

ERECTION OF 2 No. STORAGE UNITS, 2 No. CHANGING FACILITY UNITS and 1 No. WELFARE UNIT on a Public Recreation Field for use Associated with Sports Activities

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT including **GREEN BELT STATEMENT
in accordance with the NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK
and LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Ref: NB/22616-Rev B/Design Statement

Date: January 2023 (revised May 2023)



Seedfield Sports Juniors Football Pitches as viewed from the North West corner

About the football club and its activities

Seedfield Sports Club was formed on the site of the former Seedfield Secondary School which closed to pupils in 1987 when the school amalgamated with the newly built Broad Oak High School. The buildings were retained and put to various uses within Bury Council and the Sports Hall was utilised as a local sports venue for public use. The original school playing fields were maintained as part of the Boroughs leisure facilities and offered to local sports clubs to use as their base for training and club fixtures. One such club to take advantage was Seedfield Sports Juniors Football Club who offer football coaching and competitive league matches within a target age range of 5 to 11 years. The club is partly funded by The Football Foundation.

As time has evolved, the old school buildings have been slowly vacated by various staff as the Council seeks to streamline its services and cut costs after the buildings have reached the end of their useful life and are increasingly expensive to maintain. The longstanding aim has been to sell the site for new development. This has now been achieved and part of the site occupied by the original buildings and infrastructure is about to be developed for residential use (Application Ref:69079). However, the playing fields are set to be retained and will continue to be used by the local clubs. Unfortunately, changing facilities and storage for plant and equipment associated with various sports has up until now been made available within the main building along with

modular steel containers currently positioned within part of the building and curtilage which is about to be separated and developed. Therefore, alternative changing facilities and storage needs to be provided within the remaining playing field site.

Objective

Permission is being sought to locate a modular building along with two new ISO 40ft standard steel containers close to the boundary on the east side of the playing field to replace the facilities and two containers currently being used. The old school building is currently in a very dangerous state and will be demolished. The existing storage containers are deteriorated to such an extent that they will not withstand relocation and will therefore be sent for scrap.



one of the currently used storage units on the adjacent site which is no longer available

Green Belt Statement

Bury Council is committed to providing opportunities and support within local communities for grassroots football and other recreational activities. In this respect Seedfield Sports Juniors FC has used the site for a number of years, allowing all age groups to participate in various officially recognised leagues by playing home matches in this location amongst a considerable residential population.

The football pitches are located within the Green Belt and Paragraphs 147 and 148 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that: inappropriate development in the Green Belt is by definition, harmful and should only be approved in very special circumstances. However, Paragraph 149 lists exceptions to this, which includes the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land) for outdoor sport and recreation as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

Bury's Unitary Development Plan, Section OL1/2 - New development in the Green Belt, states that that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is considered inappropriate development, unless it is for one of more of the following purposes: agriculture and forestry essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, for cemeteries, and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

In summary, it is considered that the proposed modular building and modular storage units will fall under the exceptions noted above as they are to be used in connection with outdoor sport and recreation. Indeed, The Football Foundation has a dedicated website to support the purchase of storage containers by applying for a grant. A condition of

awarding such a grant is that the container is positioned within the playing field site. Link to the relevant website: <https://footballfoundation.org.uk/grant/storage-containers> Without changing facilities and use of the secure storage containers it is considered unfeasible to continue use of the playing fields in the current manner, due to health and safety concerns and for secure storage of goalposts and equipment vital for playing matches and maintenance of the pitches, left exposed.

In mitigation, the appearance of the proposed buildings and containers will be softened by means of a natural hedge planting where facing adjacent properties and will be positioned on part of the playing fields which are not occupied by marked out pitches or normally used and will therefore not affect or diminish the currently available match playing surface.



aerial view showing the playing fields with pitches marked out for a typical weekend of fixtures (note the area on the lower right corner which is not used as it is poorly-drained)



looking towards the proposed location of storage units showing the non-used area between marked-out pitches and the embankment

With regard to potential impact on the openness of the Green Belt it is considered that the proposal will have little visual impact, being small in proportion and positioned to one side of the marked-out pitches, whilst retaining the large uninterrupted aspect of the playing fields.

In terms of remediability, it will take little to return the land to its original state as the units are modular in design and will sit on the surface of the ground with no connected underground services.

Foot-fall and traffic generation to the site will be unaffected from what it is now as there will be no increase to the capacity or use of the playing fields.

Use

The modular buildings will provide necessary privacy and security for teams, officials and spectators using the pitches and the two containers will mainly be used to store plant and equipment associated with running and maintenance of the many pitches located on the site. Typical uses for the containers will be to house the long steel posts used for each football pitch, which need to be removed and stored after each match for safety and security, along with grass cutting machinery, line marking equipment and all manner of materials for the upkeep of pitches and playing of sports.

