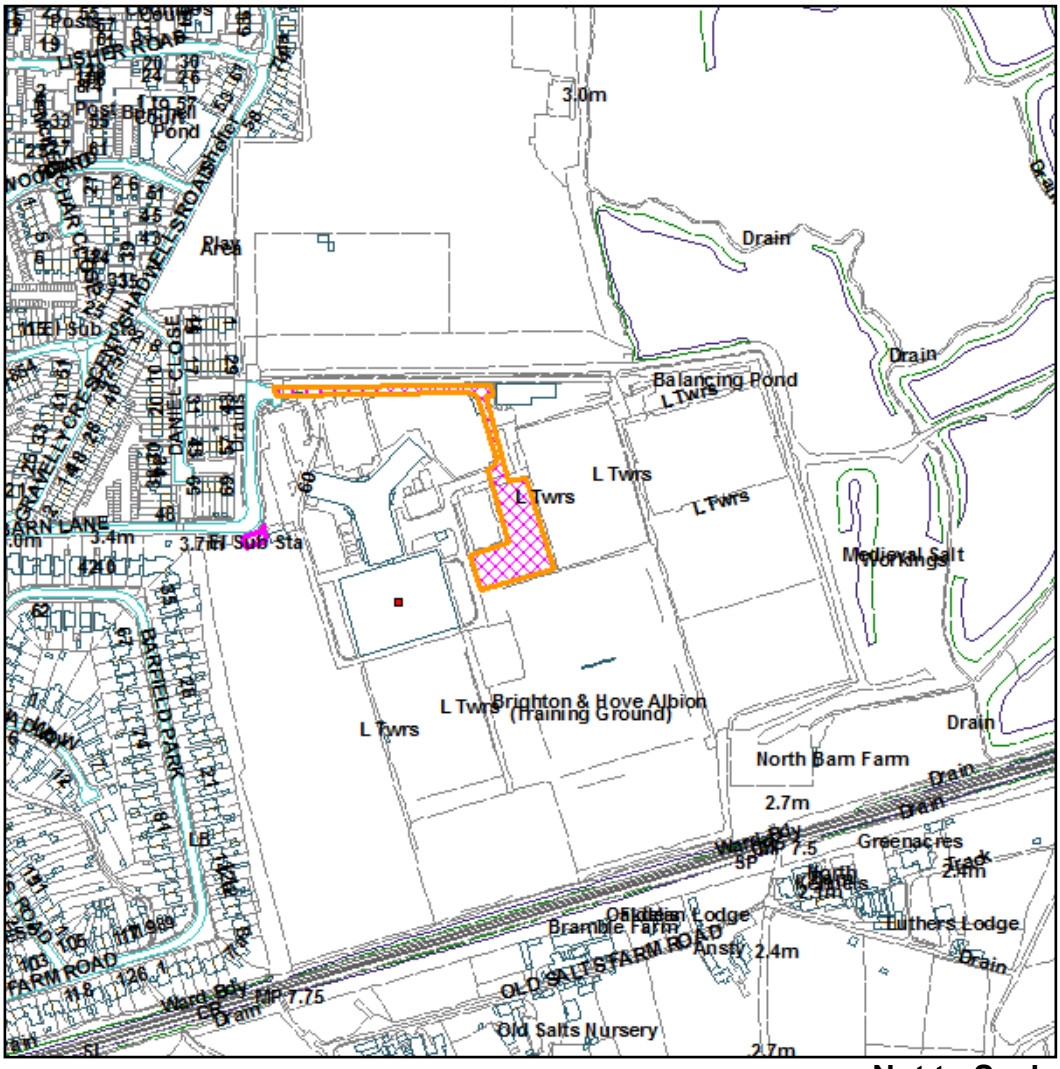
Application Number:	**AWDM/1188/24**	**Recommendation - APPROVE**
Site:	**Brighton And Hove Albion Training Ground, 60 Mash Barn Lane, Lancing**	
Proposal:	**Levelling out of running hill; proposed covered padel courts along with associated 2-storey building comprising changing rooms and office/classroom space**	
Applicant:	The Community Stadium Limited	Ward: Mash Barn
Agent:	DMH Stallard	
Case Officer:	Peter Barnett	



