

<b>Committee Date</b>	19.05.2022	
<b>Address</b>	National Westminster Bank Sports Ground Copers Cope Road Beckenham BR3 1NZ	
<b>Application Number</b>	21/02760/FULL1	<b>Officer</b> - Claire Brew
<b>Ward</b>	Beckenham Town and Copers Cope	
<b>Proposal</b>	Construction of open-air canopy covering for spectator seating stand.	
<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Agent</b>	
c/o Agent c/o Agent	Mr Aaron Zimmerman	
Centro Planning Consultancy 104C St. John Street London EC1M 4EH United Kingdom	104C St John Street London EC1M 4EH	
<b>Reason for referral to committee</b>	Call-In	<b>Councillor call in</b> Yes

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	Application Permitted
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<p>KEY DESIGNATIONS</p> <p>Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area Green Chain London City Airport Safeguarding Metropolitan Open Land Open Space Deficiency Sites of Interest for Nat. Conservation Smoke Control SCA 12</p>
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<b>Representation summary</b>	Neighbour letters were sent on 02/07/2021. A site notice was posted from 19/01/2022 and a press ad was displayed in the News Shopper on the 14/07/2021.  Consultation is for a minimum of 21 days.  13 letters of objection have been received.
Total number of responses	13
Number in support	0
Number of objections	13

## 1. SUMMARY OF KEY REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- The enhancement of outdoor sport and recreation facilities is acceptable in principle, subject to an assessment against the Open Space and Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) policies of the development plan
- The proposed open-air canopy covering for the approved spectator stand would harm openness and is therefore inappropriate development and harmful to the MOL however in this instance there are very special circumstances which clearly outweigh the limited harm to the MOL which would arise from permitting this development
- The design is acceptable, subject to the use of sympathetic, high-quality materials, being secured by planning condition

