
SPD 6

TWYFORD AVENUE

COMMUNITY OPEN SPACE

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Twyford Avenue Sports Ground is identified as Community Open Space (COS) within the adopted UDP (2004) (see policy 3.4). This guidance has been prepared with the aim of realising and enhancing this site as Community Open Space. This brief outlines a vision for the future of this site as Community Open Space over the timeframe of the plan and beyond. This guidance provides a framework within which current activities can be provided and enhanced on site in the context of its COS designation, and in respect of any future operations.

2. Site History

- 2.2 The site was previously owned by British Gas (BG) and used as an employees sports and social club for over 80 years. During this time the playing fields comprised 5 football pitches, a bowling green with associated clubhouse, and a main second clubhouse used for table tennis and squash.
- 2.3 Over many years and increasingly until 1999, the facilities were also regularly used by a number of local schools and sports clubs providing

such diverse activities as cricket, football, hockey, athletics, tennis and bowls.

- 2.4 In 1999 the site was sold to Loftus Road PLC, and was used primarily as a training ground for Queens Park Rangers (QPR), London Wasps Rugby Club (the professional rugby club) and Wasps Football Club (the amateur club). In 2001, when Loftus Road plc went into Administration, the site was sold to Chris Wright whom, whilst owning London Wasps, purchased the site as a personal investment. The property is managed on behalf of the current owner, by Sorbon Asset Management (the retained property management company of Michael Shanley Homes) and has continued to be used as an professional training facility for QPR and London Wasps Professional Rugby Club during the day, and Wasps Amateur Club in the evenings and at weekends.
- 2.5 In June 2005, QPR relocated and Wasps Football Club (the amateur rugby club) purchased the majority of the site (approximately 20 acres) with the intention of consolidating the use of the facilities for the professional and amateur rugby clubs. Historically, a number of schools in the nearby vicinity have also enjoyed access to the site, although the level of use has tailed off over recent years because of the use of the facilities during school hours by QPR and Wasps' professional players.
- 2.6 In respect of the existing use, the relocation of QPR from the site and consolidation of rugby usage may present an opportunity to increase access by local schools during normal weekday hours.

3. Site Description

- 3.1 The sports ground is 10 ha (24 acres), and is surrounded by housing to the north, east, and west, and Twyford High School to the south. The main access to the site is from Twyford Avenue. The site consists of sports pitches, clubhouse, tennis courts, 5-a-side hard surface football pitch, and Bowls green and clubhouse. The tennis courts/bowling green area to the north of the site (approximately 4.5 acres) has been vacant and unused for approximately 5 years. The boundary is a combination of dense landscaping, including conifer hedge and over 100 trees of different species, and a 2.5m high wall/fence.

4. Town Planning / Land Use Context

- 4.1 The whole site is designated as Community Open Space in the adopted UDP (2004). This is indicated as site 24 on table 10.6 and map sheet 2. Policy 3.4 'Public and Community Open Space' is relevant in this respect. This policy states:

1. The loss of Public or Community Open Space, as defined on the proposals map, will not be permitted unless the development is directly related to the open space use of the land and any development of adjoining land should preserve or enhance the open character thereof.

2. The Council will seek improved access to Public and Community Open Space and will establish additional Public and Community Open Space, particularly in areas where there is a deficiency in open space provision.

3. Development directly related to the purposes of Public and Community Open Space and which accords with their open character, will be permitted. Acceptable uses include nature areas, playing fields, allotments, amenity space, children's play areas and other open recreational uses.

4. Suitable arts, cultural and entertainment uses of open space will be encouraged.

4.2 It will be seen that the policy does not permit development on COS, which is not directly related to the open space use of the land, and which would not accord with its open character. Improved access to Community Open Space will also be sought through this policy. Improved access could also be secured through negotiation on development on adjacent and other land.

4.3 The northern portion of the site is also located within an area identified as being of Archaeological Interest (see site A2 on table 10.13 and map 9). The relevant UDP policy is 4.9, which covers ancient monuments and archaeological interest areas. This states (4.9.2 and 4.9.3):

It is the Council's intention to also protect archaeological sites, and any proposal must:

i) Provide adequate opportunities for archaeological investigation prior to development;

ii) Be carried out in accordance with the British Archaeologists and Developers Liaison Code of Practice.

Where development would adversely affect Archaeological Interest Areas or archaeological remains, the applicant will normally be required to:

i) Modify designs to avoid adverse effects;

ii) Design suitable land use and management strategies to safeguard any important remains, with the option to seek an agreement covering access and interpretation arrangements;

iii) Preserve in situ: where this is not feasible, provide appropriate provision for excavation.

- 4.4 This site is also situated in an area of both district and local park deficiency (see map sheets 3 and 4 in volume 2 of the UDP). It should be noted that this deficiency is calculated on the basis of Public Open Space provision (as indicated on table 10.5).
- 4.5 The land adjoining immediately to the west and south of the site forms part of the Creffield Road Conservation Area (Area 5 on table 10.12, and map 8, and see policy 4.8). The use of land adjoining a Conservation Area should be carefully considered in order to ensure that it preserves and enhances the character of the Conservation Area.

