

**Application Number:** 23/10375 Full Planning Permission  
**Site:** LYMINGTON SPORTS GROUND, ST THOMAS PARK,  
LYMINGTON SO41 9NF  
**Development:** Additional spectator stand; re-build of facilities to rear of  
existing stand; new maintenance store; 3 x turnstiles; fence  
(AMENDED REASON TO ADVERTISE)  
**Applicant:** Lymington and Pennington Town Council  
**Agent:** Draycott Chartered Surveyors  
**Target Date:** 16/06/2023  
**Case Officer:** Sophie Tagg  
**Officer Recommendation:** Grant Subject to Conditions  
**Reason for Referral  
to Committee:** Ward Councillor Objection

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## 1 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN ISSUES

The key issues are:

- Principle of the proposed development
- Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, including the Lymington Conservation Area
- Amenity considerations
- Impact on the local highway network, parking and access
- Ecological considerations

## 2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site lies within the built-up area of Lymington and is in the Lymington Conservation Area. The football pitches are currently enclosed by fencing on the northern and western boundaries of the pitches and part of the eastern boundary, comprising a white post and rail fence infilled with a white square mesh. There is a single-storey spectator stand with a shipping storage container set behind the fence on the western side of the pitches with an area of hardstanding adjacent to the south of the existing stand. There is a grassed area to the north of the stand.

The site forms part of the wider sports grounds, which include cricket and rugby pitches, a pavilion building and tennis courts and a bowling green with associated club buildings. There is car parking available on hardstanding to the north of the football pitch within the site accessed from the north.

The site can be accessed from Southampton Road to the south-west and Avenue Road to the north.

### 3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposal seeks to rebuild the facilities to the rear of the existing stand, removing the container, to provide improved changing and toilet facilities and a kitchen, and to add additional seating to the front of the stand, providing an additional c.30 seats. An additional spectator stand is proposed to the north of the existing stand, which would provide covered standing for c.60-80 spectators, whilst a new maintenance store is proposed in the north-western corner of the site. Additionally, 3 turnstiles are proposed to each corner of the site, with a 2 metre high fence with gates also proposed, which would allow for emergency vehicle access along the northern side of the pitch along the perimeter of the car park. The existing car parking area would remain in situ.

The intention is for the football club facilities to be upgraded to a standard which meets the FA requirements set out within the submitted Design and Access Statement.

In order to comply with FA Ground grading standards for grade F to D (step 5 Premier divisions to step 4), alterations are required to the grounds and facilities. The first phase of the alterations was completed in 2021/2022, and the next phase is now required for 2023 to meet League and FA requirements at this level.

### 4 PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal	Decision Date	Decision Description	Status
12/98598 Removal of Condition 1 of Planning Permission 09/94792 to allow permanent siting of portable cabin	08/06/2012	Granted	Decided
09/94792 Temporary siting of a portable cabin for a period of 2 years	21/04/2010	Grant Temporary Permission	Decided
07/90184 Temporary siting of portacabin for use as hospitality room for a period of two years	26/07/2007	Grant Temporary Permission	Decided
04/81923 Temporary siting of Portacabin for use as a hospitality room (renewal of Temporary Permission 74583)	08/12/2004	Granted Subject to Conditions	Decided
02/74583 Continued siting of portacabin for use as hospitality room (Retrospective)	24/05/2002	Grant Temporary Permission	Decided
98/NFDC/63066 Continued siting of portacabin - renew PP 58067 :	06/03/1998	Granted Subject to Conditions	Decided
96/NFDC/59927 Erect floodlighting to tennis courts	14/11/1996	Granted Subject to Conditions	Decided
96/NFDC/59566 Siting of Rollalong structure for store/ablution facilities	02/09/1996	Granted Subject to Conditions	Decided
95/NFDC/58067 Siting of portacabin for use as hospitality room	12/01/1996	Granted Subject to Conditions	Decided
95/NFDC/56925 Erect replacement floodlight and construct hardstanding	25/07/1995	Granted Subject to Conditions	Decided

91/NFDC/48930 Addition of stores to rear of spectators' stand	07/01/1992	Granted	Decided
88/NFDC/38858 Erection of covered sports stand.	22/09/1988	Granted	Decided
79/NFDC/13351 Construction of full floodlighting of football pitch.	16/07/1979	Granted	Decided