Not to Scale

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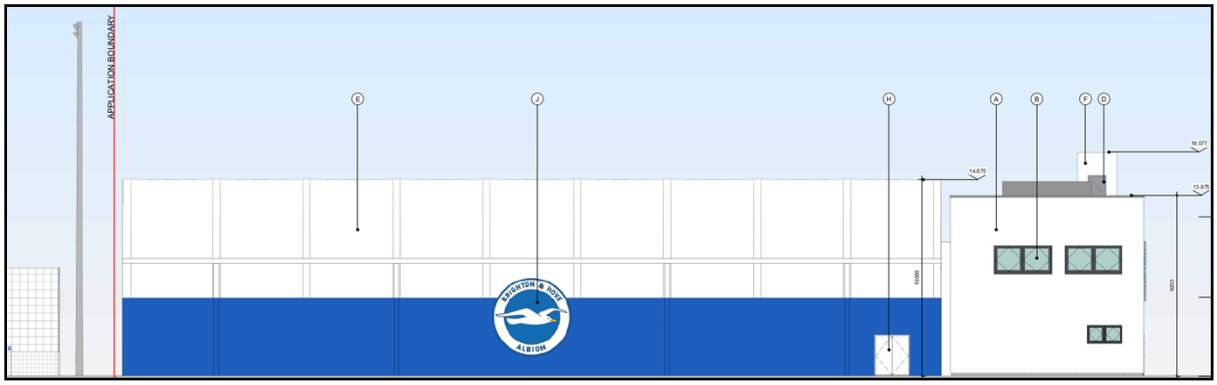
Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The application relates to the Brighton and Hove FC Elite Football Performance Centre and comprises an area to the east of the main training ground building and indoor pitch. There is currently an artificial 3G surface with level training grid and a running hill which rises to a maximum height of 2.5m. The main car park is to the north and there is new housing at New Monks Farm further north, separated by a bund. The site is some distance from the Performance Centre boundaries and neighbouring dwellings.

It is proposed to remove the running hill and training grid and to construct a dome shaped canopy 10m tall along the southern edge of the site, this will contain 2no. covered padel courts separated by a central seating area. The proposed canopy is coloured white and its walls would be blue.

An attached two-storey flat roofed building is also proposed, which will contain changing rooms on the ground floor with ancillary "multi-functional" space on the first floor which the supporting statement suggests will be used as office/classroom space. The padel court canopy will be fixed to the east elevation of this two-storey building. The building will be 9.2m tall to the top of the parapet but will contain a stair access to a height of 11.4m. It will be finished in white render. The roof will contain plant and PV panels. The remainder of the site will be levelled and finished with a 3G surface.

The padel court building will be 42m wide and 28m deep. The 2 storey building will be 9.9m wide and 26m deep.



While the site does not currently contain any grass or have any ecological value, the application includes proposals to enhance biodiversity on a small area of grassland on the western side of the site, adjacent to the access road. It is proposed to plant a single tree on the land to enhance habitat creation and to provide additional food sources for wildlife.

The application is supported by a Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement, Ecology Site Walkover and BREEAM Assessment, Energy Statement and Flood Risk Assessment.

The application is a major development.

Relevant Planning History

AWDM/0205/12 – Construction of a training ground and football academy for Brighton

and Hove Albion Football Club with access from Mash Barn Lane, comprising 11 outdoor pitches (2 of which are floodlit), external training grids, a Y-shaped 2 storey building to house changing rooms, associated offices, medical facilities, gym, catering and leisure facilities, a grounds maintenance building, security lodge, half-sized indoor training pitch and small sub-station/boiler house/refuse and recycling structure, plus 303 car parking spaces, 25-30 cycle spaces, coach parking, on-site access roads, security fencing and landscaping around the site.

