

BASE

Commercial:

PLANNING STATEMENT

PROJECT REFERENCE: CA4926

PROJECT NAME: Padel at Hornsey Cricket Club

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Erection of 4no. Padel courts at the Hornsey Crickey Club

PROJECT LOCATION: Hornsey Cricket Club, Tivoli Road, London, N8 8RG

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Base Architecture and Design (the Agent) has been appointed by Padeltastic Limited (Applicant) to prepare and submit a full planning application to the London Borough of Haringey (the Local Planning Authority) for development proposals at Hornsey Cricket Club, Tivoli Road, London.

The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of four padel tennis courts with canopy over, a new pavilion / reception building, and a small ancillary storage unit, together with associated access, lighting, and landscaping works. It is worth noting that planning consent already exists for the installation of four uncovered padel courts on this site (Reference: HGY/2024/3278), which was approved with conditions on 12 June 2025. This demonstrates an established precedent for padel courts in this location.

Hornsey Cricket Club is an established sporting venue with a long-standing role in providing outdoor sport and recreation for the local community. Building on the continued growth and popularity of padel tennis nationally and within London, an opportunity has been identified to diversify and enhance the sporting offer at the site. The proposals aim to:

- (i) broaden access to high-quality sports facilities for club members and the wider community;
- (ii) support health, well-being, and social interaction through the introduction of a highly inclusive and accessible sport; and
- (iii) secure the long-term sustainability of the cricket club by introducing complementary recreational uses.

The purpose of this Planning Statement is to demonstrate that the proposed development accords with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the London Plan, and the relevant policies of the Haringey Local Plan. It assesses the planning balance and outlines the social, economic, and environmental benefits of the proposals. This statement should be read alongside the submitted Design and Access Statement and supporting technical documents.

2.0 LOCATION AND CONTEXT

Hornsey Cricket Club is located on Tivoli Road in north London and comprises a well-established cricket ground with associated clubhouse and ancillary facilities. The site is characterised by its open sporting use and mature landscape setting, forming an important recreational asset within the local area.

The surrounding context is predominantly residential, interspersed with other sports and leisure facilities and areas of open space. Notably, Highgate Wood School lies to the southwest of the site, while Park Road Pools and Fitness is located to the northeast. The site benefits from good accessibility by sustainable modes of transport, including nearby bus routes, supporting its role as a community sports venue.

Hornsey Cricket Club has a strong history of community engagement and provides opportunities for participation across a wide range of age groups and abilities. The introduction of padel courts within the site represents a logical and compatible evolution of its sporting function, complementing the existing cricket use and reinforcing the site's role as a hub for outdoor sport and recreation.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

The following planning applications have been submitted to the London Borough of Haringey. These applications represent the applications that are readily available online through the planning portal, earlier applications are not considered to be relevant to this application.

A planning application with reference HGY/2008/0481, was submitted in 2008 for the conversion of office/ storage room to studio flat entailing modifications to adjacent changing room, this was to house the groundskeeper of the site. It was approved with conditions 17 April 2008.

In 2014 planning permission was sought for the erection of a three lane enclosed outdoor cricket net facility on the unused end tennis court. It was granted with conditions 13 June 2014

In 2024, planning permission was granted under reference HGY/2024/2070 for the installation of four de-mountable instant padel courts on the site of the existing hardstanding tennis court for a temporary period until 31st October 2024. The application was received on 25 July 2024 and approved 15 October 2024.

A further planning application was approved in 2024 under reference HGY/2024/2521, which sought permission for the installation of a temporary and de-mountable sauna for a three year period. The application was received on 12 September 2024 and was subsequently refused on 1 November 2024. Reason: "The proposed development is considered to be an unacceptable use of Metropolitan Open Land, for which no suitable justification has been provided and as such is contrary to paragraphs 103 and 154 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), Policy G3 of the London Plan (2021) and Policy DM20 of the Haringey DMD (2017)."

The most recent planning application was submitted in November 2024 under reference HGY/2024/3278 seeking permission for the installation of four Padel courts on existing hardstanding. This was approved with conditions on 12 June 2025.

