



BERKSHIRE COUNTY SPORTS CLUB

PADEL COURTS & TENNIS COURTS | RG4 6ST

DESIGN STATEMENT | NOVEMBER 2024 | FULL PLANNING APPLICATION | Rev P1

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE DESIGN STATEMENT

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by HP Architecture in support of a Full Planning Application submitted on behalf of the client, PadelStars Ltd, for the erection of 3no. covered padel tennis courts and 3 no. tennis courts with floodlighting, associated parking and social area (figure. 01).

The site has previously been subject to a Full Planning Application for the erection of flood lighting to serve the existing tennis courts, for which it gained an approval (Planning ref: 201422). Since its approval in 2020, this permission has lapsed. The applicant now looks to action the instalment of the flood lighting with the added benefit of padel tennis courts to compliment the array of sporting activities that can be found at Berkshire County Sports Club (here after referred to BCSC).

The proposal set out in this application has been designed with consideration to the local context and local policy and has also given consideration to the comments received for the approved application (Planning ref: 201422).

A list of the plans and documents submitted as part of this application include:

- 24.415.01.P4 - LOCATION PLAN
- 24.415.02.P5 - SITE PLAN
- 24.415.04.P2 - COVERED PADEL TENNIS COURTS - PLANS & ELEVATIONS
- 24.415.05.P3 - TENNIS COURTS - PLANS & ELEVATIONS
- 24.415.06.P3 - PROPOSED COURTS - SITE ELEVATION
- 24.415.CIL FORM
- 24.415.P1 - DESIGN STATEMENT
- 24.415.STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
- BERKSHIRE COUNTY SPORTS CLUB - PEA - V2 - 05.11
- BNG PART 1&2 - BERKSHIRE COUNTRY SPORTS CLUB, RG4 6ST - V1.0 - 04.11.24
- THE STATUTORY BIODIVERSITY METRIC CALCULATION TOOL - SCENARIO B - BCSC, RG4 6ST - V1.0 - 01.11.24



Figure. 01 | BCSC | Proposed Courts | Location Plan

2.0 SITE & LOCAL AREA

2.1 SITE

The application site is located within the curtilage of the Berkshire County Sports Club and equates to 0.45ha (red line boundary).

The application site currently accommodates 3no. Uncovered tennis courts and 1no. Uncovered padel tennis court located along the northern boundary of BCSC.

BCSC is a well-established amateur sports club which is open to the community. The BCSC is situated in open countryside on the eastern side of Sonning Lane, a short distance to the south of Sonning Village, and directly opposite the Reading Blue Coat School which is located on the west side of the road.

The northern and western boundaries of the BCSC site adjoin the Sonning Conservation Area, whilst the eastern and southern boundaries are open to the rest of the BCSC site which offers a wide range of sporting activities including (but not limited too) Tennis, Football, Hockey, Rugby, Squash.

There is extensive parking for the club immediately off Sonning Lane and all the built coverage is to the Northern end of the site beside the car park and adjacent to the application site. The buildings at this end of the site largely date from the 1970's and largely brick built with a mixture of flat and pitched roofs.

2.2 BERKSHIRE COUNTY SPORTS CLUB

The Berkshire County Sports Club is a family-friendly sports club based in Sonning. The large club house includes a bar and lounge area, two separate function rooms and changing rooms. The 32 acre site accommodates numerous grass pitches, padel, tennis and squash courts, and a full size all weather pitch. When Berkshire County Council ceased to exist in 1998, the Club became a self- financing entity, and now operates as a members club open to all, and currently has a membership in excess of 600 adults and

400 juniors.

Sports sections include: hockey, football, rugby, squash, tennis, touch rugby and American Football.

Less strenuous activities offered include billiards, snooker, darts and pool. Most sections offer a full range of participation from social practice to competitive matches.

Total club membership across all sports teams is considerable with numerous spectators at sporting events and training sessions.