## 2. LOCATION

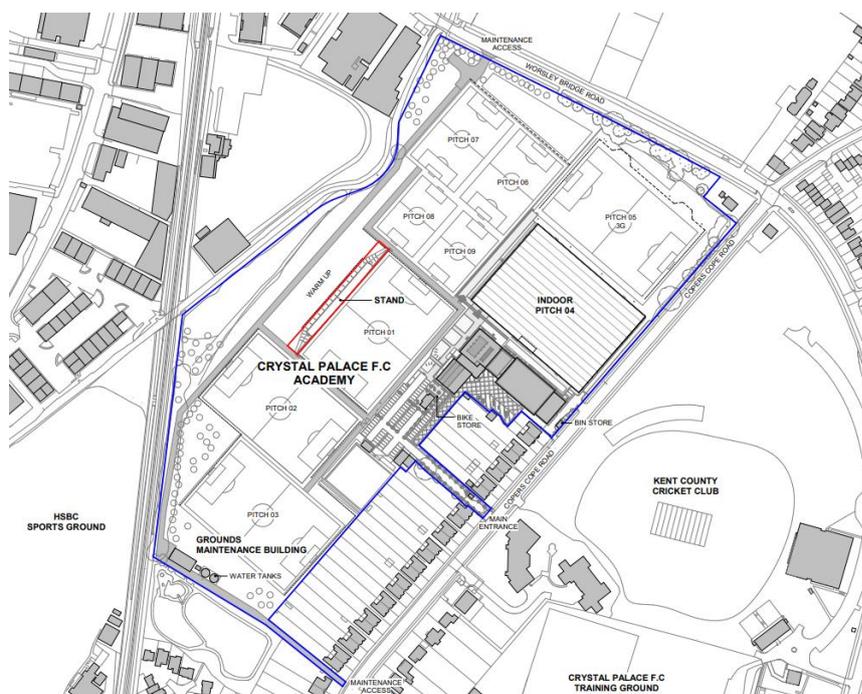


Fig 1: Site Location Plan

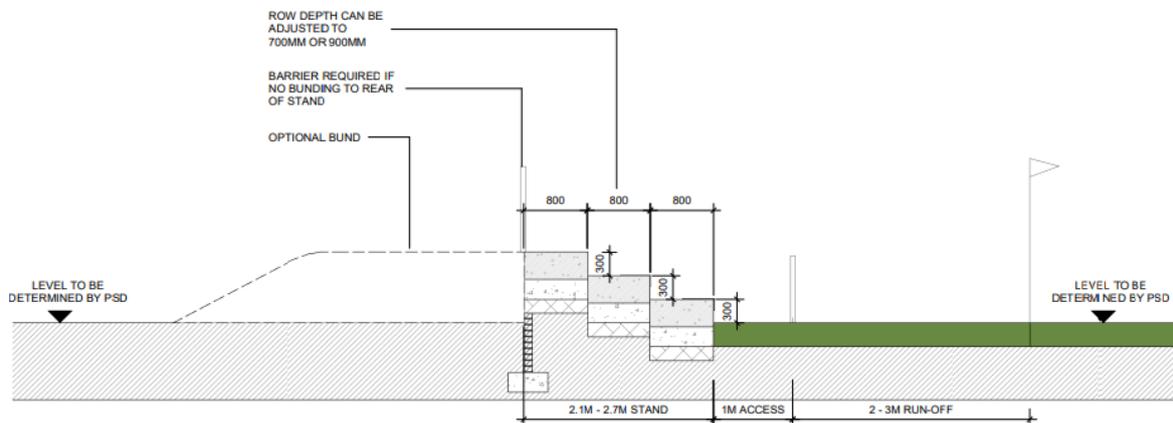
- 2.1 The site forms part of the wider Crystal Palace Football Academy training grounds
- 2.2 The spectator seating to which this application relates is situated on the north-western side of the approved 'show pitch' (pitch 1)
- 2.3 The north-western edge of the site is bounded by Pool River along with a belt of existing tree and shrub vegetation all designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)
- 2.4 To the north-east the site is bounded by Worsley Bridge Road, beyond which is the Cegas sports ground
- 2.5 Some individual trees are located along the north-east boundary with Worsley Bridge Road and the south-east boundary with Copers Cope Road
- 2.6 Opposite the site on copers Cope Road is further sports pitches and related development including Kent County Cricket Ground and CPFCs first team's training ground
- 2.7 The site is bounded along its south-eastern and part of its south-western side by residential dwellings in Copers Cope Road. Numbers 119 to 169 Copers Cope Road are all part of the Area of Special Residential Character (ASRC)
- 2.8 Along the western edge of the site runs the railway line and a further belt of protected trees and shrubs which connect to a small area of protected woodland immediately adjoining the site (TPO Ref.269A: Land rear of 32 to 39 Century Way Beckenham)
- 2.9 Previously, the landform of the site was relatively flat. However, the site levels in the area where the show pitch and spectator stand were raised by around 1m, as approved by the Council under condition 6 (slab levels) of permission 19/04644/FULL1 on 5.5.2021
- 2.10 Parts of the site are within Flood Zones 2 and 3
- 2.11 The entire site is within Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and the South East London Green Chain
- 2.12 The site is in an area with PTAL rate of between 1b and 2 (on a scale of 0 – 6b, where 6b is the most accessible). Lower Sydenham Station which is located approximately 300m to the north of the site
- 2.13 There is no public access through the site to adjoining sites

### **3. PROPOSAL**

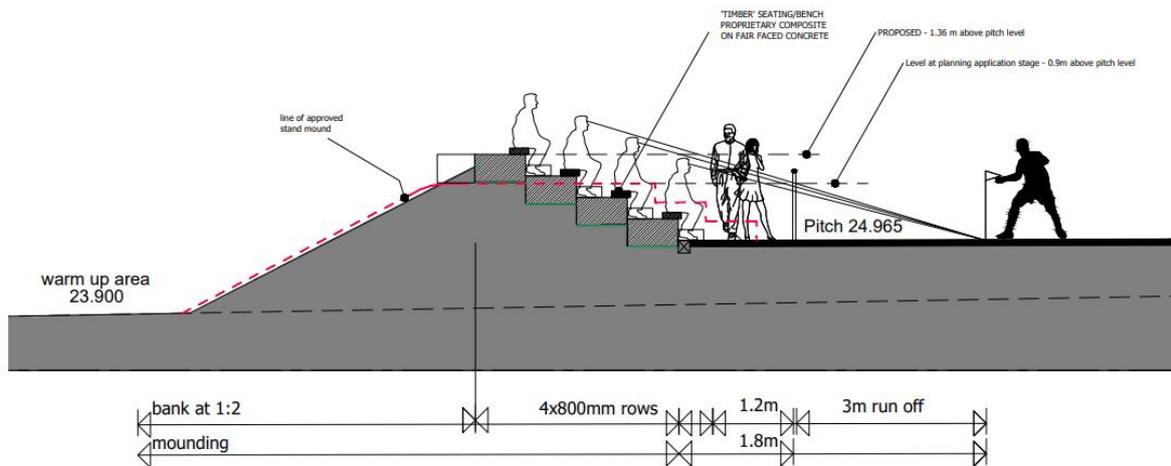
- 3.1 Planning permission was granted, subject to legal agreement, on 11.06.2020 for Erection of a covered full-size football pitch, creation of an artificial full-size pitch with floodlighting, and regrading of the site to create a full-size show pitch with spectator seating & six training pitches (two full-size, two 3/4 size & two half-size).

External alterations and lobby & link extensions to the existing buildings. Installation of maintenance/store sheds, water tanks and under-pitch infrastructure. Associated highway and landscaping works (application ref.19/04644/FULL1).