AWDM/0205/13 – Construction of 3no. additional football pitches (1 x grass, 2 x artificial) and relocation of reed bed on land to east of approved training ground. Continuation of acoustic fencing on northern boundary plus fencing and landscaping to site boundary.

AWDM/0171/14 - Installation of floodlighting to previously approved northernmost community pitch (amendment to planning permission AWDM/0205/13 for construction of 3 No. additional football pitches (1 x grass, 2 x artificial), relocation of reed bed, extension of fencing and landscaping to site boundary)

AWDM/0277/14 – Application for a minor material amendment to permission reference AWDM/0205/12 to enable replacement of half-sized academy pitch with a futsal (5 a side) pitch, 3G surface and running hill (max. height 2.5m)

AWDM1716/15 - Construction of spectator stand to accommodate a total of 500 people (to include 6 wheelchair and helper positions) and camera tower.

AWDM/0759/16 - Formation of a landscaped bund (north of training ground) and provision of an access (for maintenance vehicles only) to the Ground Maintenance Building and Community Pitch from Mash Barn Lane (with access for construction traffic to be from A27)

AWDM/0236/19 - Reconfiguration and extension of Training Ground including extension to existing Training Centre building, erection of a new single storey 'Club Hub' building to include women's and girls' changing rooms, community changing rooms and pitchside seating for parents/coaches, formation of an additional three pitches and training grid, reconfiguration of existing pitches including relocation of indoor pitch, showpitch, spectator stand, floodlighting and camera tower, provision of additional 51 parking spaces, provision of a temporary construction haul road from the A27, plus hard and soft landscaping.

AWDM/0032/20 -Application for Variation of Condition 1 (approved plans) to AWDM/0236/19 for amendments to fenestration of the Training Centre, reduced plant louvre screen on the roof of the Training Centre, addition of a stair enclosure to the roof of the Training Centre; reduced height of link between Training Centre and indoor pitch, various minor amendments to fenestration of the Club Hub, and increased height of the plant louvres to roof of Club Hub. Amendment to approved fencing details on eastern boundary and provision of additional landscaping

AWDM/1021/21 - Application for Minor Material Amendments to approved application reference AWDM/0236/19 namely:
Provision of a covered standing area for parents adjacent to parents lounge, Provision of a covered walkway between the Club Hub and Training Centre, Provision of refuse

enclosure adjacent to bin store, Extended goal storage alcove, Relocation of internal stairwell to exterior of building and reuse of internal floorspace, Installation of new vehicular and pedestrian security gates (retrospective)

Consultations

West Sussex County Council: The Highways Authority has no objection. The proposed development is not anticipated to give rise to a material intensification of use of the existing access point.

Local Lead Flood Authority: No objection and no conditions to recommend

Adur and Worthing Councils: Public Health: No adverse comments

Southern Water: No comments regarding foul sewerage. The Council's technical staff and the relevant authority for land drainage consent should comment on the adequacy of the proposals to discharge surface water to the local watercourse. From the site location, it appears that the proposed development lies within an area identified as flood zone 3. Southern Water supports the Government's requirement to apply the sequential and exception tests to development sites located in flood zones 3. In flood events, additional surface water can inundate sewers, which may result in the overloading of the sewerage system. Southern Water will rely on the Council's consultations with the Environment Agency to ensure that any proposed development on a floodplain is appropriately assessed, and necessary mitigation measures adopted.

Sport England: No objection. The site is not accessible to the community and the particular location within it is not capable of being used for formal playing pitches. The proposed development would be provided only for club players and staff only. Notwithstanding that the facility is for private club use only, I have consulted with the Football Foundation (FF) and the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA). The FF would make a general comment that aligned to providing modern ancillary provision that the proposed urinals in the male WCs should be replaced with cubicles to provide greater inclusivity and flexibility of use if required.
The LTA would prefer to see consideration given to opening up the padel courts to community use.