Figure. 02 | Aerial view of the site location (hatched red)



Figure. 03 | Aerial view of the site location | Existing Courts seen top right | Taken from BCSC Website

2.3 | SITE ASSESSMENT: BCSC, SONNING LANE, EXISTING COURTS AND SURROUNDINGS



Figure. 04 | Sonning Lane, north facing, vehicular site access shown to left.



Figure. 05 | Existing vehicular access lane to proposed parking area.



Figure. 06 | Existing vehicular access lane to proposed parking area.



Figure. 07 | Existing gap in hedging adjacent to existing tennis courts.



Figure. 08 | Proposed area for additional car parking.



Figure. 09 | Existing vehicular field access from access lane north of the site.



Figure. 10 | Existing Sonning Lawn Tennis Club courts.



Figure. 11 | Existing tank to be removed adjacent to existing padel courts.



Figure. 12 | Existing store to be removed adjacent to existing padel courts.



Figure. 13 | Existing pedestrian footpath between proposed parking and out door social space.

2.3 | SITE ASSESSMENT: BCSC, SONNING LANE, EXISTING COURTS AND SURROUNDINGS



Figure. 14 | Existing outdoor social space.



Figure. 15 | Existing access point to courts.



Figure. 16 | Existing padel tennis court.



Figure. 17 | Existing tennis courts.



Figure. 18 | Existing asphalt pedestrian path to 3G Pitches.



Figure. 19 | Existing hedging immediately south of tennis courts to be removed and replaced elsewhere on site.



Figure. 20 | Existing grassland. Proposed tennis court extension to be extended into this space.



Figure. 21 | Existing post and rail fencing to be extended.



Figure. 22 | Existing pedestrian approach to courts via social space.



Figure. 23 | Existing safe pedestrian access point off Sonning Lane.



3.0 PLANNING POLICY REVIEW

3.1 Planning Policy

Relevant planning policy guidance falls within the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) and the Development Plan which comprises of the Wokingham Core Strategy and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan.

3.2 National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies and how these should be applied. It confirms that applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (paragraph 2). The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Paragraph 224 of the NPPF confirms that the policies in the Framework are material considerations which should be taken into account in dealing with applications from the day of its publication.

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to achieve sustainable development. There are three overarching objectives to sustainable development which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways: economic, social and environmental objectives. The environmental objective includes the need to make efficient use of land and to improve biodiversity. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 10).

Paragraph 11 (d) of the NPPF states that “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.”

Paragraph 38 states that Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way and that decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Chapter 11 is concerned with making effective use of land. Paragraph 123 states that planning policies and decision should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Indent (d) of para.

Paragraph 128 states that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:

- The identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;
- Local market conditions and viability;
- The availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;
- The desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and
- The importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

Paragraphs 131 - 141 are concerned with design. It states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- Establish a strong sense of place;
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development;
- Sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting;

- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.
- Create safe and accessible environments which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Paragraph 96 of the NPPF 2023 explains that planning decisions should help facilitate healthy lifestyles in inclusive and safe environments, including through the provision of new sports facilities. Paragraph 102 underlines this objective, explaining that access to opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and wellbeing of communities.

Paragraph 103 explains that existing open space and sports facilities should not be built on unless, inter alia, the development is for the alternative sports and recreational provision.

Paragraph 115 of the NPPF explains that permission for the development should only be refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or if the residual cumulative impacts of development on the road network would be severe.



3.0 PLANNING POLICY REVIEW

3.3 The Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires that applications for planning permission are decided in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Wokingham Core Strategy (2010)

Relevant policies include:

Policy CP1: Requires that a number of criteria are met. These include: maintaining or enhancing the high quality of the environment; providing attractive, functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable schemes; demonstrate how they support opportunities for reducing the need to travel particularly by the car; and contribute towards reaching zero – carbon development as soon as possible.

Policy CP3: Requires, amongst other matters, that new development is of an appropriate scale, mass, activity, built form, height, materials, character and design quality. Proposals should not adversely affect the amenities of neighbouring land uses. Paragraph c) requires that sites are used to their full potential.