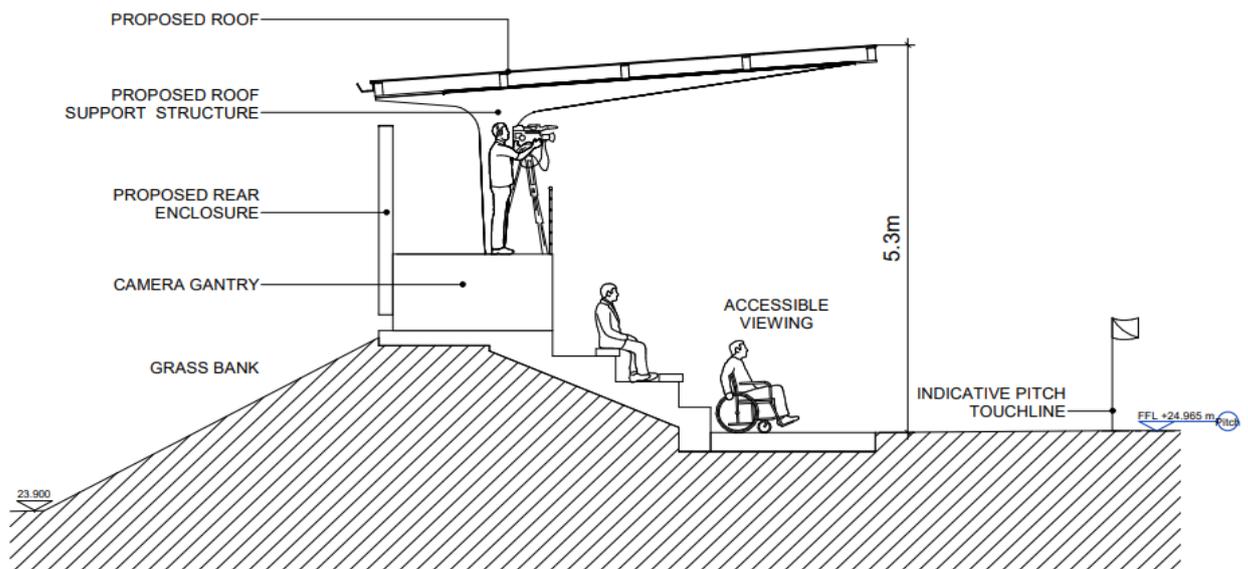
- 3.2 Details of the spectator seating were subsequently approved under condition 10 of permission ref.19/04644/FULL1 on 22.10.2021. Approval was given for one stand containing 500 seats (as opposed to the 2 x 250 seat stands shown in the original application). The approved stand has an overall length of 75.5m with four tiers of seating giving an overall seating depth of 3.8m, a maximum height above pitch level of 1.36m and an earthen bund to the rear.
- 3.3 The purpose of original application was to attain Category One status for CPFC's academy. However, owing to an oversight by the Applicant, the original plans did not include drawings for a canopy to cover the spectator seating for the main outdoor pitch, "Pitch 1".
- 3.4 The applicant now requires approval for the addition of a polycarbonate sheet roof covering over the approved seating area, measuring between approximately 4.1 – 5.3m high, as scaled from surrounding ground and pitch levels, together with a rear enclosure also formed from polycarbonate sheets.
- 3.5 The applicant states that the provision of a structure to provide spectators with protection from the elements is a league requirement and that "*Failure to meet Premier League requirements could threaten the Club's Category 1 Academy status, result in harm to the Club's reputation, and hinder the Club's ability to recruit and train talented youth athletes*" (Planning Statement, Paragraph 2.10).



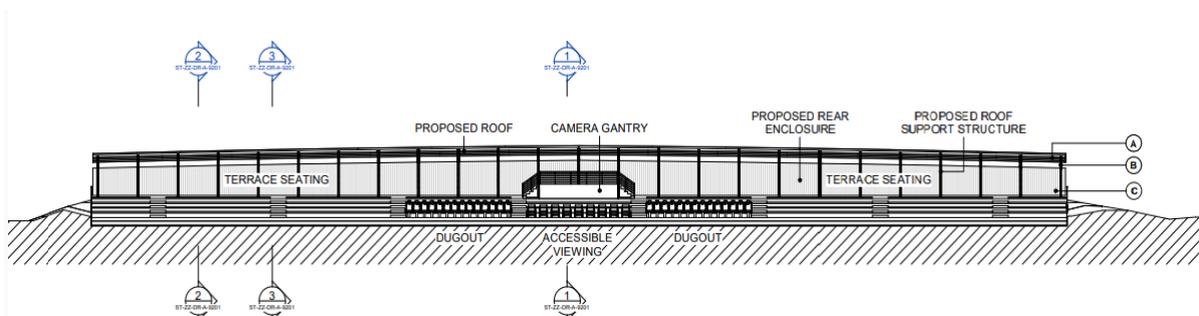
**Fig 2: Section through one of the spectator seating stands as proposed in original application (ref.19/0644/FULL1)**