5. Current Use

- 5.1 The sports ground is currently used as a training ground for London Wasps Professional Rugby Club and Wasps Amateur Rugby Club. The sports ground currently comprises 6/7 rugby pitches (including one equipped with dual rugby/football posts and markings used by Twyford High School). In addition the clubhouse building comprises changing facilities, gymnasium, offices and various teaching rooms used in conjunction with the professional players and Wasps' training academy operating from the site. This facility has a total internal area of approximately 1,440 sq.m. (15,500 sq. ft.).
- 5.2 Twyford Avenue High School also have limited use of the dedicated dual rugby/football pitch on the basis of a licence that has been renewed recently for 12 months.

6. Vision for the Future

Overall Aims/Objectives

- 6.1 The overall aim for this site and the primary function of this brief is to aid and realise the sites designation as COS. This would be achieved through enhancing existing facilities, providing additional facilities, and improving access to this site. In order to achieve this aim a process of partnership working involving the owner, the operators (Wasps Football Club & London Wasps Rugby Club), local residents, schools, sports groups, community groups, the council and other interested parties will be essential.

Facilities

- 6.2 At present there are already a number of sporting/recreation facilities provided from this site (see section 5 'current use'). Improving these and providing additional facilities and enhancing access to existing facilities will be encouraged. In this regard emphasis will be placed on making the best use of the facilities and reusing those areas of the site which are either vacant at present, or where the use has not been put to its full capacity. In particular, priority will be given to utilising the existing 4.5 acres of land (Tennis Courts/Bowls area) to the north east corner of the site which has remained unused for sometime. Over time should the existing use(s) cease to operate from this site a suitable mix of recreation facilities will be sought on site.
- 6.4 The mix/range of facilities which will be sought will be determined/informed by a range of factors. These include an understanding of the existing provision of facilities within this area, possibly in the form of a facility audit. This information would be correlated against identified demand for facilities in order to identify deficiencies/shortages in different types of facilities. In particular it has already been identified that there is a shortage of Artificial Turf Pitches (ATP's) within this part of the borough. In respect of the different sports, there is a need for additional facilities for hockey, football (in particular good quality pitches and changing room facilities) and cricket. In this regard various local cricket clubs have expressed an interest in acquiring additional facilities, particularly for second teams.
- 6.5 Twyford High School currently makes use of the playing fields, and have expressed interest in increasing their usage of the site. St Vincent's Primary School, have also expressed interest in using this site. With regard to school usage the Department for Education and skills sets down minimum school pitch provision requirements. In particular the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 sets out that a minimum pitch area of 55,000 sq. m. is required for new schools of the size of Twyford High School. Whilst this requirement relates to new schools, it is still a useful guide in determining what is desirable in respect of provision for existing schools, although many urban schools do not currently meet this standard. Some of this need could be potentially accommodated at Twyford Sports Ground.
- 6.6 It should be noted in calculating this provision that 'pitch' is defined as including grass, all-weather and hard surface areas. All weather pitches because they allow a greater intensity of use are counted twice in calculating this provision, e.g. a 10,000 sq. m. ATP would contribute 20,000 sq. m. to the overall provision. In addition to the need identified by the schools, various local clubs have also expressed a need for additional facilities. The use of part of this site as a leisure garden has also been identified as a potential use.

- 6.7 On the basis of this information and other evidence regarding demand, the provision of good quality hockey, cricket, football facilities and flexible multi-sport ATP's would be sought. Useful guidance on the use of Artificial Turf Pitches and Multi Use Games Areas has been published by Sports England and the Football Association. It should be noted that in respect of artificial turf pitches, that the use of floodlighting will need to be carefully considered in order to minimise any detrimental effect on neighbouring residents. In this regard various advice on the design of floodlighting has also been published by Sports England, the National Planning Field Association and the individual governing bodies (i.e. the Football Association & International Hockey Federation).
- 6.8 The Council will also seek to ensure that any intensification of open space use arising either from new or improved facilities, would be compatible with the existing neighbouring uses. In this regard careful consideration will be given to any new development/change or intensification of use, which would give rise to an increase in users, hours of use, traffic and spectator numbers.
- 6.9 In accordance with relevant government guidance, in appropriate circumstances, the potential for securing S.106 monies to help fund improvement works to both existing facilities and redundant facilities should also be explored through the development process.

Community Access

- 6.10 Whilst there are already a range of sports facilities provided on this site, with the exception of the limited use of one of the pitches by Twyford High School, there is virtually no public access to any of these facilities. A key objective of this brief and a central aim in designating the site as Community Open Space will be to improve community access to this site. Given that there is already an identified and recognised need for pitches and facilities from local schools, clubs and others (see above), access to a wider user group will be sought. Given that there is already an established use on site at present, it will be essential to ensure that any change in access arrangements are compatible alongside existing uses. Partnership working with the different operators will be central in achieving these aims.
- 6.11 The Council recognise the benefit that elite athletes can have in promoting development of sport in the community. London Wasps Community Team is highly successful in promoting and developing rugby at grass roots level in primary and secondary schools and local amateur clubs.
- 6.12 Wasps Football Club, the amateur club, is a Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) which means that it is open to the community, does not discriminate in its membership policy, and that its core purpose is to promote rugby. The Club is non-profit making and any

profits that are made must be reinvested within the organisation. At present Wasps Football Club comprises the leading women's rugby club in England, men's amateur teams and youth and mini rugby spanning age groups from under 6 and under 17, inclusive.