Policy CP6: The policy is concerned with managing travel demand. It states that proposals will be granted for schemes that:

- Provide for sustainable forms of transport to allow choice;
- Are located where there is a choice of transport modes available;
- Improve existing infrastructure;
- Provide appropriate parking;
- Mitigate any adverse effects upon the highway network;
- Enhance road safety;
- Do not cause highway problems.

Policy CP7: Is concerned with nature conservation at a national level and will resist inappropriate developments.

Policy CP9: Is concerned with the scale and location of development proposals and how it reflects the existing or proposed levels of facilities and services at a location.

3.4 Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014)

Relevant policies include:

Policy CC01: Policy CC01 states that there will be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Planning applications that accord with policies in the Development Plan will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Policy CC02: Policy CC02 confirms that the development limits are defined on the Policies Map.

Policy CC03: Policy CC03 is concerned with Green Infrastructure, trees and landscaping. It states that development proposals should protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features.

Policy TB21: Policy TB21 states that proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed the requirement of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment including landscape quality, landscape strategy, landscape sensitivity and key issues.

3.5 Supplementary Planning Documents

Borough Design Guide SPD

The purpose of the guide is to provide general design guidance for all development sites and detailed design guidance for certain topics, these being, residential, streets and spaces, car parking and non-residential development issues. The revised guidance has now been adopted by the Council.

The guidance sets out a number of key urban design objectives, as follows:

- Context and character;
- Connection and accessibility;
- Sustainable communities;
- Sustainable development;
- Inclusive design process.

In terms of Character and context, it is stated that new development should relate well to its surroundings, including topography and orientation of the site; existing natural and landscape features of value; heritage assets and their setting; the local settlement pattern and network of routes and neighbouring properties.

Section 7 concerns non-residential development. Developments should create a sense of place appropriate to the context. In doing so, developments should reflect the specific characteristics of a site and create a coherent public realm.

3.6 Supplementary Planning Documents

Sonning Parish Design Statement

There are a number of sporting clubs including Redingensians Sports Club, the Sonning Golf Club, the Reading Rugby Club, and the Reading Cricket and Hockey Club. All of these provide the parish with large areas of green fields which complement the Settlement Area and enhance the general character of the parish. Whilst the existing sporting facilities should whenever possible be retained, any proposed additions or extensions to the present buildings will require careful consideration and justification. Any future development should not threaten the essential function of the green gap and wedges which maintain the physical and visual separation of settlements that are close together in accordance with Local Planning Policy WCC2.



4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 Full Application - 201422 - Approved 2020

A Full Application was submitted to WBC 11th June 2020 for the installation of 15 x 8 metre high floodlights on existing tennis courts.

Following the statutory consultation period, the decision was taken to approve the scheme on the 28th September 2020.

As a result of the pandemic however, this approval has since lapsed. The applicant however sees an opportunity to partially action the previous approval in conjunction with the proposed padel courts and replacement tennis courts.



Figure. 24 | Approved Site Plan | Floodlighting setting out

5.0 CONSTRAINTS & OPPORTUNITIES

The application site is subject to several constraints and opportunities as demonstrated by figures 25 - 36.

Opportunities:

- Existing safe pedestrian access into the site (figure. 36).
- Existing public transport link adjacent to the site access (figure. 35).
- Existing hard standing (tennis courts) to be largely built off (figure. 32).
- Existing side access from where the proposed car parking will be positioned (figure. 30).
- Derelict area of grass land at the rear of club house (figure. 27).
- Access road already used to access Sonning LTA Courts.
- Opportunity to extend existing outdoor social space.
- Existing pedestrian footpath to be connected to (figure. 33).
- Well screened from single residential neighbour.

Constraints:

- Telegraph posts (figure. 25).
- Existing hedging (figure. 26 & 34).
- Conservation Area
- Bat Roost Habitat Suitability Model (Pleaser refer to preliminary ecological assessment).
- Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone (Pleaser refer to preliminary ecological assessment).
- Landscape Assessment 2019



Figure. 25 | Existing telegraph posts.