Overall, the planning history of the Hornsey Cricket Club demonstrates a clear and consistent pattern of incremental development aimed at enhancing sports provision and infrastructure, supporting the principle of introducing additional outdoor sporting facilities such as the proposed padel courts, without resulting in a material change to the established character or intensity of use of the site.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

4.1 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The following policies contained within The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are considered relevant and material to the determination of this planning application;

Paragraph 85. of the NPPF states that;

'Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development'

The proposal for the erection of padel tennis courts at the proposed site represents a strategic investment in the growth of Padelastic Limited which is established within the sports and leisure sector, and will enable the applicants to expand awareness, increase popularity and attract new members. This supports Padelastic's long-term objectives for further growth and economic sustainability. It is considered that the expansion of the existing sporting venue will compliment other local businesses within the Borough of Haringey and surrounding area through higher visiting numbers to the site and greater recognition both locally and nationally as a key venue for padel tennis.

Paragraph 96. of the NPPF states that;

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;

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.

Padel is inherently social, played exclusively in doubles format, encouraging interaction among participants of different ages and backgrounds. It is considered having a shallow learning curve comparatively with traditional tennis, making it ideal for children, families and less competitive events. The provision of new padel tennis courts adjacent to the cricket club will enable local communities to have access to an additional local sports offering, further encouraging a social hub and local sports community. Furthermore, The proposal directly addresses local health and well-being needs by encouraging regular physical activity in a low-impact, easy-to-learn sport.

4.2 THE LONDON PLAN

The London Plan is the strategic spatial development strategy for Greater London, and all Local Planning Authorities must ensure that planning decisions accord with its policies. Together with the adopted Local Plan policies of the London Borough of Haringey, the London Plan provides the primary policy framework against which this planning application for four padel courts at Hornsey Cricket Club should be assessed.

The following policies contained within The London Plan (2021) are considered relevant and material to the determination of this application.

Policy GG1 – Building Strong and Inclusive Communities states that:

“Good growth is inclusive growth. To build on the city’s tradition of openness, diversity and equality, and help deliver strong and inclusive communities, those involved in planning and development must:

(c) provide access to good quality community spaces, services, amenities and infrastructure that accommodate, encourage and strengthen communities, increasing active participation and social integration, and addressing social isolation.”

In accordance with Policy GG1, the proposed development of four padel courts at Hornsey Cricket Club will support inclusive growth by expanding access to high-quality sports and recreational infrastructure within an established educational and sporting environment. Padel is a highly accessible sport suitable for a wide range of ages and abilities, encouraging social interaction, teamwork, and regular physical activity. The introduction of padel courts will diversify the existing sports offer at Hornsey Cricket Club, creating new opportunities for community participation, promoting healthier lifestyles, and supporting social cohesion. The proposal will therefore contribute positively to the provision of inclusive community facilities, helping to reduce barriers to participation and addressing social isolation in line with the objectives of the London Plan.

Policy GG2 – Making the Best Use of Land states that:

“To create successful sustainable mixed-use places that make the best use of land, those involved in planning and development must:

- (a) enable the development of brownfield land... and sites within and on the edge of town centres, as well as utilising small sites;*
- (b) prioritise sites which are well-connected by existing or planned public transport;*
- (e) understand what is valued about existing places and use this as a catalyst for growth, renewal, and place-making;*
- (h) maximise opportunities to use infrastructure assets for more than one purpose.”*

The proposed padel courts represent an efficient and sustainable use of existing sports land within the established grounds of Hornsey Cricket Club. The site is well connected by public transport, with both Hornsey Station and Highgate underground station within 20 minutes walking distance and bus routes serving the surrounding area, thereby supporting sustainable travel choices. The proposal builds upon the long-standing sporting character of the site, complementing existing outdoor sports facilities and reinforcing its role as a local centre for physical activity and recreation. By intensifying the use of existing sports infrastructure without encroaching onto undeveloped land, the development maximises the multifunctional use of the site and supports the continued vitality and resilience of the facility. As such, the proposal aligns with Policy GG2 by making optimal use of small site, strengthening local identity, and delivering a sustainable and accessible community sports facility.

4.3 HARINGEY LOCAL PLAN

The Haringey Local Plan: Strategic Policies (2017) sets out the planning policy framework for development within the London Borough of Haringey and provides the basis for determining planning applications. The Local Plan places strong emphasis on protecting and enhancing community and leisure facilities, safeguarding open space, promoting health and well-being, and supporting sustainable forms of development. The following Local Plan policies are considered particularly relevant to the proposed development at Hornsey Cricket Club.

Policy SP15 – Culture and Leisure

Policy SP15 of the Haringey Local Plan seeks to protect existing culture, leisure, and community facilities and supports proposals that enhance or expand such facilities where they contribute positively to community life. The policy recognises the importance of sports and recreational facilities in supporting community well-being and social cohesion.

