no footpath, however, the adjacent proposed development for 225 dwellings is required to provide a new footpath on the side of our access.



Existing site access. Source: Google Streetview.

7.0 Access

7.5 Site and building entrances

Site entrance as noted. The building entrances have been considered in relation to access. For example, on days when turnstile access is required up to the football pitches, the Clubroom Reception can be still be accessed if the overall site is open.

7.6 Inclusive design

Six disabled parking spaces are proposed in line with guidance from the Leicestershire Highways Design Guide. Disabled parking is not currently possible on the site. The proposed disabled parking is sited closest to the lift up to the Clubhouse/football pitch area.

Overall, as noted elsewhere in the document, the site seeks to realise a welcoming and inclusive approach to sport, both for players themselves and their wider support network. Through providing a dedicated Clubroom in close proximity, and level, landscaped pedestrian paths around the site, this will allow those using wheelchairs and mobility equipment to gain access to areas which are currently not possible due to the terrain.

This, in addition to the covered spectator stands and dedicated Clubhouse facility with associated WCs, medical room, reception, and kitchen/servery, enable parents, friends and the wider community to have an enjoyable and safe experience watching matches.

Provision of all-weather pitches will enable them to be used all-year round, where the existing grass pitches are currently liable to flooding, frost, and mud, which is resulting in a significant portion of training sessions and matches being called off.

Enabling young people to have access to sports clubs helps nurture young people within a controlled environment to help reduce the risk of anti-social behaviour, and it is imperative that consistent weekly sessions and matches are available to the community.

The site already caters for a wide range of age groups, genders, and for people of varying backgrounds and ethnicities and upgrading the current facilities will only further help encourage member retention.

7.7 Public/private space

The site will have a security fence to allow facilities to be open or closed as required by the Club.

7.8 Emergency service access

Tracking analysis has been undertaken to ensure emergency vehicles have access. Proposed fire hydrants are indicated on the site plan drawing.