Figure. 26 | Existing hedging abutting existing court fencing.



Figure. 27 | Existing area of grassland at the rear of club house.



Figure. 28 | Existing hedging to be removed.



Figure. 29 | Existing Sonning LTA Courts.



Figure. 30 | Existing Side access from proposed car park.



Figure. 31 | Existing outdoor social space to be extended.



Figure. 32 | Existing hardstanding for existing tennis courts.



Figure. 33 | Existing 3m wide pedestrian footpath.



Figure. 34 | Existing hedging to be removed south of the existing courts.



Figure. 35 | Existing public transport adjacent to site access.



Figure. 36 | Existing safe pedestrian access links.



6.0 DESIGN

6.1 SITE

The site is approximately 0.45 hectares and is located within the curtilage of BCSC along its northern boundary. The application site currently accommodates 3 no. out door tennis courts and 1 no. Padel tennis court. Positioned next to the existing club house, the design brief is to develop 3no. covered padel tennis courts and install 3no. new uncovered tennis court in place of the existing, two of which have flood lighting. The vast majority of the development is focused over the top of the existing hard standing used for the existing tennis courts. Beyond this, the site largely demonstrates a recreational green character with existing trees primarily located around the perimeter of the site and the rest of the BCSC site demonstrating a diverse range of outdoor sporting opportunities.

6.2 USE / AMOUNT

The proposed scheme (figure. 67) provides 3no. padel tennis, each of which are located under a canopy to allow for year round use, as well as 3no. out door tennis courts, two of which have evening flood lighting. The proposed courts are to replace the existing 3no. tennis courts and 1 padel court.

All the new courts meet the relevant Sports England and LTA standards. The development will include a seating area and 2no. small huts, one of which serves the tennis courts and the second that serves the seating area. The one in the seating area will provide light refreshments and secure storage for the operator.

The padel tennis courts will be constructed from glass with the canopy having a canvas roof. The design, scale and layout of the development would relate well to the site and would sit comfortably in its context.

The proposed tennis courts meet the minimum standards as set out by the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) for 3 courts; 46.33m (width), 34.75m (length), 5.49m (run back), 3.05m (side run) and 3.66m (gap between courts). The surface finish will be acrylic coloured coat applied on top of a asphalt surface (as per LTA recommendations for outdoor courts in the UK). The floodlighting columns stand 8m in height (as per the minimum LTA standards) and are integrated into the design of the courts. This is also consistent with the previously approved application for floodlight (Planning ref: 201422).

As illustrated in figure. 37, the canopy will only cover the 3 padel courts which are positioned

adjacent to the club house, thus keeping the built structures in the same general area of the site. The canopy has a vaulted design and will stand to approximately 9m in height to its tallest point . It will have predominately open sides and a high quality durable fabric roof covering with wire mesh sides.

Given that the site is currently developed and laid out as set of tennis / padel courts, there is a minimum loss of landscaping, planting and biodiversity. Please refer to the BNG Metrics for exact figures.

6.3 LAYOUT

The proposed layout focuses on developing predominantly over the top of the existing hard standing used for the existing tennis courts.

The proposed new padel tennis courts are located under a fabric roof structure which is similar in height to the club houses water tower. The courts are positioned immediately adjacent of the club house in order to keep all the built development within the same area of the site, and away from the eastern boundary. The remainder of the site are replacement tennis courts with the two most western subject to floodlighting.

To the north east of the site are proposed 7no. car parking spaces for use by those using the padel tennis facilities. The tennis courts are served by the existing area of car parking off Sonning Lane. South west of the covered courts is an extended outdoor social space for use by all BCSC users.

Running south from the club house down to the existing 3G pitches else where on the wider BCSC site is a 3m wide asphalt pedestrian footpath. The northern most edge of this (closest to the club house) has been extended to accommodate the extended outdoor social space and to ensure that the existing footfall this path accommodates is not negatively impacted.