## **5 PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

### **Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1: Planning Strategy**

Policy CCC2: Safe and sustainable travel

Policy STR8: Community services, Infrastructure and facilities

Policy ENV3: Design quality and local distinctiveness

### **Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management 2014**

DM1: Heritage and Conservation

DM8: Protection of public open space, private playing fields and sports grounds and school playing fields

### **Core Strategy 2009**

CS7: Open spaces, sport and recreation

### **Supplementary Planning Guidance And Documents**

SPG - Lymington - A Conservation Area Appraisal

SPD - Lymington Local Distinctiveness

### **Plan Policy Designations**

Town Centre Boundary

Built-up Area

## **6 PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS**

**Lymington & Pennington Town Council:** We are happy to accept the decision reached by the District Council's Officers under their delegated powers.

## **7 COUNCILLOR COMMENTS**

Councillor Jacqui England:

Objects to the proposed planning application

## **8 CONSULTEE COMMENTS**

Comments have been received from the following consultees:

### **Conservation Officer**

No objection

It is recommended the colours and materials for the fence, store, stand including seating, fence and turnstile are agreed.

### **Sport England**

No objection - comment relating to siting of stand and views of pitch - this has been flagged to the Applicant.

### **Ecologist**

No comment

### **HCC Highways**

No objection

Further information has been submitted regarding the proposals, which indicated that this application involves providing a new covered stand. This new stand will result in a small increase of trips associated with the site; however, this is acceptable in this instance.

### **NFDC Tree Team**

No objection

### **NFDC Community Safety**

Support the proposal, which addresses reports of antisocial behaviour within the site.

## **9 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED**

The following is a summary of the representations received:

5 comments received neither supporting or objecting

1 letter of support received

1 letter of objection received

The following comments in support have been made:

- Positive step forward in that they would limit vandalism to the grounds and in particular to the stands and facilities
- Welcome renovations to improve facilities
- Plans to improve security and fencing

The following comments have been made in relation to queries or concerns:

- The convenient shortcut between Avenue Road and Southampton road would be affected
- Concerns regarding the increased need for parking and increased congestion around the local road network and within car parks
- Traffic disruption with increased vehicles and impact of pollution
- Reassurance sought around retaining the unrestricted access around the pitch for pedestrians
- Reassurance sought around retaining access to the tennis courts during matchdays
- Noise nuisance and flood lights left on after matches and training
- Request details of materials and colours of stands
- Overlooking into the changing rooms
- That the blue ticket cabin located at the changing end be removed
- The Sports Field status of a Conservation Area will not be complied with if this development goes ahead. The openness and ambience will be lost.

## **10 PLANNING ASSESSMENT**

### **Principle of the proposed development**

In principle, improved facilities for recreational uses are supported through both national and local policy. The site is designated as an area of public open space as shown on the policies map, and the development proposed is considered to be appropriate and in line with Policy DM8 of the Local Plan Part 2, as it seeks to provide small scale development of ancillary facilities which would enhance the recreational use of these areas. The football club is well established and the proposal would offer benefits to the club through the improvement of their facilities.

### **Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, including within the Conservation Area**

Policy ENV3 of the Local Plan and the Lymington Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) stipulate that new development will be required to be well-designed to respect the character, identity and context of the area's towns. Moreover, the policy states that new development will be required to create buildings, streets and spaces which are sympathetic to the environment and their context in terms of layout, landscape, scale, height, appearance and density and in relationship to adjoining buildings, spaces and landscape features.

The site is located on the edge of the Lymington Conservation Area and the proposal is viewed in the context of the existing sports ground which comprises a number of ancillary buildings, boundaries and formal pitches. There has been no objection raised by the Conservation Officer, and the proposal is considered to preserve the contribution the area makes both to the setting of listed buildings along Southampton Road, St Thomas Street and Queen Street, and to the character and appearance of the Lymington Conservation Area, as it seeks to contain the new development along the western edge of the site where there is the existing stand.

The proposed 2metre high fencing along the northern boundary is also considered to be acceptable within the setting, provided the fencing style and colour would match the existing square mesh fence around the perimeter of the football pitch. Details of the type and colour have been provided by the Applicant to ensure that there is consistency in design. It is therefore not necessary to condition this aspect of the proposal.