Whilst the LTA's comments are noted, it is appreciated that this is not a public, community facility and the proposal would have no negative impact on accessibility. In light of that, Sport England raises no objection to the application because it is considered to accord with exception 3 of our Playing Fields Policy and paragraph 103 of the NPPF.

Brighton City Airport: No aerodrome safeguarding objection, subject to a condition requiring a glint and glare assessment of the proposed PV panels.

South Downs National Park Authority: No comment

West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service: Currently the nearest Hydrant to the proposed covered padel courts along with associated 2-storey building comprising

changing rooms and office/classroom space is 470 metres away. The supply of water for firefighting for commercial premises should be within 90 metres. Evidence will also be required that Fire Service vehicle access meets with the requirements identified in Approved Document B. Recommends a condition to address this.

Representations

None received

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adur Local Plan 2017 Policies 5, 13, 14, 15, 18, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36
National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)
WSCC Guidance on Parking at New Developments (Sept 2020).
Sustainable Energy SPD (August 2019)

Relevant Legislation

The Committee should consider the planning application in accordance with:

Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provides that the application may be granted either unconditionally or subject to relevant conditions, or refused. Regard shall be given to relevant development plan policies, any relevant local finance considerations, and other material considerations; and

Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that requires the decision to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Planning Assessment

Principle

The site circumstances have changed considerably since the original development of this site for the Performance Centre back in 2012. Since then the site has been included within the built up area boundary and is no longer within the countryside or Strategic/Local Green Gap. The strategic development at New Monks Farm to the north has also been granted permission and development is well underway.

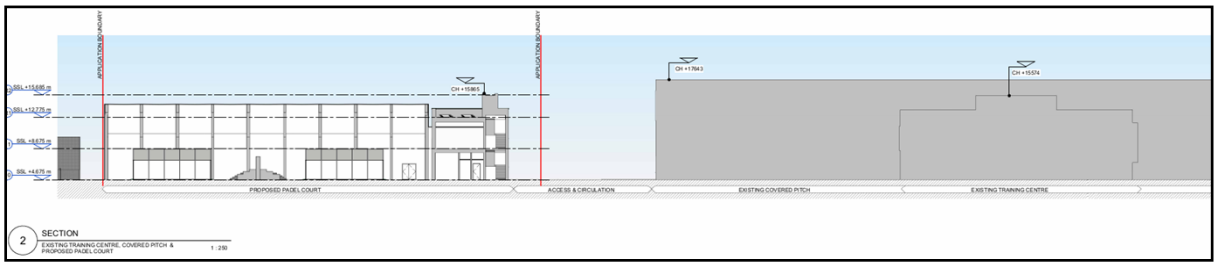
The main considerations are therefore ensuring that the proposed development respects the character of the site and surrounding area, with particular regard to its visual impact in the wider landscape and in more distant views.

Visual amenity and landscape impact

The design and appearance of the proposed building and canopy adopts the corporate branding and colour scheme used on the existing main training centre building and covered pitches to the west, being largely white with blue motif.

The proposed two storey building will be a similar height to the main performance centre building (the training centre is 9m tall to the top of the parapet compared with 9.2m for the building now proposed) but the stair access will be higher than the plant

on the main building (11.4m proposed, 10.9m existing). The existing canopy over the indoor pitch is 13m tall and the proposed dome is 10m tall.



The position of the proposed building and canopy close to the main building will help to reduce their visual impact in the wider landscape. From the west, the existing building and covered pitch will largely screen the proposal while from the east the new buildings will be viewed in the context of the existing building which sits behind.

