



Design, Access & Planning Statement

PADEL AT SHAW LANE SPORTS CLUB

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BARNSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Design and Access Statement for Padel at Shaw Lane Sports Club

1. Introduction

This design and access statement has been submitted in support of the planning application for the proposed padel tennis courts with canopy at Shaw Lane Sports Club. The application is for two padel tennis courts within the grounds of an existing sports club. The proposal is to locate the new padel tennis courts on an area within the club grounds. That was previously used for bowls. This proposal will enable the club to support the development of an additional sport. It will increase the overall leisure opportunities on offer for the local community. The proposal is functional in scale and type. The acceptability of the proposal reflects the current use of the land as a sports facility where it will be appropriately positioned away from neighbours.

Padel

Padel is commonly described as the fastest growing sport in the world and increasingly being called the fastest growing sport in the UK. Padel is a discipline of tennis and was recently recognised by Sport England. The sport is governed by the LTA and is developing rapidly and growing in popularity across the UK. Padel is easy to learn and popular with women and men and played by people of all ages and abilities. It contributes to a healthy lifestyle and is very sociable being played as doubles. The padel courts will be available to members and non-members. Local schools will be offered regular opportunities for children to come and try this new sport.

2. Site Analysis

The application site lies within the existing sport club grounds which features a mix of sports facilities with associated clubhouse facilities, parking and ancillary storage.

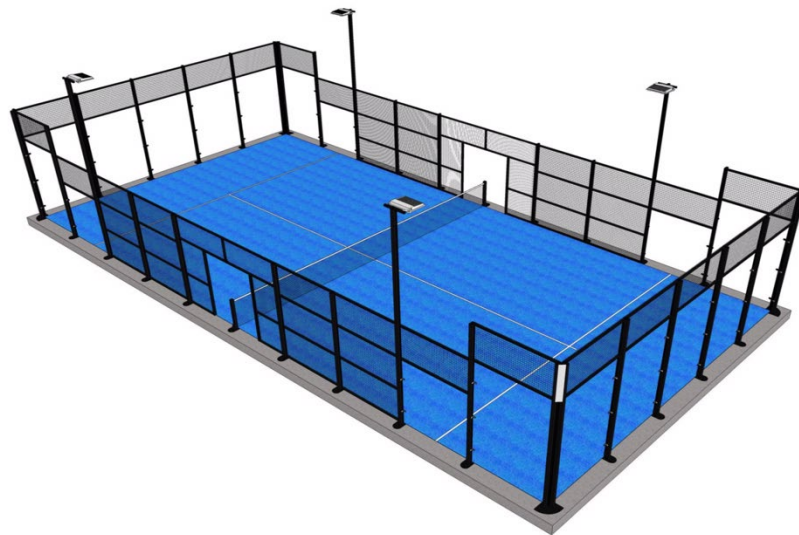
The proposed location for padel tennis is indicated on the plan below and has been selected to sit on a suitable area within the club. The development site is less than 0.10Ha in total and currently forms part of the grounds of the sports club.



2. Design Proposal

The padel courts are designed in accordance with LTA and SAPCA guidance to meet the needs of the sport. Each court is 20m x 10m and is enclosed by metal posts which are infilled with clear toughened glass and metal open mesh panels. This creates a light and airy outdoor feel to the courts. The proposal is for black powder coated metalwork. The surface is covered in artificial grass which is a typical tennis court surface and would be blue or green in colour. Standard tennis fencing typically ranges from 3m to 3.8m high and the padel court structure is a 3m to 4m high. Existing tennis floodlight columns are understood to be around 8m and 9m high and the padel columns are significantly lower at 6m high. The padel project will create two covered outdoor padel tennis courts which can be used throughout the year.

Typical Court diagram (without canopy for clarity)



The canopy structure (not shown) is designed to comply with LTA guidance on heights which have been selected to allow uninterrupted play in all weathers. The canopy fabric can be green or white in colour.

The canopy has open sides that allow for good ventilation into the courts which makes it a safe covid friendly covered outdoor space that can be used for wet weather provision for other activities.

4. Access

The court access is via an automated wi-fi controlled gate system. This can be accessed by anyone via online booking and so play on the courts is not restricted only to club members. The community access element is a key part of the ethos of the development. The SmartAccess gate also provides automatic control of the low energy LED floodlights which go on and off in line with bookings to ensure a low energy managed system.

The site is located close to the existing clubhouse and there is adequate parking provision within the existing car park to accommodate the proposed users of the facility.

The main access gate into the padel courts is wheelchair accessible and the access route from car park to the courts is also navigable by a wheelchair user.

5. Landscaping

Some low level planting may be done around the court to enhance the visual impact of the courts and there is no impact on the area outside the padel location.

6. Planning Policy

The NPPF has a strong emphasis on sustainable development, and this is underlined throughout this policy document. It confirms that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so significantly and demonstrably outweigh benefits of the development.

Section 8 NPPF - Policies promoting healthy and safe communities,

Paragraph 92(c) requires that planning decisions should enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – 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.