**Fig 3: Cross-section through seating stand as approved under condition 10 of application ref.19/04644/FULL1**



**Fig 4: Cross-section through seating stand and roof canopy, as proposed**



**Fig.5: Proposed stand elevation (front view)**

## 4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 19/04644/FULL1: Erection of a covered full-size football pitch, creation of an artificial full-size pitch with floodlighting, and regrading of the site to create a full-size show pitch with spectator seating & six training pitches (two full-size, two 3/4 size & two half-size). External alterations and lobby & link extensions to the existing buildings. Installation of maintenance/store sheds, water tanks and under-pitch infrastructure. Associated highway and landscaping works - Permitted subject to legal agreement on 11.06.2020
- 4.2 21/01021/FULL1: New service vehicular access from Worsley Bridge Road – Refused on 22.07.2021 for the following reasons:
- 1 The proposed development would harm the openness of the Metropolitan Open Land and is therefore inappropriate as it would not meet any of the exemptions listed within paragraphs 149 or 150 of the National Planning Policy Framework. In this instance there are no very special circumstances for permitting the development and the proposal is refused in accordance with policies 50 of the Local Plan and G3 of the London Plan.
- 2 The proposal would result in the loss of on-street parking in Worsley Bridge Road and, in the absence of any evidence submitted to support this loss, the proposal would add to localised parking stress, detrimental to road safety and contrary to the aims and objectives of Local Plan policies 32 and 34.
- 4.3 21/02984/FULL1: Erection of a security hut and access controls with associated works to the site access road – Permitted on 25.10.2021
- 4.4 21/03379/FULL1: Installation of a fuel tank for the storage of heating oil (retrospective application) – Pending Consideration
- 4.5 22/00063/FULL1: Maintenance vehicle site access from Worsley Bridge Road – Permitted on 26.04.2022

## 5. CONSULTATION SUMMARY

### A) Statutory

- 5.1 Sport England - **No Objection:**
- the proposed development meets exception 2 of our playing fields policy, in that the proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field and does not affect the quantity or quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use.
- 5.2 Drainage (lead local flood authority) – **No comment**

### B) Local groups

- 5.3 North Copers Cope Road Action Group:
- Inappropriate development on MOL and there are no very special circumstances specific to the canopy itself (addressed in section 7.1 – 7.3)

- The statement that CPFC would not be able to carry on as an Academy 1 club without a covered stand at their Academy site is not in our view correct (addressed in section 7.1 – 7.3)
- The Academy inter-club matches can take place at Selhurst Park and Dulwich Hamlet FC which satisfies the relevant criteria (addressed in paragraph 7.1.8)
- Further Damage to the Openness of the MOL (addressed in section 7.1 – 7.3)
- Existing development is all ranged around the periphery of the site, as it is indeed at KCCC, whereas this will be in the middle of it (addressed in section 7.1 – 7.3)
- The PL rules have always mandated that Academy inter-club matches are played on grounds that have a covered stand and so it was disingenuous that it was not included in the original planning application (addressed in paragraph 3.3 and section 7.1 – 7.3).
- Permitting the roof would set an unfortunate precedent for the KCCC Ground should Kent ever apply for a roof to their stand (addressed in paragraph 7.1.26).
- Further damage to the Academy MOL will weaken the Council's case to resist the residential development proposed for the Old Cegas Sports Ground corner of Greycot and Worsley Bridge Roads now proposed for redevelopment with 121 new flats and houses (addressed in paragraph 7.1.26).

### **C) Adjoining Occupiers**

#### *5.4 Principle / impact on MOL (addressed in section 7.1 – 7.3):*

- Two other CPFC grounds at Selhurst Park and Dulwich Hamlet which are within 45 minutes drive of the main stadium at Selhurst Park already have this facility and are therefore acceptable to the Premier League for inter-club matches
- Should have been included in original proposal (addressed in paragraph 3.3)
- Further built development on MOL
- Much larger stand with a roof on the north side of the pitch will lead to further degradation of the openness of this land
- Stand is sited in the middle of the playing fields, rather than close to existing buildings on the edge of the site

#### *5.5 Design (addressed in section 7.4)*

- Not in keeping with other developments in MOL and also within the local architecture of Copers Cope Road

#### *5.6 Impact on neighbourhood amenity (addressed in section 7.5):*

- Will be visible from neighbouring house

#### *5.7 Highways/Transport:*

- Insufficient parking to support a full 500 capacity crowd (addressed in paragraph 7.5.2)

#### *5.8 Other:*

- Members of the public should be allowed to attend matches and a condition should be imposed accordingly (addressed in paragraph 7.4.9)

## 6. POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

### National Policy Framework 2021

6.1 Paragraph 11 states that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For **decision-taking** this means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

In accordance with Paragraph 47 of the Framework, planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.2 Other relevant paragraphs are referred to in the main assessment.