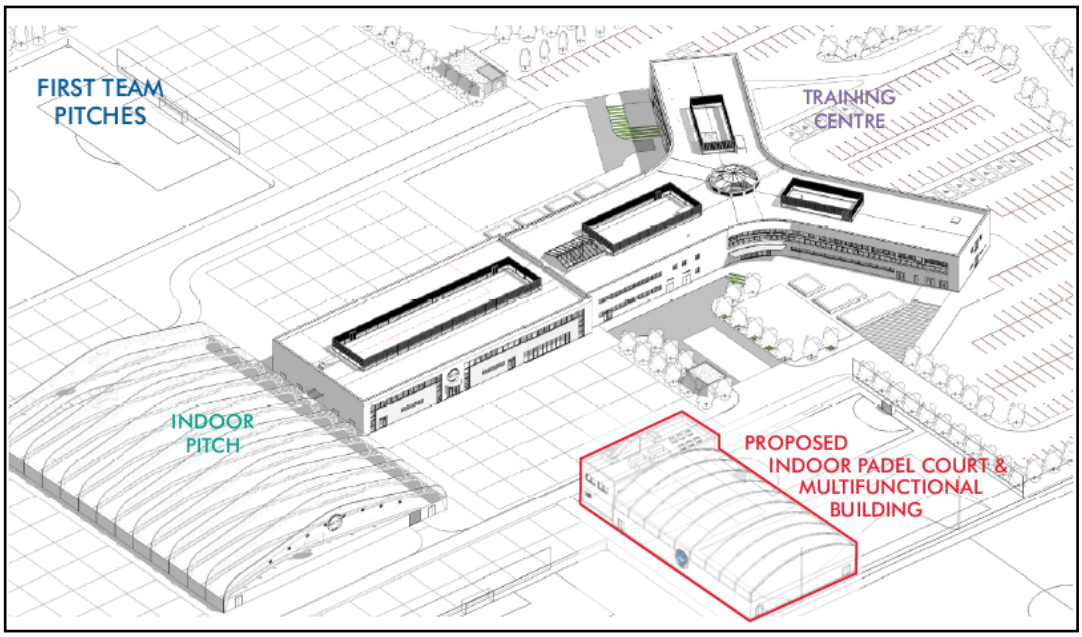
The applicant's agent was asked to submit an update to a previous landscape and visual impact assessment for the site and their photos show that from the east the views of the site are now partly obscured by the new Panattoni buildings at Shoreham Airport. Longer views from Mill Hill will be visible but the proposal will be seen against the backdrop of the existing training ground building and covered pitch, with the New Monks Farm development in the foreground.

Views from Lancing Ring will also be visible but in the context of the new residential development in the foreground and the existing buildings at the training ground. The SDNPA has not commented on the proposal.



Nevertheless, the proposal will result in an additional large white domed roof and your

Officers are concerned at the visual impact of this in wider views, notwithstanding the new development at New Monks Farm in the foreground when viewed from the Downs. The existing white dome of the indoor pitches is a very noticeable feature, mainly due to its height, size and bright white colour which stands out in longer views across the airport and among the more muted roofscape around it. The new canopy will lie to the east of this, at right angles to the existing covered pitches and will present a new white dome covering, 42m wide and 10m high.



The applicants were asked to justify the building which, on the face of it, does not appear to be directly related to the main football-related activity of the site. They have explained:

"*The court is necessary to provide an active leisure facility away from football that all members of the Club and BHAFC Foundation staff can enjoy. This will help staff to be more active and improve their wellbeing. Padel is one of the fastest growing sports in the UK, and many staff already play at various venues, so there is already great interest in using the courts at the training ground.*

The training ground is a Category 1 boys academy training facility and has Professional Game Academy status for the girls academy awarded by the Football Association, both of which are the highest categories available to Football Clubs. Therefore, it is one of the best training facilities in the world. The padel courts are a further enhancement of this facility by BHAFC to ensure that their staff have opportunities to remain active and healthy whilst at work. It will also be made available to parents of Academy players and so it will also be an added benefit for those parents who will be able to use the facility whilst their children take part in training."

