



Planning / Sequential Test

Unit 1, Bridgefield Street, Radcliffe, Manchester, M26 2SG

Prepared By:

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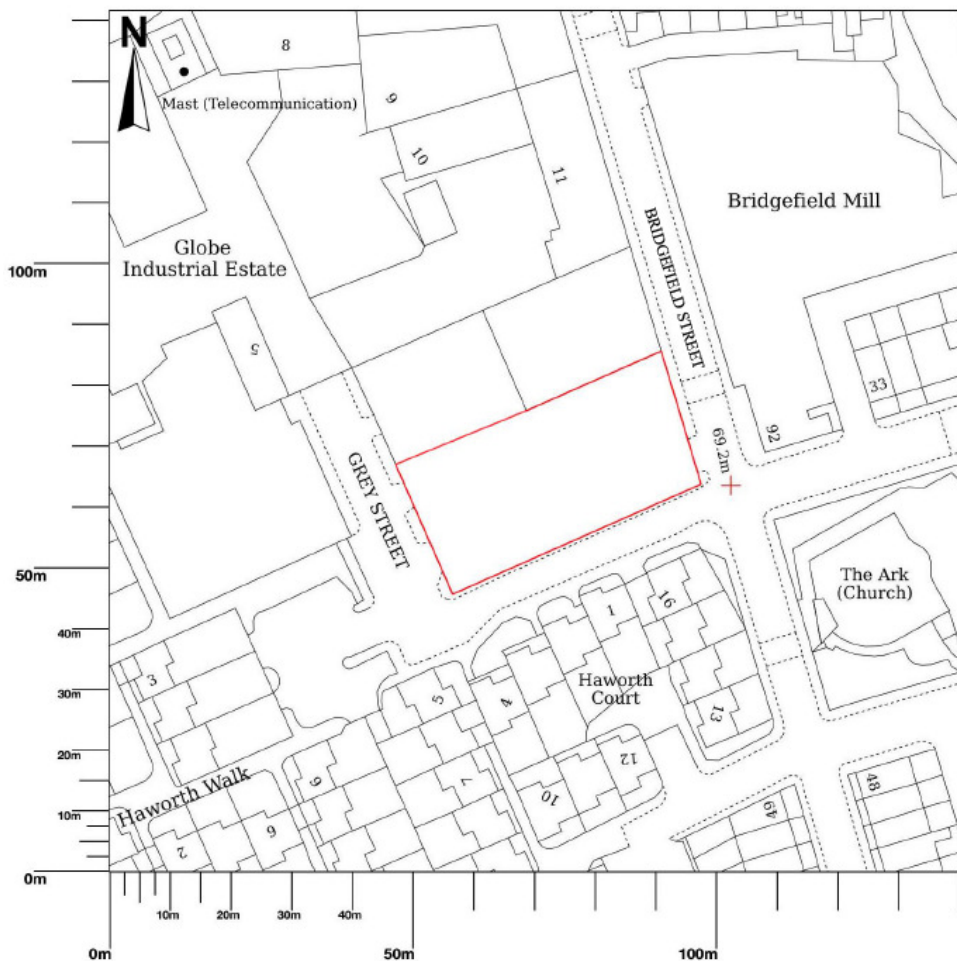
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Introduction

This statement is prepared to support the application for

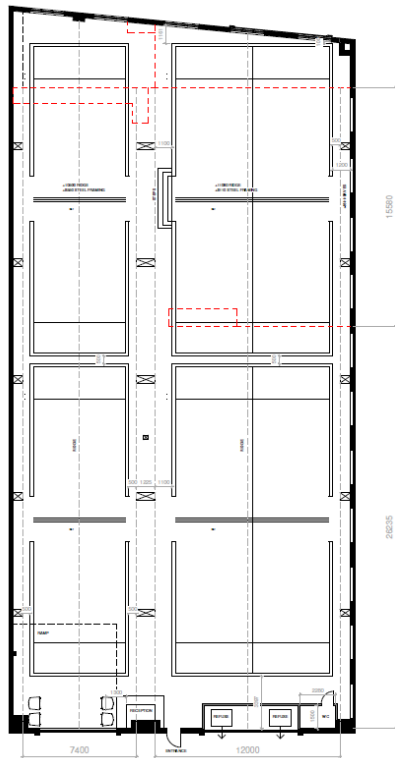
Temporary change of use from warehouse/storage to an
indoor padel sports facility (Class E) for a period of 3 years,
to include reception, toilets/changing facilities and
associated internal works