### National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

6.3 Relevant paragraphs are referred to in the main assessment.

### The London Plan (March 2021)

6.4 Relevant policies:

<b>Chapter 3 Design</b>	
Policy D4	Delivering good design
Policy D5	Inclusive design
Policy D8	Public realm
Policy D11	Safety, security and resilience to emergency
Policy D12	Fire safety
<b>Chapter 5 Social Infrastructure</b>	
Policy S1	Developing London's social infrastructure
Policy S5	Sports and recreation facilities
<b>Chapter 7 Heritage and Culture</b>	
Policy HC3	Strategic and Local Views
Policy HC4	London View Management Framework
<b>Chapter 8 Green Infrastructure and Natural Environment</b>	
Policy G3	Metropolitan Open Land
Policy G6	Biodiversity and access to nature

<b>Chapter 9 Sustainable Infrastructure</b>	
Policy SI12	Flood risk management
Policy SI13	Sustainable drainage

## **Mayor Supplementary Guidance**

### 6.5 Relevant SPGs:

- Social Infrastructure (2015)
- Accessible London: Achieving an Inclusive Environment (2014)
- The control of dust and emissions during construction and demolition (2014)
- Character and Context (2014)
- Sustainable Design and Construction (2014)
- London View Management Framework (2012)

## **Bromley Local Plan (2019)**

### 6.6 Relevant policies:

- 20 Community Facilities
- 21 Opportunities for Community Facilities
- 33 Access for all
- 37 General Design of Development
- 44 Areas of Special Residential Character
- 48 Skyline
- 50 Metropolitan Open Land
- 54 South East London Green Chain
- 57 Outdoor Recreation and Leisure
- 58 Outdoor Sport, Recreation and Play
- 69 Development and Nature Conservation Sites
- 77 Landscape Quality and Character
- 78 Green Corridors
- 79 Biodiversity and Access to Nature
- 115 Reducing Flood Risk
- 116 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
- 122 Light Pollution
- 123 Sustainable Design and Construction

## **Bromley Supplementary Guidance**

### 6.7 Relevant SPGs:

- SPG 1 General Design Principles

## 7. ASSESSMENT

### Land use Considerations

#### 7.1 *Principle of Development on Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) - Acceptable*

- 7.1.1 The site is designated as Metropolitan Open Land, offering it protection from development, unless under very special circumstances.
- 7.1.2 London Plan Policy G3 affords Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) the strongest possible protection and says it should be protected from inappropriate development. Proposals that harm MOL should be refused. National Green Belt policies, set out within the NPPF, apply to MOL and therefore MOL is offered the same protection as Green Belt. Bromley Local Plan (BLP) policy 50 is consistent with the London Plan.
- 7.1.3 As set out in paragraph 149 of the NPPF, the construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate development in the Green Belt (and henceforth the MOL). Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt (and henceforth MOL) and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
- 7.1.4 The exceptions to 'inappropriate development' listed in paragraph 149 which are of relevance to the application proposals are:
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- 7.1.5 The proposal is for a roof covering to the approved spectator seating used in connection with the existing use of the land for outdoor sport. Therefore, to not be considered 'inappropriate' the proposals must not harm openness.

#### *Impact on openness*

- 7.1.6 Openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume.
- 7.1.7 It is relevant to note that in the original Academy application, built development (including the large indoor covered pitch) was directed to parts of the site which were already occupied by fenced-off 5-a-side all weather artificial football pitches. The majority of the site was to remain open for outdoor sport. As the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVA) (Nov 2019) which accompanied the original application observed:

The open area of land adjacent to the belt of vegetation that lines Pool River would remain clearly perceptible between other areas of undeveloped land. The distinction between the Site and the built-up areas would remain largely unchanged as a result of the proposed development (Para 6.4).

- 7.1.8 When considering the potential impact of the spectator seating stands on the openness of the MOL it was concluded by officers that *“the stands would not be unduly high... Provided appropriate materials are used and the stands are constructed in accordance with the details provided, they would have limited visual impact”* (report to committee for application ref.19/04644/FULL1).
- 7.1.9 The canopy over the stand is an additional element that did not form part of the considerations within the original LVA and MOL review. Accordingly, the applicant has provided an addendum to the Landscape and Visual Assessment undertaken in 2019 (dated June 2021). It concludes that the proposed development would cause a very small magnitude of change to the site where the inherent character is defined by sports pitches and would result in a negligible adverse effect upon the character of the site.
- 7.1.10 The applicant at paragraph 5.4 of the addendum to the LVA surmises that:
- any perceived reduction in openness would be very limited due to the size and orientation of the Seating Stand, its limited visibility and the remaining visibility of undeveloped land surrounding the Proposed Development. Where visible, the Proposed Development would not reduce the perception of openness between the existing built form in the wider sports facility and the Approved Development (Ref. DC/19/04644/FULL1) and the open-air canopy of the Seating Stand would be seen within the context of MOL that is already influenced by and contains built form. Therefore, the proposed development has a very limited overall effect on the openness of the MOL.
- 7.1.11 Whilst the proposed roof canopy and spectator seating would be used as part of a facility for outdoor sport and could be said to be a characteristic feature of a site such as this, the conclusion reached previously by officers, that the seating aspect of the scheme would not harm openness, cannot be reached in this instance. This is due to the enclosed nature of the proposed roof canopy, along with its height (5.3m), length (74m), and the impact it would have on existing views of belt of vegetation that lines Pool River along the north-western edge of the site, which would be compromised.
- 7.1.12 As such it is considered that the perception of openness on this part of the site would be eroded by the development.
- 7.1.13 At the same time it is acknowledged that any perceived reduction in openness may be limited due to the orientation of the seating stand and the proposed use of translucent and transparent materials.
- 7.1.14 Taking the above into account, the proposal would result in some limited harm to the openness of the MOL and is therefore inappropriate development as it would not meet any of the exemptions in paragraphs 149 or 150 of the NPPF. It is necessary therefore for to consider whether any ‘very special circumstances’ exist that outweigh the harm.