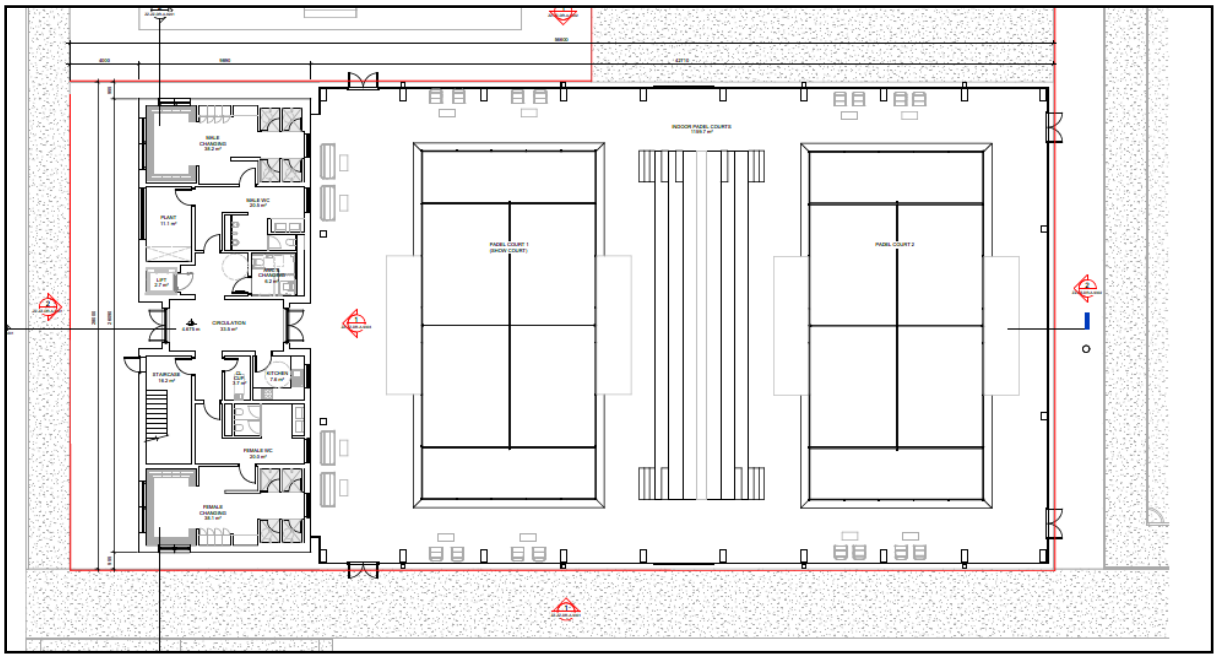
The need for such a tall canopy was also queried and the following response received:

"For new facilities, the LTA recommends a clear internal height over the playing area of 8m and depending on the roof profile this generally gives an external peak height to the 'ridge' of between 9.5m and 10.5m as the roof truss needs a certain shape to achieve structural integrity. The internal clear height is clearly less due to the depth of

the truss.

A key part of padel is lobbing your opponents and so the height of the roof directly impacts the playability of the game with the ball potentially hitting colliding with the roof truss. Given that the people using the facility will generally be of above average athleticism the clear height of 8 m is necessary."

The courts include a central seated viewing area and the applicants were asked to consider removing this to help reduce the width of the dome.



Their response was:

"The viewing area is necessary for the purposes of ensuring there is seating for people waiting to use the court as well as providing somewhere for spectators to view the games from. We expect this to be popular with players and staff, and there will be an interest in watching others play."

The need for the two storey building attached to the western end of the building was also questioned and the following response received:

"Since the training ground opened over 10 years ago the Club have progressed from a Football League team to one that is challenging towards the top half of the Premier League and competed in Europe last season for the first time. In line with this growth in profile, its operational and performance requirements have grown exponentially. This growth has included significant investment in the boys and girls academy and significant growth in the women's and girls' game, as well as its medical and wellbeing facilities. This has meant that the space requirements of the Club have grown significantly, and the Club needs to maximise office, education, welfare, performance, and teaching space throughout the Training Centre. It is referred to as a multi-functional space because the Club would like the opportunity to utilise it either as teaching/lecture space and/or offices and therefore would not wish future use to be restricted. It is understood that the most likely use will be as a teaching space associated with the boys and girls Academies."

