



## QUARRY ROVERS FOOTBALL CLUB

Established 1952

Home ground: Margaret Road, Headington, Oxford

Paul Blackman  
Sports Development Officer  
Leisure, Parks & Communities  
Oxford City Council  
Horspath Road  
Oxford OX4 2RH

8 March 2016

### **Response to Planning Application on Quarry Recreation Ground pavilion**

Dear Paul

As previously stated in our response to the consultation in March 2015, Quarry Rovers Football Club welcomes the decision to upgrade facilities at the Quarry recreation ground in Margaret Road. This investment will enable us to continue to develop as a club, allowing future generations of local children to enjoy the benefits of organised competitive sport.

We believe the new pavilion should serve the wider Headington community too. As such, we would like to see the new building host a variety of activities for different groups.

As a key stakeholder, Quarry Rovers FC has welcomed the opportunity to review the plans for the pavilion in a collaborative forum with you, the council, our committee and members.

However, we feel that the current plans do not address a number of key concerns raised during the consultation and these matters need to be resolved to deliver the vision that many people in the area have for this project. While we appreciate this may incur additional planning costs we feel this could have been avoided if the consultation responses had been addressed correctly and circulated before submission to planning.

We have collated a list that covers a number of these issues, along with some additional comments relating to the future sustainability of the whole site. These were provided to you at our meeting on 3 March.

We feel that the following items detailed in this letter should be addressed in the planning application.

## **1. Size and positioning**

- 1.1. We believe this once-in-a-generation opportunity for the community calls for some more creative thinking. We encourage the City Council to consider design options that will get more from the site while, of course, remaining sympathetic to the surroundings.
- 1.2. We are pleased to note the use of the existing foot print as we are keen to ensure the existing green space utilised by the park users is maintained.
- 1.3. The current design is based upon a generic outline suggested by Sport England and does not address the specific nature of the site in question. These are the key initial requirements that they state the site should provide:
  - 1.3.1. sufficient space for the proposed pavilion
  - 1.3.2. space for future expansion
  - 1.3.3. adequate car parking provision, including the potential for overspill parking
  - 1.3.4. access for service and emergency vehicles
  - 1.3.5. a reasonable relationship with the sports spaces it will serve.
- 1.4. Having studied the details within the Sport England booklet on pavilions<sup>1</sup>, it is evident that these plans are merely guidance and not a specific requirement in some key areas, but they support our views on the changes required. This is confirmed by the following statement:
  - 1.4.1. *'The scale and type of the changing accommodation depends upon the number and type of pitches served, as well as the different sports that will use the pavilion'.*
- 1.5. We also believe that the future sustainability of the facility means that the Sport England guidance on Village halls<sup>2</sup> should also be considered. As the room is being referred to as a community room this would also seem logical.

## **2. Community room**

- 2.1. We have considered this area in line with the Sport England guidance and the future sustainability for the management of the facility. Regardless of whether it is run by the council or a private venture, the financial viability of the community facilities is a critical factor.
- 2.2. We have carried out research on the usage of such facilities and potential rentals and feel that the proposed size is inadequate. The most relevant example of this is the similar development at Hinksey, which has not been able to attract the amount of activity needed to provide financial sustainability. This would therefore require financial support from the council or potentially our club.
- 2.3. We feel that the community room should be repositioned to face the sports fields as suggested in the Orientation section of the Pavilions and Clubhouses booklet.
  - 2.3.1. *'Plan for convenient access to pitches and satisfactory viewing of the principal playing areas'*
  - 2.3.2. Currently the community room faces the proposed car park with windows that overlook the playground.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sportengland.org/media/30956/Pavilions-and-clubhouses.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.sportengland.org/media/32402/Village-and-community-halls.pdf>

- 2.4. We also feel that to support the Sport England provisions on future sustainability a covered area or awning outside of these doors would encourage usage both now and in the future.
- 2.5. We are also in discussions with the parks department regarding the pitch layouts to support this application and usage.
- 2.6. Sport England's (Pavilions and Clubhouses) guidance also confirms some of the following points that we cover in this letter:
  - 2.6.1. That the community room should be proportionally bigger than currently provided (page 5 Pavilions and Clubhouses)
  - 2.6.2. That the male toilets can be integrated with the changing facilities while still serving the community room to make the most of the space available.
  - 2.6.3. That the officials changing facilities can be combined.
- 2.7. The village hall guidance is also particularly useful in this regard
  - 2.7.1. It suggests the proportions for this space compared to changing facilities.
  - 2.7.2. It suggests toilets should be near the entrance, which in our suggested layout revision would be an entrance from Margaret Road.
  - 2.7.3. It gives examples of the interaction of male and female changing facilities with a focus on maximising the available space.
- 2.8. We would suggest that a revised layout is commissioned in line with all of our other comments to address the serious shortcomings in the current designs.

### **3. Changing facilities**

- 3.1. Most of the matches taking place at Quarry Rec at weekends are small-sided games. However, the proposed changing facilities seem designed for two adult teams (one home, one away). The shortage of changing room space is an inherent problem in the current pavilion. This has become more acute in recent years with the successful addition of girls-only teams. To encourage the growth of girls football as part of the youth football mix it is important that we can offer appropriate facilities for changing. We would like to see this requirement addressed, if possible, in the new building.
- 3.2. We also feel that the provision of changing facilities for officials is unnecessarily generous. This space could be used more effectively for toilets or player changing rooms. As the proposed pavilion is apparently designed for one match at a time, it seems illogical to provide for two officials with separate changing facilities.
- 3.3. We would therefore suggest a revised changing room layout that accommodates the current usage and reduces the large number of toilet facilities that are currently included in the plan. We feel that a simple repositioning of the key areas and removal of the corridors will allow for segregation of the changing facilities, while also allowing the community room to be used in isolation when required.
- 3.4. We would be happy to meet with the architects to facilitate these amendments.

### **4. Parking**

- 4.1. We remain firmly of the view that the proposed parking arrangements are unnecessary and that providing vehicle access to Margaret Road so close to the

Quarry Road junction is both unsafe and a waste of funds. The current on-road option has proved adequate to date and as long as residents' parking conditions are not materially changed, precious grassed play area can be prioritised over tarmac.

- 4.2. We can confirm that the club does not utilise the current concrete area for parking or access. Emergency access is provided at another entrance.
- 4.3. Disabled parking, if required, could be accommodated on Margaret Road using designated spaces.
- 4.4. We are aware that this may require County Council and planning approval, but we would strongly recommend this is investigated and addressed.
- 4.5. The removal of the parking and junction alterations would allow for these funds to be utilised where they are needed most.
- 4.6. We would also suggest that these funds could be used for ramps and access from the road to the new facility.

## **5. Storage**

- 5.1. The provision of storage in the proposed design is inadequate for existing club equipment. In addition, we believe that the use of removable goalposts will help preserve the playing surface at Quarry Rec in the future. This would require further lockable space with wide door access.
- 5.2. We would suggest that this is included in the plans at the back of the facility where this space is currently not utilised for any purpose, but is required for utility purposes.

## **6. Funding**

- 6.1. We would suggest that all of the funds earmarked for this project are utilised on the site and pitch improvements that are long overdue. This would also ensure that the facility reaches the maximum number of users and ensure the future sustainability of the site as a whole.

As mentioned above, we look forward to receiving answers to all of the questions raised in our document submitted to you on 3 March 2016 and we look forward to working with you in delivering the best pavilion possible for the local community. We feel that the investment in this facility could be utilised as a blue print for other similar clubs in the country and by addressing these points you would be providing a legacy for generations to come.

Yours sincerely

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