**Fig.6: Existing spectator seating stand and proposed location of the roof canopy as viewed from the south-east**



**Fig. 7: Existing spectator seating stand and proposed location of the roof canopy (on left) as viewed from the south with Maybrey Business Park residential development in background**

### *Very Special Circumstances*

7.1.15 The applicant has put forward a case for what they consider to be ‘very special circumstances’, broadly summarised as follows:

- The future prospects of CPFC within the Premier League and the need to develop a Category 1 Academy facility in order to continue the club’s success
- The facilities that a Category 1 Academy must provide as required by the Premier League and the specific “locational requirements” for such a facility
- A resulting long-term and viable business facility that will ensure that the site will be used for outdoor sports and recreation and well-maintained for the future

7.1.16 It is understood that only a small group of football academies are awarded with a Category One status as there are a number of criteria which must be met. In line with the Premier League's Elite Player Performance Plan (EPPP) each Club which operates a Category One Academy must compete in the Premier League 2, which is a competition specifically for players aged under 17 to under 23, which helps to bridge the gap from youth football to senior competitions.

7.1.17 The Premier League's website provides further information on Premier League 2: [Premier League.com/news/58764](https://www.premierleague.com/news/58764). According to this website:

- Each club must host at least three league matches at their main stadium during the course of the season. This helps to enhance the matchday experience for the players and fans.
- Member clubs' training grounds or Academy venues will be permitted for the staging of up to three home matches over the course of the league season.

7.1.18 Whilst the wording on the website implies that Academy grounds can only be used for up to three matches per season, the Premier League have confirmed that with the requisite facilities in place the Academy venue can be designated as their 'alternative venue', meaning they can play all games there except for the three main stadium games (at Selhurst Park). Residents have suggested that Dulwich Hamlet FC could instead be used as a suitable alternative, however, CPFC's preference is for the Academy site to be their alternative venue and the Premier League are supportive of the development of CPFCs own training grounds.

7.1.19 Appendix 1 of *Rules of Premier League 2 Season 2021/22* sets out the Venue Criteria which must be met in order for a Premier League 2 match to take place at an alternative venue to a club's main stadium. One of these being "*the ability to accommodate a minimum of 500 spectators under cover*". With the covered spectator seating in place it is understood that between 13 and 20 Premier League 2 matches could take place at the site. However, in the absence of any approved floodlighting for the show pitch these would all need to be played in daylight hours. To date, no application for floodlighting for the show pitch has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority for consideration and the applicant has confirmed that floodlights are only needed if they wanted to host evening games and as such are not an absolute requirement.

7.1.20 The applicant contends that failing to meet Premier League requirements could threaten the Club's Category 1 Academy status, result in harm to the Club's reputation, and hinder the Club's ability to recruit and train talented youth athletes (Para.5.17, Planning Statement). The Premier League has clarified that, whilst it is not a given that the club's Category One status would be lost if they were unable to host Premier 2 League matches, it could impact their license for Category One status next season.

7.1.21 In terms of the "locational requirements" for such a facility, *one of the criteria in Appendix 1 of the Rules of Premier League 2 Season 2021/22 is "The venue shall not be more than 45 minutes from the Member Club's Stadium"*. While it does not

specify by what means of transport, it is noted that Selhurst Park (the Club's main stadium) is approximately 4 miles away from the Academy site which would be an approximate 15 – 20 minute drive.

7.1.22 In terms of long-term viability, the applicant sets out in their Planning Statement that the ability to obtain and maintain Category 1 Status under the EPPP ensures that more money is invested by the Football Association and Premier League into English Youth Development, ensuring that the Academy can continue to develop young players, provide and maintain facilities of a high standard, and therefore ensure a viable and long-term sporting opportunity for the site.