The proposed erection of four padel tennis courts with canopy, together with a new pavilion / reception building and ancillary storage, directly accords with Policy SP15 by enhancing the existing sports provision at Hornsey Cricket Club. The development will introduce a new and increasingly popular sport, broadening the range of facilities available to club members and the wider community. By strengthening the role of Hornsey Cricket Club as a local sporting hub and providing opportunities for participation across a wide range of ages and abilities, the proposal supports the continued use and enhancement of community leisure facilities in line with the objectives of the policy.

Policy SP13 – Open Space and Biodiversity

Policy SP13 of the Haringey Local Plan seeks to protect and enhance the Borough’s open spaces and resists inappropriate development that would harm their openness, character, or function.

The policy states that:

“New development shall protect and improve Haringey’s parks and open spaces.”

The supporting text confirms that development on open space will only be acceptable where it constitutes limited, small-scale development ancillary to an existing use, where there is a demonstrable need, and where it respects the size, form, and function of the open space and does not detract from its openness or public enjoyment.

The proposed padel courts are located within the existing sports grounds of Hornsey Cricket Club and will be accommodated without undermining the overall open character or primary sporting use of the site. The development represents an enhancement of the existing recreational offer rather than a loss of open space, making more effective use of land already dedicated to sport and leisure. As such, the proposal is fully consistent with Policy SP13.

Sustainable Development Objectives

The Haringey Local Plan promotes sustainable development, including the efficient use of land, support for community infrastructure, and development that contributes positively to local character.

The proposed development represents a sustainable form of development by intensifying use within an established and accessible sports site, well served by public transport and existing infrastructure. The proposal supports the long-term viability of Hornsey Cricket Club while reinforcing the site's established character as a centre for outdoor sport and recreation. The development therefore accords with the principles of sustainable development promoted by the Local Plan.

Conclusion on Local Plan Compliance

Overall, the proposed development at Hornsey Cricket Club is fully aligned with the Haringey Local Plan, supporting enhanced sports provision, improved health and well-being outcomes, and the sustainable use of existing recreational land, without resulting in harm to open space, local character, or residential amenity.

5.0 VERY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES (METROPOLITAN OPEN LAND)

The application site is located within land designated as Metropolitan Open Land (MOL), which is afforded the same level of protection as Green Belt. The principle of outdoor sports facilities is accepted as appropriate development within MOL, and the proposed scheme includes covered padel courts and associated lighting.

It is considered that the proposed development gives rise to a compelling and exceptional set of Very Special Circumstances, which, when taken together, clearly and decisively support the development within MOL.

Need for Covered Padel Courts and Canopies

The provision of canopies over the padel courts is fundamental to the viability and community value of the facility. The UK experiences approximately 156–159 days of rainfall per year, during which uncovered padel courts would be unavailable due to safety concerns associated with wet playing surfaces. This would significantly restrict access to the facility, undermine participation levels, and limit the social and health benefits the sport provides.

Covered courts enable year-round, all-weather use, ensuring that padel can be played safely 365 days a year. Crucially, the ability to guarantee court availability substantially increases participation beyond simply recovering rain-affected days, as users are more likely to book when closures due to weather are eliminated. The courts are not fully enclosed, allowing users to continue benefiting from outdoor play and fresh air, thereby retaining the essential outdoor recreational character of the development.

Justification for Canopy Height (9 metres)

The proposed canopy height of 9 metres to the apex is necessary to ensure the long-term functionality and quality of the facility. Guidance from both the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) and SAPCA (Sports and Play Construction Association) confirms that a minimum clear height of 8 metres above the net is required to ensure the proper playability of padel, particularly for lob shots, which form a core part of the game.

The additional metre provides operational flexibility and future-proofs the facility, enabling youth development, coaching programmes, and competitive play to a high standard. Padeltastic (trading as Smash Padel) has a proven track record in delivering best-in-class facilities, with its Bicester centre being the only padel venue to receive an LTA “Best Centre” award. Notably, five members of the GB U14 and U16 padel squads have been coached at Smash Padel Bicester, highlighting the importance of high-quality infrastructure in developing youth talent.

Delivering similar standards in the Borough of Haringey will provide significant benefits to local schools, young people, and the wider community, supporting the development of padel at both grassroots and elite levels.