The site is an existing vacant industrial unit which is bound by Bridgefield Street and Grey Street to the rear.
There is a mix of predominantly industrial, mixed use, community and residential properties in the area.



Proposal

The scheme is for 2 double and 2 single padel courts with associated reception and refuse storage. It is single storey internally with a vaulted high ceiling as required by the sport.



Opening Hours

The scheme is proposed to be open 7 days a week between 6am and 12 midnight. Courts are to be pre-booked on an app so users of the facility will attend only at their game time which can be typically 1hr to 1.5hrs, in some rare cases 2 hours.

Planning Policies

The Places for Everyone Plan

Long-term plan of nine Greater Manchester districts (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan) for jobs, new homes, and sustainable growth.

Took effect and became part of the statutory development plan for each of the nine PfE authorities on March 21, 2024.

Policy JP-S2: Carbon and Energy states that from 2025, new development will be net zero carbon in terms of both regulated and unregulated operational carbon emissions – unless it can be demonstrated that it is not practicable or financially viable.

Policy JP-S3: Heat and Energy Networks states that the provision of decentralised energy infrastructure is critical to the delivery of objectives for low carbon growth, carbon reductions and an increase in local energy generation.

Policy EC2/2 – Employment Land and Premises Outside of the Employment Generating Areas

It is understood this policy aims to protect employment sites, however it states if it's open to alternative development is 'no longer suited for employment, is not detrimental to the surrounding area, and complies with other council policies.'

It focuses more on preventing the loss of employment land to higher-value uses (such as residential or retail).

Policy JP-J2: Employment Land. Sets out how diversity is required for employment sites both new and second-hand.

It states 'This will offer opportunities for all kinds and sizes of businesses, including start-ups, firms seeking to expand, and large-scale inward investment, which will help to tackle inequalities.'

This proposal for padel courts is based on a demand in facilities in the area for the fastest growing sport in the UK and the applicants have successfully implemented similar schemes in Manchester whereby growth and expansions has been required in subsequent years.

Although it states for land to be 'protected from redevelopment to other uses' it also notes that there is scope for 'selective removal of land from the Green Belt and other land previously safeguarded for development' as required for the scale of long-term economic growth.

Policy JP-J4 : Industry and Warehousing Development.

This policy outlines the intent to provide 3,513,000 sqm of new, accessible, industrial and warehousing floorspace between 2022-2039. This largely addresses the need for 'high level of choice and flexibility will be provided in the supply of sites for new industrial and warehousing floorspace' and less so about existing warehousing. The existing warehousing, through its vacancy and marketing material demonstrates this is either not suitable for the requirements for modern warehousing or that it's not in demand for this specific location.

The policy also states that 'The new sites will be important in enabling the relocation and expansion of existing businesses, which will free up some poorer quality current employment sites for redevelopment for uses such as housing, as well as attracting new investment into the sub-region.' This outlines that the new development will in part offset the loss of current employment sites, of which is one of them.

It further states 'The large amount of flexibility in the supply is also necessary because some existing employment areas may be utilised for employment-generating uses other than industrial and warehousing floorspace, which, whilst making an important contribution to economic growth, may mean they are no longer available for industry and/or warehousing purposes.' Further highlighting that there is scope to repurpose existing employment areas if they are a contributor to economic growth, of which this proposal would be.

Policy JP-P7 Sport and recreation.

This states that development should be 'accessible' to residential facilities but also distant enough to not be impacted, which this proposal has been suitably located.