The application does not specifically detail the cladding materials and colour of the extension to the existing stand or the new stand, maintenance store or turnstiles. To ensure that these would be muted in colour and appearance and acceptable within the Conservation Area, a condition needs to be applied for further details to be submitted.

### **Amenity considerations**

The Application has been considered in relation to the overall impact on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers. Given its location within the existing sports ground area and the distance of the works from the closest properties on Southampton Road which back to back with the edge of the proposed development, are approximately 34 metres away, there is not considered to be any undue overlooking, loss of light or outlook. The windows proposed in the extension to the existing stand would be high level and would not result in any overlooking to rear garden areas. To maintain privacy of the users of the changing rooms (as raised by a local resident), the Applicant may wish to obscurely glaze the windows, but this is not considered to be a necessary planning requirement.

### **Impact on the local highway network, parking and access**

The site is located in a sustainable town centre location with access to a bus route and within walking distance of the train station. There have been concerns raised that the addition of a second stand will generate additional traffic in the vicinity of the site, along with associated parking difficulties. A Transport Statement has been submitted by the Applicant, which was requested by HCC Highways. This statement anticipates that any change in the levels of traffic would be negligible, as the crowds will remain fairly static and growth of the club would be in small increments. The

majority of spectators arrive at the site on foot. The club have advised that the numbers of persons attending to watch a match is unlikely to exceed the weekly average per game of 55 to 120 per week, and that it has been at these levels historically. The FA requirements are such that extra undercover seating and shelter is required to enable to club to improve and attract sponsors and stakeholders to ensure the club is supported long term. The Statement advises that the impact on local transport systems and highways will be unchanged, and an optimistic viewpoint would be a 1 or 2% growth by Season 2030.

HCC Highways have been reconsulted on this basis and raise no objection, advising that whilst the new stand, in their view, would be likely to result in a small increase in the number of trips associated with the site, this would be acceptable from a highway safety perspective.

Paragraph 111 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. Officers are satisfied that the proposals would not be of severe detriment to the operation and safety of the local highway network. Overall, it is considered that the proposal would not result in severe harm to public highway safety.

There is open access available at the moment for pedestrians between entrance points to the north and to the south. However, the route through the site is not a designated public right of way. The Applicant has advised that pedestrian access would be available during the week day through the proposed double gates which would be left open, and only on match days would the access be more limited. An appropriately worded condition is proposed to address this. The applicant has provided assurance that there would still be access to existing bowls and tennis facilities at all times, even on matchdays, via open pathways and routes around the recreation ground.

### **Ecological Considerations**

Following the adoption of the Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1 in July 2020, the Council has sought to secure environmental net gain / ecological enhancements, where it is proportionate to do so, as a requirement of planning permission for most forms of new development, in accordance with Policies STR1 and DM2. There have not been any ecological enhancement measures incorporated within the proposed development plans. However, an appropriately worded condition will be applied to require that proportionate in-built ecological enhancements are provided to secure biodiversity enhancements in line with the expectations of the Local Plan.

## **11 CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE**

Overall, on balance, it is considered that the proposal would not have a harmful impact upon the character of the area including the Conservation Area, highway safety, ecological interests, or neighbouring amenity subject to conditions as set out in the report above, in accordance with policies of the development plan. It is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

## **12 RECOMMENDATION**

**Grant Subject to Conditions**

**Proposed Conditions:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

SGD 003

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Fence elevation revised (as submitted 12 July 2023)

Reason: To ensure satisfactory provision of the development.

3. Prior to commencement of development, samples or exact details of the facing and roofing materials to be used for stand 2, the extension to stand 1, the maintenance store and the turnstiles shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure an acceptable appearance of the development in accordance with Policy ENV3 of the Local Plan 2016-2036 Part One: Planning Strategy for the New Forest District outside of the National Park.

4. Specific details of ecological enhancements to be incorporated into the development shall be provided to the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of the development. The identified ecological enhancements identified shall be installed prior to first use of the buildings hereby approved and shall thereafter be retained in perpetuity.

Reason: To deliver ecological enhancements in accordance with Policies STR1 and DM2 of the Local Plan for the New Forest District outside the National Park (Part 2 : Sites and Development Management).

5. The approved gates along the northern boundary of the site shall only be closed on match days and at all other times shall remain open to provide available public access into the sports ground.