7.1.23 Officers recognise that this site has a long-history of sporting uses and the importance of securing the long-term future of the site for outdoor sport and recreational uses, ensuring it is well maintained and kept available for community users in line with its MOL designation is acknowledged. However, the covered spectator seating was not included as part of the originally approved development (application ref.19/04644/FULL1), the purpose of which was to “consolidate and upgrade the existing youth academy to attain ‘Category 1’ status” and it was understood by the Council that the development as approved would allow the youth academy to attain its Category 1 status.

7.1.24 The applicant has provided details of a planning application which was granted permission relating to the Fulham FC training ground in New Malden (LB Kingston upon Thames), which is also on MOL for “*Replacement indoor training facility, replacement floodlit full-size all-weather pitch, the provision of additional floodlights and the erection of a covered spectator area for the arena pitch, the provision of an overflow car parking and associated soft and hard landscaping*” (ref. 15/15210/FUL).

7.1.25 The Fulham application, however, relates to a larger scheme and the provision of a number of facilities, more akin to the development which was originally granted at the site (under ref.19/04644/FULL1). The covered spectator area was just one element of the Fulham application. Had the proposed canopy (for which permission is now being sought) been included in application ref.19/04644/FULL1 it would have been assessed in the round, taking into account the benefits / dis-benefits of the wider scheme. In any case, planning law requires that each application is treated on its merits and as such it is seldom possible to justify permitting a development on the basis that something similar was permitted at another site

7.1.26 Similarly, the suggestion by the Local residents' group that permitting the roof canopy would set a precedent for other MOL sites to be developed is noted, but any subsequent applications at other sites would need to be considered on their individual merits.

## **7.2 Other Land use considerations - Acceptable**

7.2.1 Bromley Local Plan Policy 20 (community facilities) states that “the Council will promote the quality of life and the health and wellbeing of those living and working in the Borough...to ensure the provision, enhancement and retention of a wide

range of social infrastructure, including facilities for health and education, recreation, sports...”.

- 7.2.2 Policy 21 supports the maximisation of opportunities for the enhancement of social infrastructure, this includes sports facilities. Clause d specifically supports the provision and enhancement of sports and recreational facilities especially where there are recognised deficiencies or where they present a tool for renewal and regeneration.
- 7.2.3 Policy 58 of the Bromley Local Plan states that the Council will support the enhancement of outdoor sport and recreation facilities provided that proposals address nature conservation, Green Belt and Open Space Policies of the Local Plan. The London Plan takes a similar stance and says that such proposals should also be considered in light of the borough’s own assessment of needs and opportunities for sports facilities, and the potential impact that the development will have.
- 7.2.4 Planning Statement para 5.16 indicates that whilst four other Premier League London clubs have Category 1 status, they are all in North London. The large catchment of a Cat 1 facility at this site therefore includes much of the Borough and indeed wider South London, with the planning statement making specific reference to the ‘*abundance of raw footballing talent in South London*’ (para 5.18).
- 7.2.5 In the original application the applicant was able to demonstrate very special circumstances that justified the development, namely its public benefits which include an enhanced sports academy, community access and ensuring long-term and viable use of the site for outdoor sport. As discussed, the applicant has stated that failure to provide covered seating could be a threat to them maintaining Category 1 status.
- 7.2.6 The Premier League are supportive of the Club developing its Academy training grounds to become a viable ‘alternative venue’ to host Premier League 2 matches and Sport England have not raised any objection to this proposal as it will not prejudice the sporting use of the site.
- 7.2.7 In light of the potential benefits to the quality of life and the health and wellbeing of those living and working in the Borough, the proposal to enhance these facilities in a sensitive manner is supported in principle by officers.

### ***7.3 Conclusions on land use/principle of development in the MOL - Acceptable***

- 7.3.1 It is considered that the development is inappropriate development in the MOL as it would introduce a substantial structure onto currently undeveloped land which would result in harm to openness. Openness is one of the essential characteristics of Green Belts (and henceforth MOL).
- 7.3.2 Whilst it is considered that any perceived reduction in openness may be limited somewhat due to the orientation of the seating stand and the proposed use of translucent and transparent materials, the NPPF states that inappropriate

development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

- 7.3.3 When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations (NPPF, para 148).
- 7.3.4 The applicants' case for very special circumstances focuses on the argument that failure to provide covered seating could threaten the Clubs' ability to maintain Category 1 Academy status. This would undermine the basis on which the original development was granted planning permission by the Council.
- 7.3.5 Having regard to the merits of this particular application and taking into account the representations received from local residents and all other material considerations, it is considered that, on balance, there are very special circumstances which clearly outweigh the limited harm to the MOL which would arise from permitting this development.
- 7.3.6 The application is subject to a further assessment against a number of other development plan policies which are dealt with in the following sections of the report.