Existing Environment

The environment surrounding the playing fields is of traditional brick built, two storey residential properties and open countryside which has been the case since before the school was built in the mid-sixties. Sporting activities then commenced creating open leisure space within this vibrant local community. The boundary of the site is made up of low-level wrought-iron fencing typical of a school perimeter from this era and some local residents have supplemented this with their own boundary fencing in various forms of construction.

Amount of Development

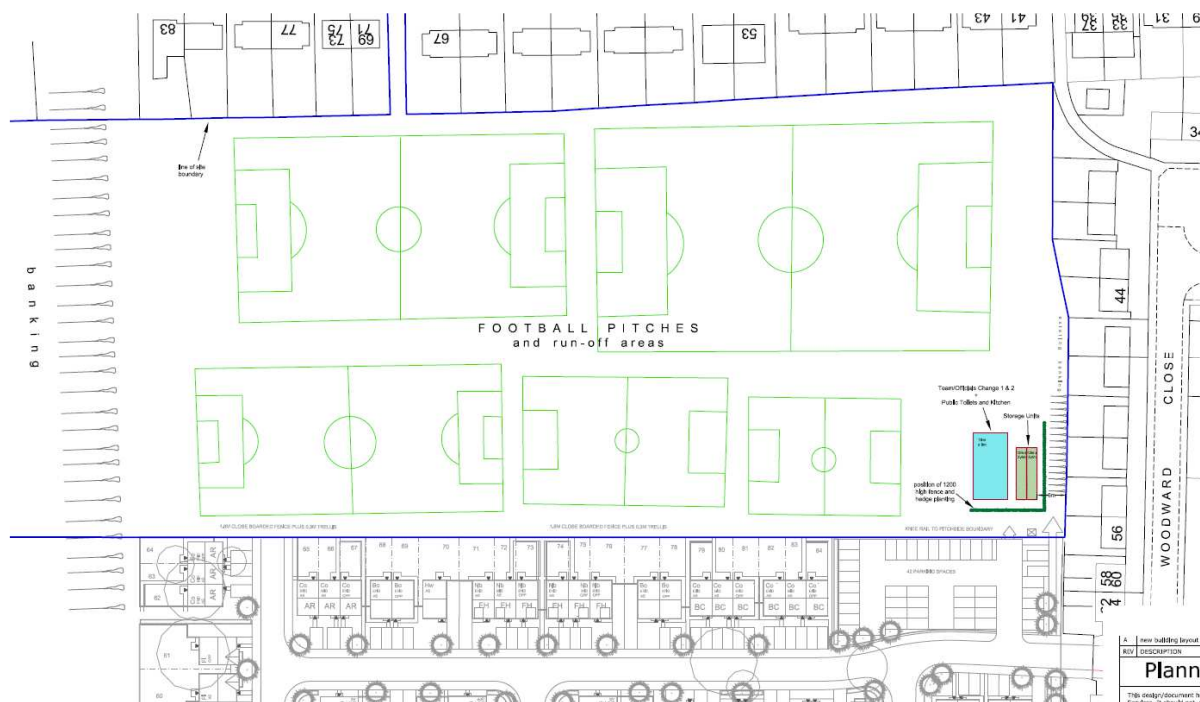
The modular buildings will occupy a footprint of 16m x 8m x 3m high and the proposed storage units will be similar to the ones they are replacing, each being of a standard ISO 40ft size which is 12.19 long x 2.44 wide x 2.59m. high. To help reduce the visual impact, a 1200 high wire mesh fence will be erected along two side of the proposed buildings to protect a natural laurel bush screen to soften the appearance and provide a self-contained and more contained area. In addition to this, the preferred location is at a position where the ground floor level of adjacent properties is set somewhat lower than the units such that the visual aspect from the properties will be over the top of them to the open countryside beyond.