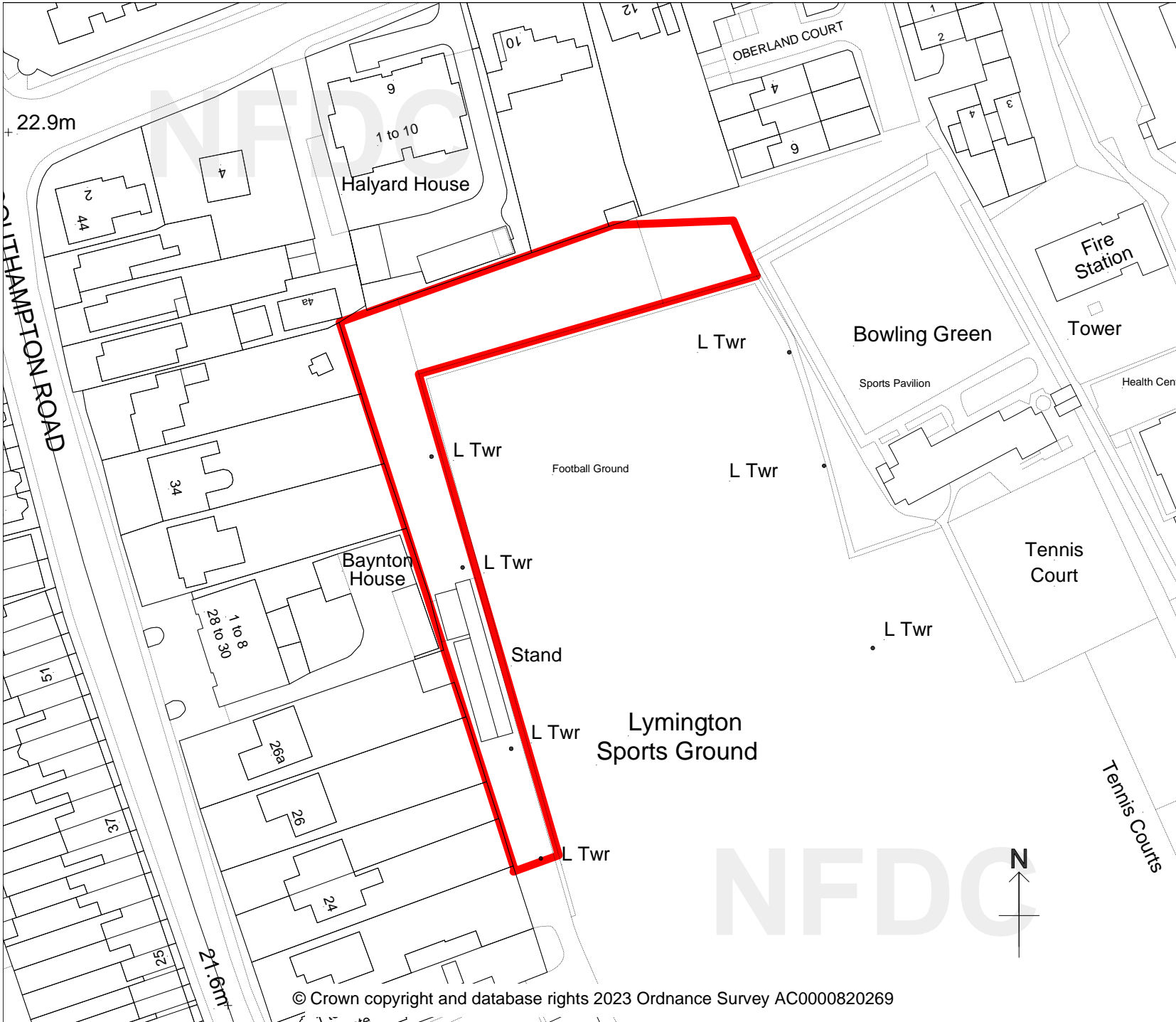
Reason: To ensure that public access into the sports ground is maintained.

**Further Information:**

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# New Forest

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## PLANNING COMMITTEE

October 2023

Lymington Sports Ground  
 St Thomas Park  
 Lymington  
 23/10375

Scale 1:1087

N.B. If printing this plan from the internet, it will not be to scale.