- 6.13 In addition to seeking improvements in access for different user groups the Council and Wasps will seek to improve access to the site and its facilities for disabled people.

Landscaping/tree protection and Planting

- 6.14 The landscape within and bounding the site is a significant feature of this sports ground. A survey undertaken by the arboricultural team and local residents has identified various trees of significant value which merit protection. In particular 18 trees have been identified which merit an 'A' classification. These trees should be afforded a tree preservation order. Trees of notable value include an Old Oak near the Pavilion, and a London Plane towards the south west corner of the site. A number of other trees (approximately 46) along the boundary of the site have also been identified as being of value. The existing hedging bounding the site also has important screening value and thus should be retained and protected for this purpose.

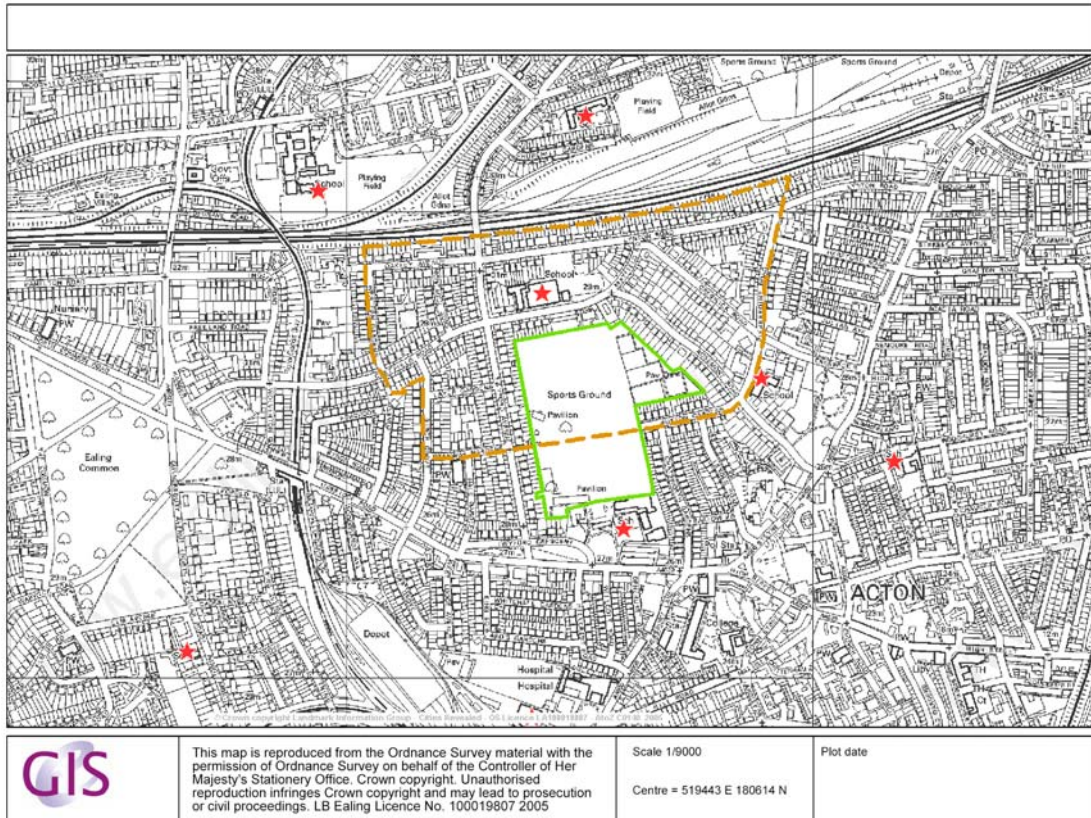
Archaeological/Heritage Value

- 6.15 The northern portion of this site is identified as forming part of an Area of Archaeological Interest. In particular the site is recognised as being of international importance for its prehistoric value, as one of the oldest inhabited sites in London, dating back over 100,000 years. See location plan for extent of area/designation.
- 6.16 Archaeological desk based assessment will be expected as part of any future planning applications affecting this site. The adjoining school building at Twyford High School immediately to the south of the site is grade 2* Listed. Any proposals for development on the sports ground in close proximity to the school should seek to complement rather than detract from the setting of this listed building.

Site Maintenance

- 6.17 The owners have a duty of care to maintain and keep his site in a satisfactory order. For example when British Gas owned the ground they carried out a yearly programme of pruning their hedges/trees that form the boundary between residents gardens and the sports field. To this end the Council will expect the owner to confirm the statutory requirements of Section 215 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990. The maintenance of the site and the facilities operating from this site will also be secured through the use of conditions and legal agreements where necessary, as part of the development process.

Figure 1: Location Plan



KEY	
	COS boundary
	Archaeological Interest Area
	Local School