In response to the Preliminary Ecological Survey ,as well as the BNG metrics, new hedging is proposed to the south of the tennis courts in lieu of the hedges that will be removed, whilst we also proposed a number of fruit trees, again in

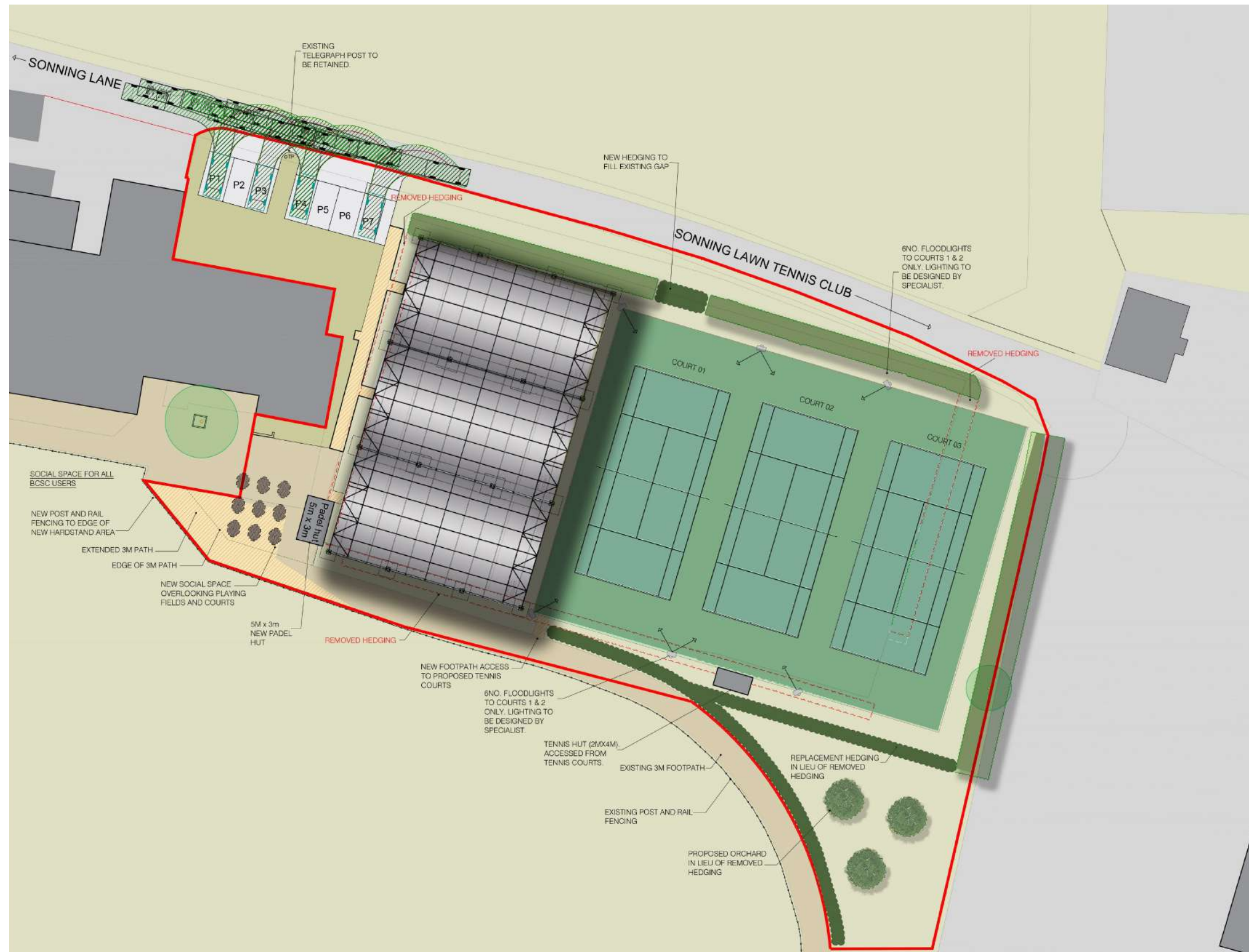


Figure. 37 | Proposed Site Plan

accordance with the ecological report.