It also states that areas should have regard to 'existing and future needs'. With this being the fastest growing sport in the UK and demand increasing in the region, this would meet the requirement to future proof the needs.

UDP

RT2 – New provision for recreation in the urban area.

This states that the council will 'encourage the provision of additional land and facilities for recreation in the urban area.'

It states that the Borough's Recreation Survey (1989) has shown that there is a shortfall in both formal sports provision and children's playspace, compared with the NPFA standard of 2.4 hectares per 1000 population.

It demonstrates that there is a shortfall that is not possible to meet within the plan period however opportunities to extend existing provision can be explored.

Despite there being a padel facility in the region, this is a much smaller offering with a single court being provided currently.

Policy RT2/1 Potential site for recreation.

Despite this site not being highlighted as a possible identified site, it does state 'The Council is keen to encourage new recreation provision and will consider all opportunities which arise, not just those listed.'

Policy RT3/5 Noisy sports

It is understood the council would not be in support of proposals that generate noise and nuisance. The noise report submitted highlights this would not be the case. The noise generated would be contained within the building and the traffic flow has been addressed through the transport report submitted.

The recreational use of pre-booked visitors would generate less noise than the presence of wagons that would have served the prior use. The coming and going of cars of potential users is no different to the coming and going of residential vehicles and other users in the area.

Residential units are suitably distant away from the building to be impacted by the internal function which is to be contained within the building.

104 NPPF – Existing facility protection.

Paragraph 104 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) protects existing open spaces, sports, and recreational facilities from development. It prohibits building on these areas unless they are proven to be surplus to requirements, replaced by equivalent/better provision, or the development provides alternative, superior facilities. There is an existing unit at Unit 7 Globe Industrial unit that serves as padel use, however this is only one court and there is an increase in demand for padel sports, often with new facilities opening a larger number of courts to serve peak times and increased numbers who are taking on the sport.

The unit at 7 Globe Industrial is a pre-booking as well as these facilities and therefore courts are openly offered on a third party app as to their availability so users are aware of booking availability. This ensures a continued offering of bookings with very low void periods.

Loss of Employment Land (SPD 14)

Under Bury Council SPD 14, proposals involving loss of employment land are to be evidenced. This highlights the process of considerations to be made for potential loss of employment land and allocation. It states that alternative proposals can be considered should it be demonstrated 'that the site has been comprehensively marketed and that there is no demand for the site.'

Temporary consent is appropriate as it provides an option for the land to be returned to employment use if required given that the padel use is low intensity in terms of alterations required. The courts are added to level internal datum but there is minimal alterations to the external fabric and should the use not continue it would be a case of removing the courts to return the unit to an open space. However based on previous proposals and facilities provided, often a full application is submitted to continue the use, at which would be evidenced based on the demand of the 3 year period that this is a suitably in demand use.