The applicants have therefore provided reasons to support the provision of such a facility and for its size and scale, but the expanse of white roof remains a concern. The applicants were asked to consider a more muted colour but they wish to keep the colour scheme as submitted. They have explained that, in their view:

“The main reason for using a white cover is because it allows more sunlight in, which means that it would not be necessary to use internal lighting at all during daylight hours. The use of an alternative colour would increase the need to use internal lighting having an impact on the amount of energy used and therefore sustainability.

In addition, all other buildings within the Training Ground are white and an alternative colour would look stark in contrast to these. Consequently, we consider that this is the best approach for this proposal.”

The site is no longer in the countryside and so the applicants do not have to justify an essential need for the development. However, development should comply with the requirements of Policy 15 of the Local Plan which states:

“Development should be of a high architectural quality and respect and enhance the character of the site, and the prevailing character of the area, in terms of proportion, form, context, massing, siting, layout, density, height, size, scale, materials, detailed design features and landscaping. Development should:
Enhance the local environment by way of its appearance and character, with particular attention being paid to the architectural form, height, materials, density, scale, orientation, landscaping and layout of the development.”

While the main buildings on the site have a white colour scheme, there is a darker maintenance building on the northern edge of the site. The proposed two storey building to the side of the domed roof is also to be white but that will present a rather limited expanse of white wall in views from the Downs as its main elevation faces west towards the existing performance centre building and it is consequently less of a concern than the height and expanse of white domed canopy roof over the padel courts and its visual impact.

The desire for a colour scheme that matches other buildings at the site is understood but in terms of its context in the wider landscape, a more muted grey or dark green roof for the proposed dome is likely to have less impact in wider views. Members are therefore asked to consider whether an alternative colour should be required here, taking into account the existing buildings, the surrounding development and the arguments put forward by the applicants.

The scale of the building in relation to the adjoining performance centre and indoor pitch, and in the context of the new development in the foreground, is considered to be acceptable, but final details of the finished colour should be reserved by condition to ensure that the visual impact in the landscape is minimised.

Residential amenity

The proposal relates to a central part of the site which is screened from residential dwellings to the west by the main building and indoor pitch. It is also a considerable distance from houses to the north and south. It is not considered that the activity associated with the proposed development will have a significant impact on residential amenity compared with the previous use of the site.

Accessibility and parking

The proposal will not be open to the public and will be used in connection with the existing activities at the training ground. There will be no change to vehicular movements or access arrangements and WSCC Highways have no objection.

Flood risk and Drainage

The site lies in Flood Zone 3 where the NPPF usually requires all new development to be subject to the Sequential and Exception Tests to ensure that there are no other more preferable lower risk sites available for the development. There are exemptions, including where a development is on a site allocated in the development plan through the sequential test and

- the proposal is consistent with site's allocated use
- there have been no significant changes to the known level of flood risk to the site, now or in the future, which would have affected the outcome of the test

To support their case the applicants have stated:

"*We would argue that in the context of the PPG and using a plain English reading, allocated is synonymous with being permitted. Further to this and with reference to the Adur Local Plan Policies Map the site is clearly identified as the 'Brighton & Hove Albion Football Academy' and therefore it is clear from the Local Plan that the site is identified for this use (irrespective of a specific policy for the Training Ground). The proposals are for the redevelopment of an existing outdoor sporting use (running hill) with an alternative outdoor sporting use and there is no change to the permitted use of the site, or the flood risk associated with the site.*

Notwithstanding the above if we were to apply a Sequential Test, we would note the following guidance contained in the PPG:

"Equally, a pragmatic approach needs to be taken where proposals involve comparatively small extensions to existing premises (relative to their existing size), where it may be impractical to accommodate the additional space in an alternative location."