The proposed facility will provide inclusive access to sport for all future users. The development will provide level access with ample room around the courts to allow for wheelchair use. This inclusivity is central to the applicants business model and encourages wide participation in the sport.

6.4 SCALE

All of the of the proposed courts accord with the LTA size standards. The vast majority of the proposal is situated over the top of the existing area of hardstanding. In doing so, the area of new hardstanding is kept to a minimum.

The scale of the roof structure is similar in height to the water tower immediately adjacent to the site (figure. 38).

6.5 APPEARANCE

Please refer to the submitted drawings.

The padel tennis courts will be constructed from glass with the canopy having a canvas roof. The design, scale and layout of the development would relate well to the site and would site comfortably in its context.

The proposed tennis courts meet the minimum standards as set out by the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) of 46.33m (width), 34.75m (length), 5.49m (run back), 3.05m (side run) and 3.66m (gap between courts). The floodlighting columns stand 8m in height (as per

the minimum LTA standards) and are integrated into the design of the courts.

6.6 LANDSCAPING

The landscape strategy has been informed by an ecological assessment which accompanies this application to ensure that the required BNG metrics are met.

The position of the proposed courts have been set out to ensure the hedging along the north boundary is not negatively implicated. There is an existing gap in the hedging which we intend to fill and in doing so help aid the BNG metric.

The existing hedging that runs along the southern boundary of the courts is to be removed and replaced by a more extensive area of hedging further south, as well as a number of fruit trees. Please refer to the submitted BNG Metrics. The positioning of the proposed planting has been set out so that it doesn't negatively impact the proposed tennis courts, and to make them easier to maintain.

The scheme will include wire mesh fence details to the courts as well as new timber post and rail fencing to the pedestrian footpath.

6.7 EMPLOYMENT

The proposed development will enable the employment of 2no. Full time staff, as well as 2-3 part staff and 2-3 freelance coaches.

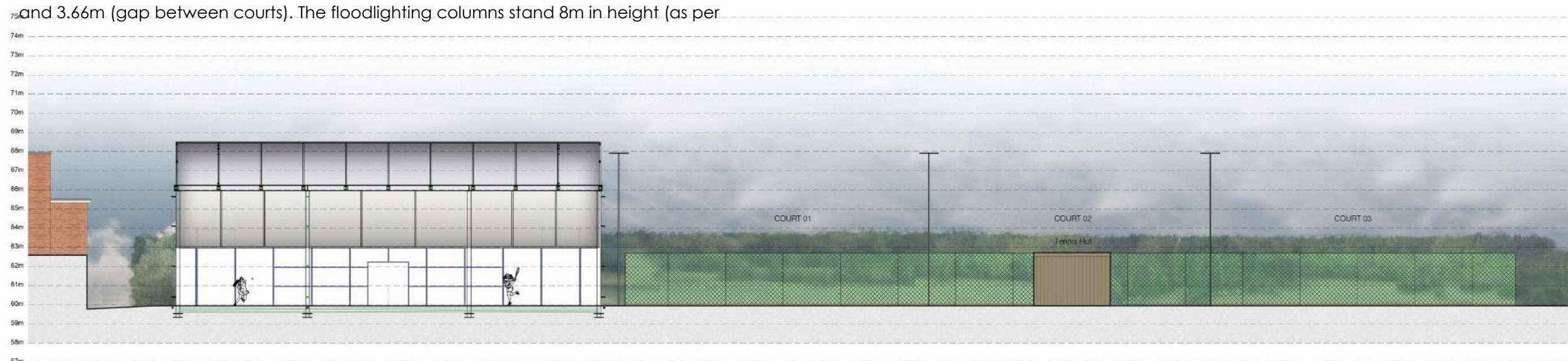


Figure. 38 | Proposed site elevation of padel courts and tennis courts

HP Architecture

Berkshire County Sports Club, RG4 6ST

Appendix 4: Post Development Habitat Plan



Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

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Figure. 39 | Ecological Habitat Plan

6.8 VEHICULAR ACCESS

BCSC is already subject to an extensive area of parking accessed of Sonning Lane. To support the extended use of the site however, 7no. additional spaces have been proposed in the north western corner of the application site and have been set out to ensure vehicles can maneuver effectively. This is demonstrated by the tracking (figure. 40) included with the proposed site plan. The area in question is currently a small unused area of grassland.