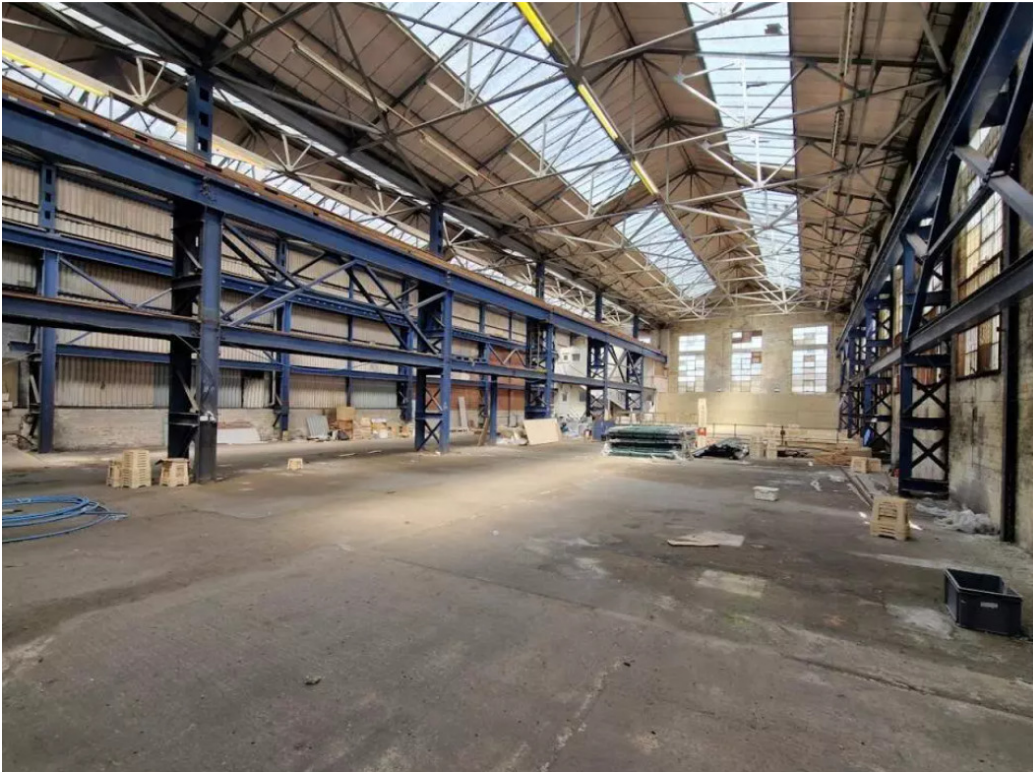
It has been marketed under the below advert link.

https://www.zoopla.co.uk/to-rent/commercial/details/68923634/?search_identifier=c0ebf8c0cf2c5f04dd3d9527112110943cb28ed780ee3538066e3671f3a03c87

The building has been marketed online on Rightmove / Zoopla with the caption
An exciting opportunity to acquire this versatile commercial unit, ideally situated in the heart of Radcliffe. Offering a spacious and adaptable layout, the property is perfect for a variety of uses.



It is also evident from the interior photographs that the site is effectively an empty shell for storage purposes. There are no specifics to the site that deem it a desirable proposition to manufacturing operations for example as there are no facilities for staff areas, WC's, kitchenettes and with it being such a large space, it wouldn't comply under current building regulations for this kind of use given the increased risk with industrial buildings.



The area has a significant number of industrial units and this vacancy demonstrates that that this is surplus to requirements.

There is no evidence available of what a prior use was or the number of employees that were at this site, so the proposed change of use cant be assessed in terms of loss of employment given there is no evident employment.

It is noted that a proposal should have **economic and social benefits**.

The proposed padel facility will:

- Generate **new jobs** (coaching, management, maintenance)
- Support the **health and wellbeing economy**
- Increase local spending

Employment

It is outlined that a proposal that is not purely employment should be considered as mixed use. This proposal is not replacing an industrial storage use with housing for example with zero employment.

It is proposed to have 1 full time member of staff and 1 part time member of staff. It still retains the external fabric shell as it is, and should this use come to an end in the future, this site could in theory be returned to industrial storage with no significant alterations other than an interior strip out. It would not be the same as a full conversion as housing would be which would be unfeasible in terms of returning it to industrial storage.

Sustainable location

The site is situated within a highly sustainable location. The table below highlights the nearest services to the site. Evidently, services are located in easy walking distance of the application site, making it highly sustainable. Of course this is assessed differently to if it were a residential site, however this demonstrates conveniences for end users of the padel facilities should they require medical needs and basic needs for food, drink and transport.