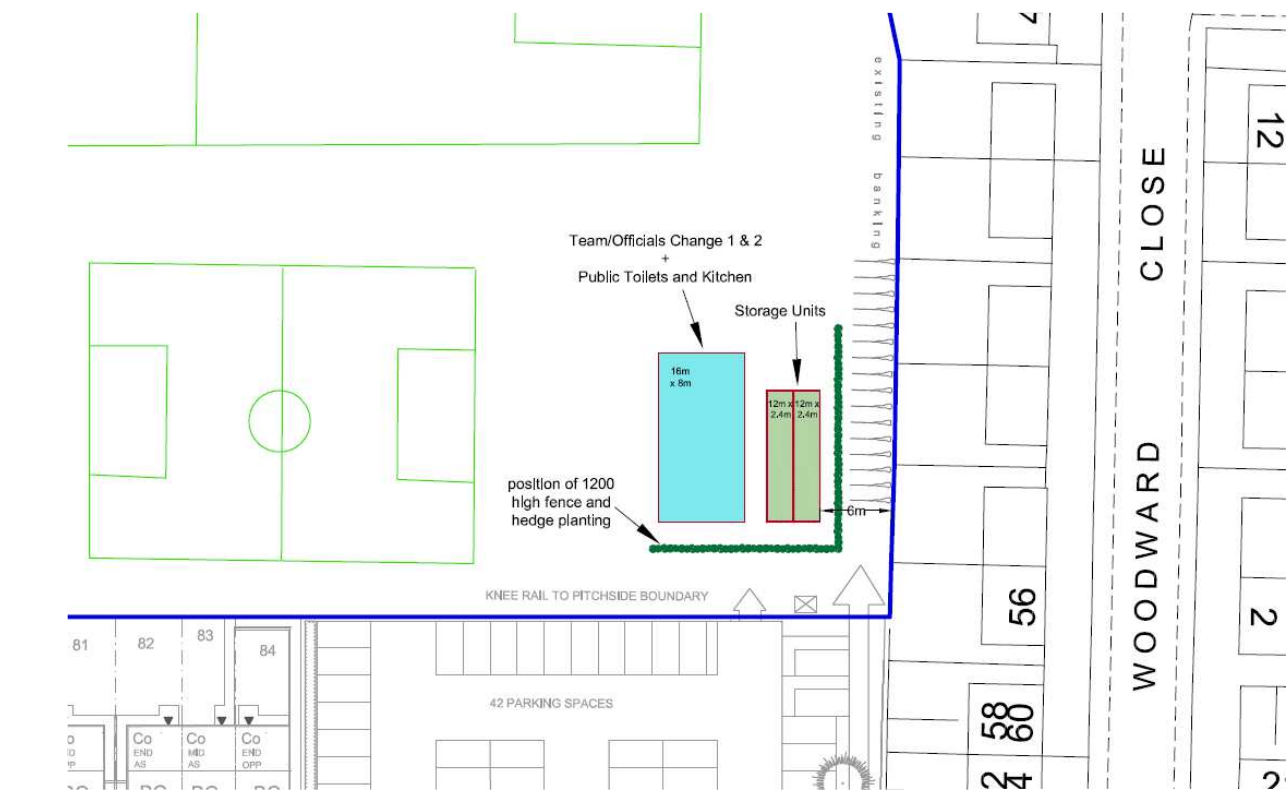
*looking towards the proposed modular building and storage unit location
showing the embankment and difference in levels*

Layout & Access

The modular buildings and storage units will be positioned alongside each other with a gap for access and maintenance between and around them. The units will be positioned on concrete bases at ground level so as to allow easy wheeled access into them. Access to the playing fields will be from a new car park within the proposed residential development on the original school site with a new access path to the units so as to minimise travel distance. Proposed location of the units is an area of the fields which is not used for marked out pitches and will therefore not affect longstanding playing arrangements.



plan showing proposed siting of the new buildings in relation to the football pitches, new residential development and existing adjacent dwellings



detail of building layout and hedge screening in relation to embankment and adjacent dwellings

Scale

The scale of the modular building and proposed storage units is consistent with the number of matches potentially being played on the pitches and requirement for sufficient changing accommodation and storage space. The units will occupy a very small proportion of the overall site area and the building height will be lower than a traditional single storey building being 3m.



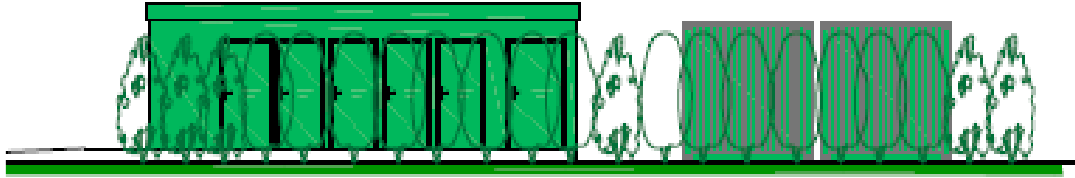
plan layout showing the proposed buildings and hedge screening

Landscaping

The existing outlook of the overall landscape will not be significantly affected as it will remain largely open recreation space used periodically for training and playing of club matches. To maintain a suitable surface for the playing the matches within league rules, grass will continue to be cut as and when necessary using equipment stored within the units. The buildings will be screened with a natural laurel hedge so as to cause little impact to the surrounding area and present a natural appearance.

Appearance

The proposed storage units will comprise a modular building and two ISO Standard steel containers which are commonly used alongside sports pitches as they offer protection from elements for equipment along with a high level of security. The units will sit at pitch level which is up to two metres lower than adjacent residential properties helping to reduce the visual impact and outlook from houses immediately adjacent to the compound. The buildings will be constructed from heavy-gauge profiled steel for strength and will be painted dark green in keeping with the surrounding environment.



a typical view showing the modular buildings and hedge screening

This Statement to be read in conjunction with accompanying plans ref: GN/22616a01A, o2A and 03.