Lighting and Hours of Use

The proposed lighting is essential to meet demonstrable demand and to allow the facility to operate during early mornings and evenings, ensuring broad accessibility for users with varying work and family commitments. Without lighting, use of the courts would be severely restricted, particularly during the winter months, undermining the effectiveness and community value of the development.

The padel courts are sited within an established sporting environment and are appropriately separated from nearby residential properties, significantly reducing the potential for adverse impacts on residential amenity. The design of the lighting will ensure that light spill is minimised and appropriately controlled.

Furthermore, there is an established precedent for floodlighting within the wider Hornsey Cricket Club site and surrounding open land, where lighting associated with sports use is already an accepted feature of the local context. Subject to appropriate controls, the proposed lighting will not result in harm to residential amenity or local ecology.

Noise Considerations

Given the substantial separation distance from residential amenity, the open nature of the site, and the background noise associated with existing sports use, any noise generated by padel activity is expected to be minimal and not materially harmful. Padel is a social but relatively low-impact sport, and activity levels will be consistent with the established recreational character of the site.

Unmet Local Demand for Padel Facilities

There is a clear and evidenced lack of padel provision in the local area, particularly covered facilities. The nearest existing padel courts are:

Georgians Padel – approx. 0.6 miles (uncovered)

Hazelwood Padel – approx. 6.2 miles (uncovered)

Padel Tree Finchley – approx. 3.7 miles (uncovered)

There are no covered padel courts within this catchment, resulting in unmet demand and limited access to the sport during large parts of the year. The proposed development would address this significant shortfall, providing the first covered padel facility in the area and meeting a clearly identified community need.

Wider Benefits Clearly Outweighing Harm

In addition to the site-specific justifications above, the proposal delivers a range of substantial public benefits, including:

Health and Well-being Benefits: Promoting regular physical activity through an accessible, low-impact sport that supports both physical and mental health.

Community and Inclusivity: Providing a highly social and inclusive sport suitable for all ages and abilities, encouraging participation, social cohesion, and youth engagement.

Sporting Infrastructure Enhancement: Diversifying and strengthening the existing sports offer at Eltham College through complementary recreational provision.

Economic and Operational Sustainability: Supporting the long-term viability of the site through strategic investment in a rapidly growing sport.

Environmental Mitigation: Delivering a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain, alongside new planting, sensitive landscaping, low-impact fencing, and controlled lighting.

Future Sustainability Measures: The scheme can accommodate electric vehicle charging infrastructure, should this be required by the Local Planning Authority.

Conclusion on Very Special Circumstances

When assessed cumulatively, the community, health, sporting, economic, and environmental benefits of the proposed development are substantial, compelling, and site-specific. Any harm to the openness of the Metropolitan Open Land is limited, localised, and carefully mitigated, and does not undermine the wider purposes of the designation.

Accordingly, it is concluded that the identified Very Special Circumstances clearly and decisively outweigh any potential harm to MOL openness, and the proposed development should therefore be supported in planning terms.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed erection of four covered padel courts at Hornsey Cricket Club has been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework, the London Plan, and the Haringey Local Plan, with full regard to the site's designation as Metropolitan Open Land (MOL). The development represents an appropriate enhancement of an established sporting site and will deliver significant public benefits, including increased access to inclusive, year-round sports facilities, improved health and well-being outcomes, and the provision of a new sporting opportunity where there is clear unmet local demand, particularly for covered padel courts. Importantly, the courts are proposed on existing hardstanding that currently accommodates uncovered tennis courts, which cannot be used all year round; the proposed covered courts will therefore optimise the use of the site without further encroaching on open green space. The proposal complements the existing sporting character of the site and supports its long-term viability as a community sports hub.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the development introduces additional built form within MOL, the resulting harm to openness is limited and localised, arising from lightweight, open-sided canopies within a campus that already accommodates floodlit sports facilities. When assessed cumulatively, the identified Very Special Circumstances – including substantial health, social, sporting, economic, and environmental benefits – clearly and decisively outweigh any limited harm to MOL openness. The proposal therefore accords with the development plan when read as a whole and with national policy, and the planning balance weighs firmly in favour of granting planning permission.

Shrewsbury Office:

**UNIT 1, NEXUS, ROUSHILL,
SHREWSBURY, SHROPSHIRE, SY11PT**

Tel: **01743 236 400**

Email: **HELLO@BASEARCHITECTURE.CO.UK**

Web: **BASEARCHITECTURE.CO.UK**

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