Paragraph 93 - to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services that the community needs then planning policies and decisions should:

- *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.*

Paragraph 99 states that

- *Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:*
 - a. an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
 - b. the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
 - c. the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.*

It is therefore clear that Government regards recreational and sports facilities as a sustainable form of development that will benefit the community.

The Barnsley Local Plan Jan 2019 does not have any specific policies relating to sports provision but there is reference to recreation in the section 'Green Infrastructure'.

Policy GI1 Green Infrastructure

We will protect, maintain, enhance and create an integrated network of connected and multi functional Green Infrastructure assets that:

- Provides attractive environments where people want to live, work, learn, play, visit and invest;
- Meets the environmental, social and economic needs of communities across the borough and the wider City Regions;
- Enhances the quality of life for present and future residents and visitors;
- Helps to meet the challenge of climate change;
- Enhances biodiversity and landscape character;
- Improves opportunities for recreation and tourism;
- Respects local distinctiveness and historical and cultural heritage;
- Maximises potential economic and social benefits; and
- Secures and improves linkages between green and blue spaces;

The padel facility will help to meet the demand for vibrant and well used spaces and the operating model allows access to everyone.

8. Merits of the Proposal

Both the Local Plan and the NPPF support the retention and enhancement of sports and community facilities. There is an increased emphasis on providing public health benefits through the planning process, thus planning policy clearly seeks to increase sport and recreation facilities to promote health and wellbeing and to support local communities in providing these facilities.

The introduction of padel tennis is the next step in providing enhanced sports facilities on the site to the benefit of the local community. There is an acknowledged need for the facility at Shaw Lane Sports Club to serve a local community demand.

The facility will also provide another income stream for the club which is an important consideration. The club solely relies on income from membership fees and a pay and play facility to maintain the extensive grounds, playing facilities and the clubhouse and any extra income will help with this.

It is important to state that the padel courts will be open for use by anybody from the local community or visitors to the area through the pay and play online booking system.

Owing to the fickle British weather, providing a canopy over the padel courts will encourage all year-round use, maximising their availability to meet demand. There is clear evidence from other padel sites in the UK on the positive impact that covered outdoor courts provides with

Thistle Padel club in Edinburgh significantly increasing activity when they covered padel courts two years ago.

Balanced against this, of course, is that if both padel courts are in use, the maximum number of players at any one time will only be 8.

Visual Impact

The canopy provides a roof covering to give weather protection with the lower sections of the elevations being open with glass or mesh fence panels allowing light through the structure and giving an airy outdoor environment to play in. The tensile fabric is stretched over a lightweight aluminium or steel frame which is galvanised.

The height of the canopy is determined by the structural requirements of the roof profile and has been designed to give the minimum clear height required for uninterrupted play. The eaves height is 6.5m which means the playing area headroom starts at this level; this is only 500mm above the minimum height required by the LTA for padel court headroom; and it is considered that the proposed design is the minimum height needed to play the sport while complying with LTA facility guidance.

The site forms part of the existing club grounds and the new courts are therefore an appropriate use in this area. The Club's location is away from public areas and the impact of the new facility will be limited.

Heritage

The location chosen for the courts is close to existing buildings which will soften any visual impact of the structure.

Consequently, no harm on the setting of the wider area or its significance overall will arise because of this proposal. Set alongside this are the significant public benefits of the proposal which are:

- Padel is particularly attractive to families, allowing inter-generational games. It is easy to play, fun and good for general fitness and currently there are no facilities in Barnsley. Padel is an inclusive game allowing players of all ages and abilities to participate.
- There is a significant undersupply of suitable venues for this sport in the local area.
- The provision of covered courts means that padel tennis can be more available to the local community in any weather throughout the whole of the year.
- The project reuses existing club land to provide a facility which is not currently available in the community.
- The provision of covered courts offers increased availability to play this sport which is important in leading the fight against unhealthy lifestyles.
- The availability of courts for the community to play is increased when the courts are covered, and this increases the potential for a healthier community. The provision of a new and inclusive sport which is progressive and moving with the times will reinvigorate sports provision in this area and support a healthier community.

A significant disbenefit would be that If the courts are not covered the development is unlikely to go ahead as it is not viable without a canopy.

9. Conclusion

The provision of padel tennis will add to the facilities available to the local community and provide access to a new sport that is increasingly popular in the UK. This will be the first such covered facility in the Barnsley area and will offer all year access to a fun and healthy activity and provide a positive impact to be enjoyed by the local community.

Without the canopy the padel courts will be underused and only be available for part of the year. The positive benefits of additional sports provision in the community and by creating a venue for sports competition will support the future of the club and the wider economy.

Adding covered padel courts offers an improved facility with a broader range of activities to encourage the community in taking more exercise without encroaching on any land beyond the boundary of the existing club.

It will enhance the existing sports facilities at the club which will help to support their continued growth and sustainability and ensure the future of the club.

It is considered that this proposal is suitable and appropriate in this location and the positive benefits of the proposal merit support from the local authority.

It is a sustainable development that has significant support in the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework.