

Re-location of Tennis Club facilities to Stanford Road, Faringdon, Oxon

for Faringdon Tennis Club

## **Design and Access Statement - 14.3.12**

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### *Introduction*

This statement has been prepared by Andrew Townsend Architects on behalf of Faringdon Lawn Tennis Club for the proposed re-location of tennis club facilities to land south-west of the Stanford Road known as Jaspers Hill, on the eastern edge of Faringdon, which was recently developed to support the provision of recreational facilities, including cricket, rugby and skating, as part of an S106 agreement with Bloor Homes Ltd who have developed land for housing, to the west. Folly Hill is located to land immediately north of the site and is of considerable historical and landscaping importance. The proposal has been developed so views from the site towards Folly Hill are not affected (see Appendix 1 – Visual Amenity Report).

### *Brief*

Faringdon Tennis Lawn Club (FLTC) is currently located on Southampton Street, near Faringdon town centre and is affiliated to the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA). FLTC is a Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC). The existing facilities consist of three all-weather courts that are smaller than the LTA-recommended minimum size and a very basic clubhouse. There are no parking facilities, no special provisions for coaching or young players, and no possibility of artificial lighting. The facilities are extremely restricted for their growing number of members (approx. 120) with no room for expansion and FLTC have been actively searching for new accommodation in the local area. The use of floodlighting will allow extended use of the courts into the evening; this will be especially useful in the winter when daylight hours are reduced.

### *Consultation*

From the initial concept, Faringdon Lawn Tennis Club has been transparent about their plans to re-locate the existing facilities and they have actively sought the opinions and advice from as many people affected by the proposals as possible. The consultation process has involved members of Faringdon Lawn Tennis Club, local residents, the cricket and rugby clubs, Faringdon SK8, and representatives of Vale of White Horse District Council (including planning officer Martin Deans) and the town council. Oxford County Council's Highways department have been consulted regarding the placement and design of the floodlighting and parking proposals and their comments have helped to evolve the design, especially with regard to the location of the new tennis courts, which were originally to the north-east of the site.

Faringdon Lawn Tennis Club carried out a comprehensive transport survey, which was distributed to members via an emailed questionnaire website link to be completed online. Results of the survey were collated and analysed to give a rough idea of the expected increase in journeys to the new Stanford Road site, including the type of transport to be used.

### *Transport Survey*

NB – see Appendix 2.

The results of the transport survey compare the difference between the existing and proposed tennis club locations. The response indicated the percentage of car journeys is not likely to increase significantly as most local members intend to continue to walk or cycle. Due to the nature of club sessions, tennis players tend to arrive over a period of time, in staggered intervals, rather than all at once. So the increase in the flow of traffic due to tennis will be relatively light, evenly spread out, and will have very little impact when existing traffic flows are busiest on Stanford Road due to rugby / cricket related use. As FLTC will promote cycling or walking to the site, the proposal are likely to increase the number of pedestrians and cyclists in the area and concern has been expressed that the existing speed limits, at the south end of Stanford Road, should be reduced from unrestricted (60mph) to a more

appropriate blanket speed limit of 20mph along the whole road. FLTC are hoping to reach an agreement with OCC Highways to reduce the speed limit and improve the associated signage.

### *Physical / Limitations of Jaspers Hill Site*

NB – see location plan drawing no. 819: PL01

The only useable space within the site to locate the new tennis courts is between the skate park, to the east, and the cricket pitch, to the west. Various other alternatives were considered to the north of the site but they would have impacted views of the Folly and Folly Hill from the footpaths going past Wicklesham Farm, and they would have required extensive engineering solutions to alter the topography of the site, which were considered uneconomical. The new courts follow the line of the existing perimeter fence and the existing cycle/footpath will be re-laid to follow the perimeter of the new courts.

The recently constructed cricket pavilion and separate equipment store are the two buildings on the site. Careful consideration was given to the option of sharing the pavilion facilities with the cricket club, but this is not possible due to the very different nature of the two sports. Therefore, the proposal is to convert the existing cricket/rugby store into a tennis club pavilion and extend the store towards the north, away from the car park, to create replacement cricket and rugby storage, as shown in proposed drawings 819: PL06 & 07. The materials and detail of the new extension will match those of the existing store and pavilion building, such as metal painted doors, red brick walls and slate roofing tiles (see Appendix 3 - Photos). The child-friendly Red Zone mini-tennis courts will be located to the north of the access road and in close proximity to the new tennis club pavilion (see Appendix 4 – Mini Tennis Court Guidance).

### *Design Proposal*

By re-using the existing store and extending this building, this will have a minimal impact on the existing mass of buildings on the site, as viewed from the nearest dwellings along the neighbouring Nursery View (approx. 200m north of the site). The level changes across the

site, from Nursery View, ensure the direct line of sight of the new courts will be limited. Sports ‘Dugout’ shelters with bench seating will be provided, along a grassed verge, to the side of each double court and in the Red Zone. The new floodlights are designed to be very directional and cause minimal light pollution.

FLTC organised a community consultation event on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2011 for all parties with an interest to allow comments to be made on the proposal. This included: local residents; members of the rugby and cricket clubs and Faringdon SK8; town, district and county councillors. The consultation feedback suggested a very positive response to the proposed location and design of the new tennis club facilities.

### *Sustainability*

The proposal includes for solar panels to be fixed to the south facing existing and new roofs. The aim is to produce enough renewable energy for the new pavilion and floodlights to be self-sufficient. By altering the existing store building, the design maximises the re-use of existing materials and structures. The proposed new pavilion will allow for substantially improved insulation, draught proofing and double-glazing to improve energy efficiency. The rooflights, glazed entrance door and windows will provide natural internal lighting and reduce energy consumption. A sustainable drainage management plan outlining drainage systems for the new parking and tennis courts to be incorporated into the site aims to reduce the impact of flooding. Low energy LED lighting will be used throughout the new pavilion and store, and for the tennis court floodlights.

### *Security*

There is a need to design out crime, especially in an area not overlooked by the community. The principles of Secure by Design have been applied to the exterior of the new pavilion and store. The use of security roller shutters and small windows on the new pavilion and store will create a defensive appearance that is aimed to improve protection by deterring potential criminal and anti-social behaviour.

### *Scale and Proportion*

The new rugby and cricket storage extension (7.66m width x 10.8m length x 4.68m height) reflects the scale and proportion of the existing Store (5.85m width x 10.8m length x 4.3m height) and cricket pavilion (10.6m width x 25.8m length x 6.1m height) to create minimal change to the existing mass of buildings and views across the site. The new tennis club pavilion has been designed within the constraints of the existing store dimensions, aiming to retain as much of the existing fabric as possible.

The tennis court dimensions comply with LTA recommended size for tennis clubs (see Appendix 4 – Key Dimension Court Guidance). The courts are located against the perimeter boundary fence and established trees providing screening from/to the A420, between the existing skate park and cricket pitch, to reduce the impact of views to and beyond the site. The Red Zone mini-tennis court dimensions comply with LTA guidance sizes. The Red Zone location has been designed to fit between the perimeter boundary fence, along the Stanford Road, and existing car park, near the new tennis pavilion.

### *Landscaping*

The landscaping of the site has been designed to reduce alteration to the existing topography, which also influenced the positioning of the tennis courts. The proposed location of the courts allows for a minimum 3m access gap for ground maintenance, as recommended by Graham Hawkins, VWHDC Shared Strategic Property Team Leader, and Ian Matten, Shared Parks & Waste Manager. To minimise the amount of re-grading of the existing ground levels, the courts will be located in an area where there are relatively shallow gradients. To reduce significantly re-grading levels over a large area, retaining walls or banks will be constructed to the north of the Red Zone and east of the tennis courts near the cricket pitch. Existing paths will be re-formed to follow the line of the new courts and tennis club parking bays. After seeking advice from George Reade, VWHDC Tree Officer, in order to create a windbreak, to the south-west of the tennis courts, a shelter belt will be formed of carefully chosen native planting, such as Beech hedging. Root invasion and proximity to courts will be taken into account.

### *Floodlighting*

NB – see site floodlighting plan drawing no. 819: PL09 and Appendix 5.

The proposal includes floodlighting for two of the four courts. The orientation of the tennis courts and positioning of the floodlighting columns have been designed to reduce light spill and glare on to the A420. The barrier of dense shrubs and tall trees (including 10m high lamp posts at approx. 60m centres), along the south perimeter fence, acts as a screen between the new floodlighting and the A420, which runs parallel to the site, especially during the summer months. The new floodlighting will consist of six lighting columns, as shown in drawing 819:PL10. The proposed floodlighting system consists of lighting columns with 8 LED luminaries that can be switched on/off selectively (rather than the less flexible Metal Halide lamps). The lighting control management system allows for increased energy efficiency and user friendliness. Each column is 10m high to provide an optimum aiming angle of the luminaries thus minimising both the glare and light spill. The LED fixtures are all focused individually on the two tennis courts, which means light spill and glare onto the A420 is minimal.

### *Car and Cycle Parking*

Existing parking, to the south of the existing cricket pavilion and store, is restricted when the cricket / rugby facilities are not in use; therefore, new parking for the tennis club is required. Analysis of the transport survey concludes that the maximum number of cars using tennis facilities at any one time is likely to be nine. Using the land along the south side of the entrance road, between the new Red Zone and Skate Park, ten parking spaces are proposed. Current use of the existing Sheffield type cycle parking stands, located between the existing store and pavilion buildings, suggest that 22 spaces will be adequate for the tennis and cricket club.

### *Site Access Issues*

The site is accessed from the south end of the Stanford Road. There is gated access to a large car park to the south of the existing cricket pavilion and store buildings, which will be open during training sessions and matches for the cricket and rugby clubs, and may be used by the tennis club at these times. The proposed new car parking will provide parking for tennis club

members when the gate to the main car park is locked. There is bike access from the road and a public pedestrian and cycle footpath that runs around the perimeter of the site. The proposals are designed to enable access by all people regardless of ability, age or gender. The thresholds to the new pavilion avoid the use of steps, for inclusive access. The re-positioned cycle and pedestrian path, around the new tennis club parking spaces, allows continuous level access beyond the existing car park gate to the new pavilion and existing cycle parking. The cricket club have given their permission for access to the disabled WC in the cricket pavilion to be provided when necessary (see Appendix 6 – Disabled WC).