Sustainable Service	Name/Location	Distance from application site (approx.)
Doctor	Radcliffe Medical Practice	0.1 mile (3 minute walk)
Convenience Store	Bargain World, Blackburn Street	0.3 miles (6 minute walk)
Pharmacy	Radcliffe Pharmacy, Church Street	0.2 mile (4 minute walk)
Bus Stops	Spring Lane and Blackburn Street	0.3 miles (6 minute walk)
Train / Tram Station	Radcliffe Tram Stop	0.2 miles (5 minute walk)

Sequential Test Assessment

NPPF Paragraph 91)

Paragraph 91 of the NPPF requires a sequential approach to the location of main town centre uses, prioritising:

1. Town centre locations
2. Edge-of-centre locations
3. Out-of-centre locations (only if no suitable and available sites exist)

It has been considered if -

- The site is **available immediately**
- Comprises an **existing large-format industrial unit** with sufficient footprint and height for the sport.
- Can accommodate the proposal **without substantial structural alteration**

Given the lack of suitable and available sequentially preferable sites, the proposal complies with the sequential test. The application site is located approximately 400 metres from Radcliffe town centre and is therefore considered to be in an edge-of-centre location, consistent with the sequential preference set out in the NPPF.

Nature of the Proposed Use

The proposed development is a specialist indoor padel facility. This form of development has specific operational requirements which materially limit the range of suitable premises. These include:

- A large, uninterrupted internal floorplate that can accommodate 10m x 20m for double court sizes.
- Significant internal height, typically in excess of 10 metres – To comply with LTA rules for the sport.

- Capacity to accommodate multiple courts within a single open volume – for viability of bookings and management of the site as often demand for courts outweighs the supply especially at peak times, hence a requirement for multiple courts to be available.
- Suitable access, circulation, and servicing arrangements – Scope for an entrance foyer and ability to add a refuse / WC facility.

These requirements mean that the use is inherently large-format and space-intensive, and cannot be readily accommodated within typical town centre premises, which are generally constrained in scale, height, and configuration.

Assessment of Alternative Sites

A review of available premises within Radcliffe town centre and the surrounding area has been undertaken.

No sites within Radcliffe town centre have been identified that are capable of accommodating the proposed use. Available units within the centre are predominantly smaller retail or commercial premises, which do not provide the necessary scale, height, or layout required for indoor padel courts.

Potential options explored were -

Location		Suitability
Dale Street Industrial Estate, Phoenix Way, Manchester M26		Distance to centre similar to proposed site. Height insufficient for padel sport use. Footprint not suitable to accommodate size of courts as well as reception, refuse and WC facilities.
Grindrod Street, Radcliffe M26		Distance to centre similar to proposed site. Height insufficient for padel sport use. Footprint not suitable to accommodate size of courts as well as reception, refuse and WC facilities. Predominantly residential area with potential increased issues for noise and car parking clashing with residential parking.

Unit 34 Eton Business Park		Distance greater than proposed site. Height and internal area insufficient for padel use. Landlords on wholly industrial sites often have issues with general public crossing with industrial operations / large vehicles in the area.
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As identified these units are therefore not suitable for the proposed use and do not represent sequentially preferable options.

Suitability and Availability

The building is of a scale and configuration that is well-suited to large-format indoor leisure uses. The proposed development represents an effective reuse of an existing vacant building, which is capable of accommodating the operational requirements of indoor padel without the need for significant alteration.

It is recognised that buildings of this type, offering the necessary internal height and open floorplate, are typically located within industrial and employment areas rather than within town centres. As such, the application site reflects the functional requirements of the use, rather than a departure from the sequential approach.

The proposal does not displace active industrial operations and instead brings a suitable building into a viable and active use, contributing positively to the utilisation of existing employment land. With the current building being vacant this ensures an activity is in it's place for improved security of the site and its surroundings and mitigates against anti-social behaviour, vandalism and break ins.

Padel is a growing sport and once established, often they can be retained in a local for a long period of time which is an improvement for a sustainable and long term prospect.

Given the absence of suitable and available sites within Radcliffe town centre, and the physical constraints of alternative premises, the application site represents the most appropriate and viable location for the proposed development.

Conclusion

The proposal fully satisfies the requirements of the sequential test.

- The site is located within an edge-of-centre location, in accordance with national policy
- No suitable or available sites exist within Radcliffe town centre
- The specific physical and operational requirements of the proposed use significantly limit the range of suitable premises

The development is therefore considered to be sequentially compliant, and there are no sequentially preferable sites that could accommodate the proposal.