#### **7.4 Design - Acceptable**

- 7.4.1 The NPPF is clear that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design, it says, is a key aspect of sustainable development.
- 7.4.2 The proposed canopy would be constructed with a dark grey coloured, painted, metal structure with an overall height of 5.3m. The roof material would be translucent polycarbonate sheets and the rear enclosure would be transparent polycarbonate sheets.
- 7.4.3 Whilst the rear enclosure does add an element of bulk to the design and induces more of a sense of enclosure to the structure, the applicant contends that the rear enclosure is necessary to prevent rain being blown through the stand. However, to help mitigate the visual impact they have amended the proposed material for the rear enclosure to a transparent polycarbonate (as opposed to a translucent material).
- 7.4.4 The provision of a transparent rear enclosure would help to ensure that views of the belt of vegetation that lines Pool River along the north-western edge of the site are still perceivable from the surrounding area.
- 7.4.5 Given its slanted roof design and single row of vertical supports to the rear, the structure would appear fairly slender when viewed from the side and, with the use of the transparent rear enclosure, the development would respect the important landscape features, in line with Policy 37 of the BLP.

- 7.4.6 A pre-commencement condition is recommended which should require the developer to submit details of all of the materials to be used for the roof structure, including samples. This will help to ensure a high-quality finish, using materials that are sympathetic to the surrounding landscape.
- 7.4.7 Policy 48 of the Bromley Local Plan requires developments which may impact on the skyline to demonstrate how they will protect or enhance the quality of the views, vistas, gaps and skyline listed in the policy. The LVA addendum concludes that the proposed canopy would not affect views towards the Crystal Place Ridge, a 'major Skyline Ridge'; nor would it affect either the view from Crystal Palace Park or the Addington Hills, which are 'Views of Local Importance' as identified in the LB Bromley Local Plan.
- 7.4.8 In terms of access, a grassy bank surrounds the stand on three sides, with a 1:20 ramped access provided to the north and south. Terrace seating, dugout and a camera gantry are also arranged within the stand enclosure to one side of pitch 1. As such it is considered that the proposal would meet the principles of accessible and inclusive design set out in Policy D5 of the London Plan.
- 7.4.9 The comments received from local residents regarding allowing public access to the site are noted, however, this is neither relevant to the development being considered nor would it be enforceable, as such a condition of this nature is not recommended. Community use of the site is already permissible under condition 25 of planning permission ref.19/04644/FULL1.
- 7.4.10 Overall it is considered that the proposed design for the spectator seating canopy, would be of a high standard of design and would not unduly impact on the character or appearance of the area.

## **7.5 Neighbouring Amenity - Acceptable**

- 7.5.1 The proposed canopy would be visible from homes backing onto the site in Copers Cope Road and Worsley Bridge Road and, to an extent, from the former Maybrey Works and Footzie Social Club sites where new residential development is being built or has been approved. However, given the separation distances to neighbouring sites, it would not significantly harm the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring buildings by inadequate daylight, sunlight, privacy or by overshadowing.
- 7.5.2 In terms of potential for increased noise and disturbance, the 500-seat spectator stand has already been permitted under the original planning permission (and details approved under condition 10). The current application does not propose any increase in the number of spectators at the site from that originally approved, as such, there would be no significant increase in traffic, noise or disturbance as a result of this proposal.
- 7.5.3 No additional lighting or floodlighting has been applied for as part of this application. A condition is recommended to prevent the installation of any additional lighting without express consent. This would enable the Council to carefully consider the

impact of any future lighting proposals on the amenities of local residents and the adjoining SINC.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The enhancement of outdoor sport and recreation facilities is supported, in principle, in planning policy terms. However, the proposed roof canopy would harm openness and is therefore inappropriate development and harmful to the MOL.
- 8.2 Having regard to the merits of this particular application it is considered that, in this instance, there are very special circumstances which clearly outweigh the limited harm to the MOL which would arise from permitting this development. It would help to develop and enhance the clubs' youth academy, enabling it to maintain its Category One status, the basis on which planning permission was granted for the original development.
- 8.3 Subject to the use of sympathetic, high-quality materials, including a transparent rear enclosure, which should all be secured by condition, the proposed roof canopy would respect the surrounding landscape and landscape features and would appear as a sympathetic addition to this sports ground.
- 8.4 Accordingly, having regard to the presumption in favour of sustainable development, the application is recommended for permission, subject to conditions.
- 8.5 In reaching this conclusion officers have had regard to the statutory provisions of Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which dictate that decisions must be undertaken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Application Permitted

### **Subject to the following conditions:**

#### **Standard**

- **Time Limit**
- **Compliance with approved drawings**

#### **Pre-Commencement**

- **Approval of Materials**

#### **No Further Details/Compliance**

- **No lighting**

**Any other planning condition(s) considered necessary by the Assistant Director of Planning**

#### **Informatives**

In addition to the conditions set out above, you are reminded of the conditions and your obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in relation to permission ref. 19/04644/FULL1 and the covenants contained therein.