With such little parking proposed, we do not foresee an significant change in traffic movements.

There are bus stops located on Sonning Lane which runs adjacent to the site.

Cyclists will utilise the existing access road into the site.

6.9 DISABLED ACCESS

The site is flat and a disabled parking space has been allowed for within the proposed 7 spaces.

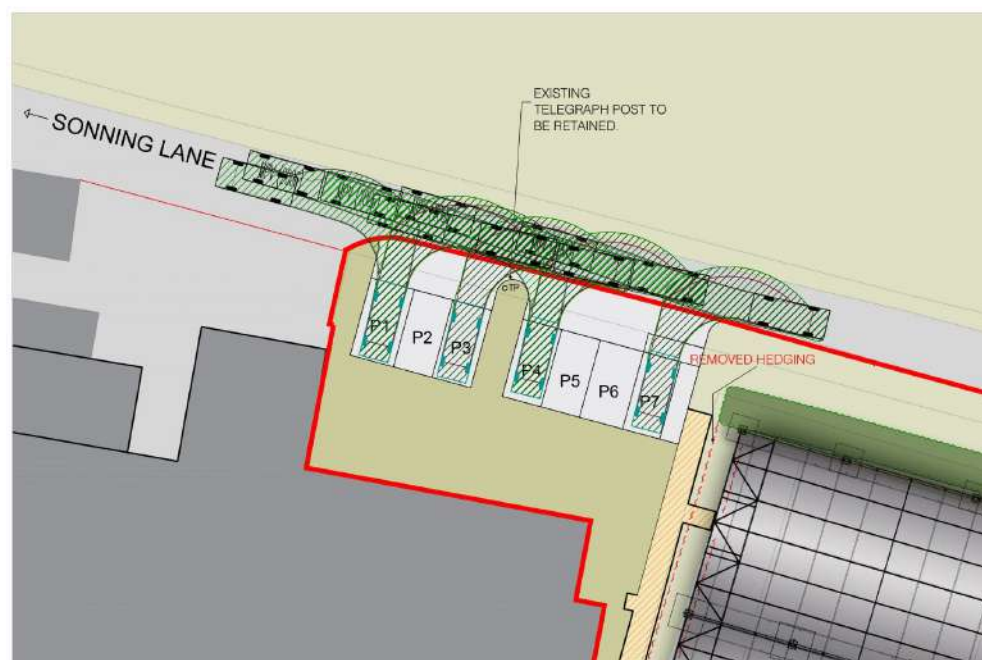


Figure. 40 | Proposed site plan | Vehicle tracking



Figure. 41 | Existing vehicular access of Sonning Lane



Figure. 42 | Existing Lane down towards Sonning LTA. Proposed access route to new area of parking.



Figure. 43 | Existing bus stops on Sonning Lane.



Figure. 44 | Existing example of bike storage



7.0 CONCLUSION

This application seeks Full Planning Permission for the development of 3no. covered padel courts and 3no. replacement tennis courts, with associated parking and floodlighting.

The application site forms a small part of the wider BCSC which already serves as a significant local sporting hub.

The proposed design set out in this application has responded accordingly to both national and local planning policy to ensure that it is an appropriate form and scale of development.

Landscaping and ecology have been directly informed by the submitted preliminary ecology report and BNG metrics.

The proposed development would relate well to the site's existing sporting use.

The design of the development avoids any unacceptable impacts on the amenity of neighbouring residents .