We would argue that this is a comparatively small extension to the relative size of existing development across the training ground. A pragmatic approach must therefore be taken, and it would be impractical to accommodate the proposal in any alternative location given that it is a facility to support the existing uses."

In this case, your Officers agree with the applicant's approach. In reality, the proposed development would not be located on any other site because it is a new facility that is ancillary to the existing facilities at the training ground and that will be used to support the training of players and for parents visiting the training ground. Therefore, the only reasonable and sequentially preferable location for the building is at the training ground itself.

In terms of the Exception Test:

"*It should be demonstrated that:*

- *development that has to be in a flood risk area will provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk; and*
- *the development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall*."

In this case, while the development is not to be made available to the wider public, it will benefit those players and staff that use the training ground, as well as their parents. It will consolidate facilities for an important local football club, with its location in Lancing being of immense value to many local residents that support the team as well as having economic benefits for the area as a whole.

The submitted FRA notes that the surface water will be discharged into the existing surface water system on site and be reused for pitch irrigation with no discharge from the development. The Flood Risk Assessment also provides calculations confirming the scheme can contain the 100 year plus 45% climate change event within the site without increasing flood risk, a plan and the calculations are located in Appendix 6 of the Flood Risk Assessment. The development does not increase or have any impact on flood risk elsewhere.

There is no impact from the building on a tidal flood. No compensatory storage is required for a tidal flood risk and in the unlikely event that the defences were significantly breached or removed then the building would flood during a 1 in 200 year tidal event. The existing flood defences on the banks of the River Adur were designed to offer a 1:300 year protection for up to 50 years and 1:200 year protection for approximately 75 years. The Hazard Mapping produced by the Environment Agency confirms that the site is defended and the hazard associated with flood risk is very low. There is therefore only a residual tidal flood risk from a breach or removal of the defences.

The type of development proposed is classified as being a 'Less Vulnerable' use and is considered to be acceptable in flood zones. The proposal is not expected to increase flood risk elsewhere and the LLFA has not raised any objections to the proposal.

The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in flood risk terms in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF.

Sustainability

The submitted Energy Report suggests that the use of PV panels on the roof of the two storey building and the construction of a high thermal performance building will reduce carbon emissions and energy demand, and will achieve a BREEAM rating of 'Very Good' in accordance with Policy 18 of the Local Plan.

Ecology and biodiversity net gain (BNG)

The proposals are exempt from BNG requirements as the site does not currently contain any grass or have any ecological value. However, in order to meet BREEAM requirements, the application includes proposals to enhance biodiversity on a small area of grassland on the western side of the site, adjacent to the access road. It is proposed to plant a single tree on the land as a minor habitat enhancement.

Recommendation

Approve

Subject to conditions:-

1. Approved Plans.

2. Standard time limit.

3. Construction Management Plan.

4. Final details of materials, including finished colour, to be approved.

5. Landscaping details to be submitted and approved.

6. Final details of the number and position of PV panels, including a glint and glare assessment, to be submitted.

7. 1) Prior to the commencement of the development details showing the proposed location of [1] one fire hydrant or stored water supply (in accordance with the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Guidance Notes) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with West Sussex County Council's Fire and Rescue Service. These approvals shall not be unreasonably withheld or delayed.

   2) Prior to the first occupation of any unit forming part of the proposed development that they will at their own expense install the fire hydrant (or in a phased programme if a large development) in the approved location to BS 750 standards or stored water supply and arrange for their connection to a water supply which is appropriate in terms of both pressure and volume for the purposes of firefighting.

   The fire hydrant shall thereafter be maintained as part of the development by the water undertaker at the expense of the Fire and Rescue Service if adopted as part of the public mains supply (Fire Services Act 2004) or by the owner / occupier if the installation is retained as a private network.

3 February 2025

Local Government Act 1972
Background Papers:

As referred to in individual application reports

Contact Officers:

Peter Barnett
Principal Planning Officer (Development Management)
Town Hall
01903 221310
peter.barnett@adur-worthing.gov.uk