Overall, we consider the proposed scheme is an appropriate form of development, that responds to local policy, as well as the sites established sporting character.

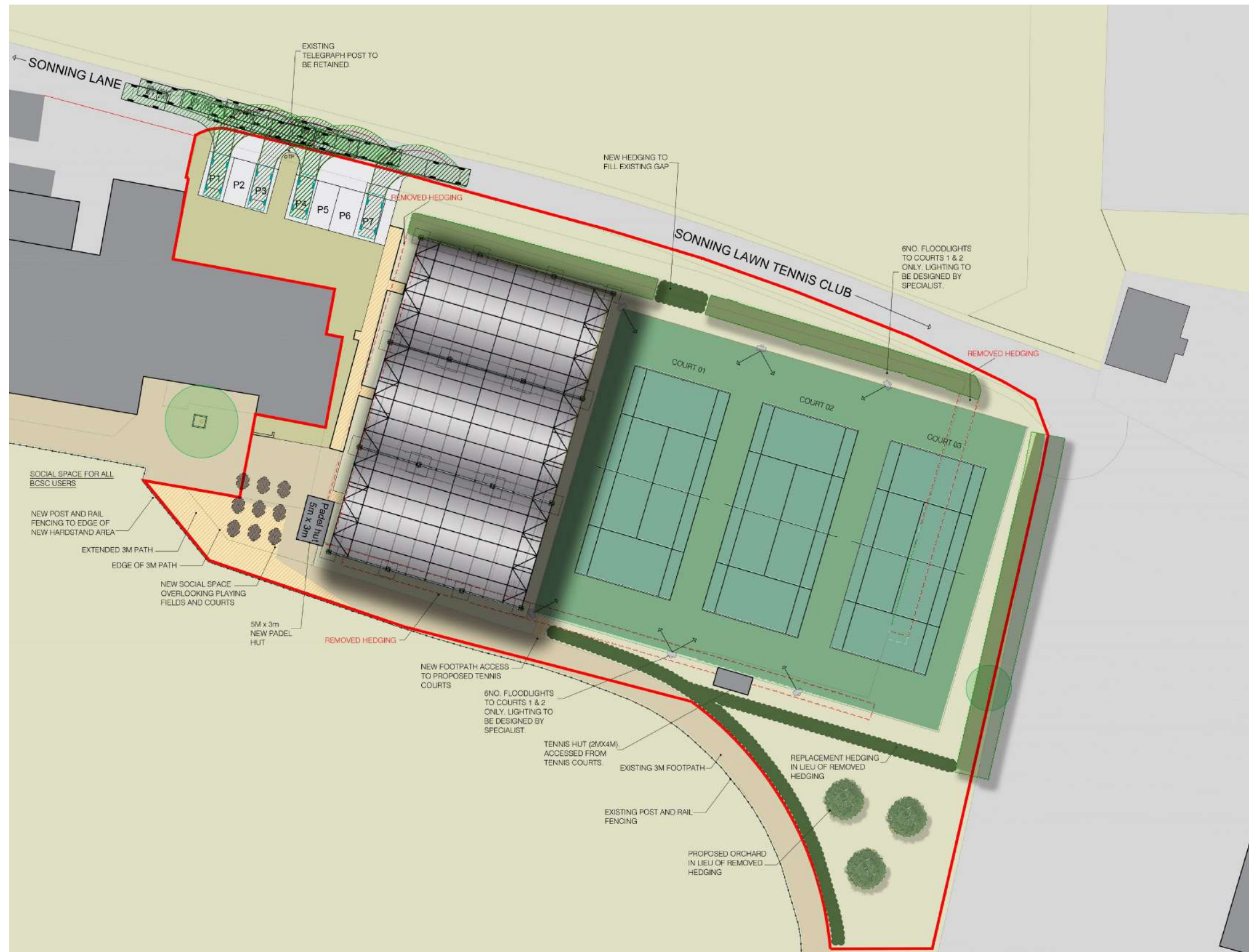


Figure. 45 | Proposed Site Plan