

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

FOR

**PLANNING APPLICATION MADE TO HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL REGARDING –
CONVERSION/ADAPTATION/EXTENSION & FLEXIBLE USE OF RUGBY CLUBHOUSE
WITH USE PART OF GROUND FLOOR AS A CHILDREN’S DAY NURSERY,
ALTERATIONS TO SOUTH, WEST AND NORTH ELEVATIONS, INCLUDING
PROJECTING FIRST FLOOR BALCONY AND STAIRCASE WITH INFILL OVER MAIN
ENTRANCE: ALTERATION OF TARMACADAM SURFACE OF ADJACENT BALL
COURT TO THE WEST TO A 4G ARTIFICIAL PLAYING SURFACE AND USE OF LAND
BEWTWEEN CLUBHOUSE AND BALLCOURT AS ENCLOSED ANCILLARY OUTDOOR
SPACE TO DAY NURSERY**

AT

HRFC CLUBHOUSE FRASER ROAD BEDHAMPTON PO9 3EJ



1.0 BACKGROUND, CONTEXT AND SITE DESCRIPTION

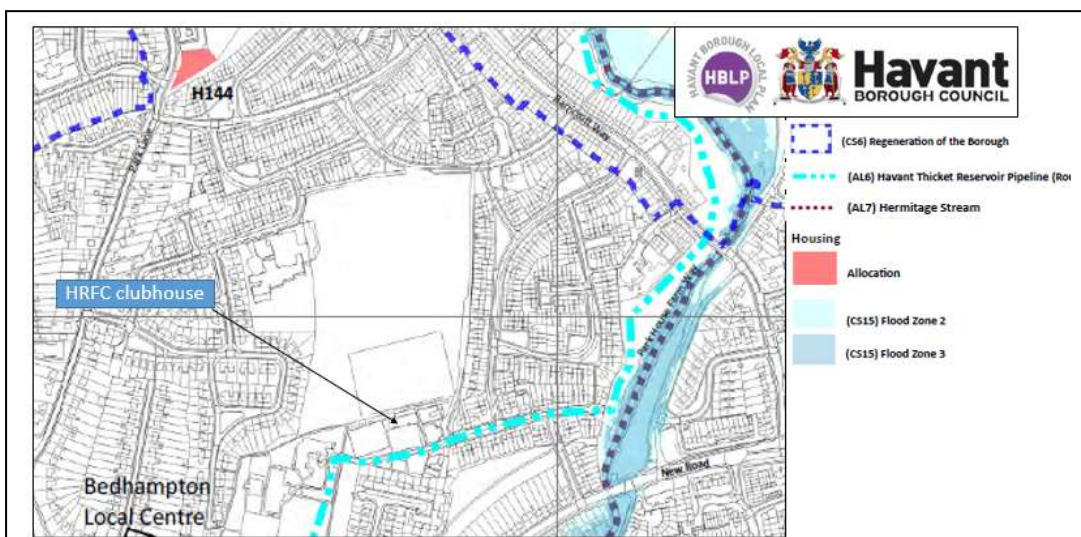
- 1.1 Havant RFC Clubhouse, as it exists now, was built out under a planning granted 21.8.1973 (HBC Reference 15228/2 – “Clubhouse, squash courts, changing rooms and bar”). Several later permissions were granted to extend, giving the clubhouse its current appearance. It functioned as a clubhouse

supporting rugby union and squash. It contains two bar areas, 2 squash courts, separate changing rooms and showering facilities, a kitchen, small office space, ancillary club shop and a large rugby spectator stand with a 203 seated capacity.

- 1.2 In recent years the popularity of squash and the ability of the squash section to invest in the 2 squash courts has declined. Income generated by the squash section to help maintain the clubhouse per se has also dropped. At an annual general meeting on 25 June 2015, the club membership voted to alter its constitution, such that it no longer has a squash section and squash members no longer have voting rights. The Club has offered remaining squash members an introductory season's membership at the Avenue Lawn Tennis, Squash and Fitness Club in Denvilles, Havant, PO9 2RS.
- 1.3 Since its formation in 1951, Havant RFC has developed in the sport of Rugby Union. Since the formation of the Leagues in 1987, Havant have never been lower than level 6 (currently finishing 7th last season in Divisional London League 1, just outside the national leagues (i.e. the top 40 clubs in England). The club has spent a substantial part of its existence in the National Leagues, only just missing promotion to Level 2 in 1992. The club has ambitions to play at the highest level possible. However, this is tempered by the fact that Havant is proud to be a community club providing rugby union for all. The club provides this for 3 adult male sides, 2 colts' sides, a ladies' team and 400 children aged between 4 and 17. This provides healthy exercise within a disciplined sport. There are also aspirations to start a girls' side and a 4th adult male side this season. The key to the club's sustainable success in the future is through the prudent management by its Committee. The club needs to utilise the clubhouse to its best potential to maximise the income it can generate, so as to fund the upkeep of the clubhouse building and develop the playing, coaching and refereeing potential of the sport of rugby union at Hooks Lane.
- 1.4 For some time, the Management Committee, over recent years, has considered the dwindling resource of the squash courts and their financial contribution to the club overall. At a time of national austerity, the club has also sympathised with the funds available to Havant Borough Council to maintain the playing pitches at Hooks Lane Recreation Ground. On occasion, inclement weather in the winter months has left certain pitches unplayable and meant rugby for adults on some Saturdays and for 400 children and the ladies' side has needed to be cancelled for some Sundays. As such, the club has noted the underutilised nature of the ball court to the west of the clubhouse and that an improvement and investment in its playing surface, could provide an alternative training area, in times of wet weather as well as an enhanced community facility, which the club could help to manage and provide on-site supervision for. Such a qualitative enhancement would also off-set the loss of the underused squash courts.
- 1.5 The club has decided that the conversion of the squash courts, by the insertion of a mezzanine floor, could realise an increased space at first floor and the ability to convert the ground floor to an additional community facility,

namely a children's day nursery. The increased space at first floor would be multi-functional. It would serve to provide the club with extra space to host its own and community events, such as club dinners, wedding receptions and family celebrations and also the potential to rent space to local businesses for conferences and staff training days. The Club asks the council to formally recognise this flexibility of use under this application. This would all generate sources of income for the club to further its key aim of developing Hooks Lane as a centre of excellence for the sport of rugby union.

- 1.6 The two storey, buff-brick clubhouse has a spectator stand on its northern side. A public footpath passes between the clubhouse and the 1st XV pitch to the north. An area of soft planting exists to the west with a footway linking the aforementioned public footpath and an area of car parking for 52 cars on the south side of the clubhouse, including 2 spaces for disabled drivers. This is accessed via Fraser Road. A further area of car parking for some 24 cars serves two community buildings and a ST John Ambulance premises beyond. That car parking area abuts housing in Ingledene Close. Fraser Road continues westwards as a cul-de-sac serving Bidbury Mead Primary School and its associated pre-school facilities. Council changing rooms and pitch maintenance galley are located to the south-east of the clubhouse, separated by another public footway. All of the above can be seen on the aerial photograph at the beginning of this statement.
- 1.7 The clubhouse and Hooks Lane Recreation Ground is unallocated on the Proposals Map of the Havant Borough Local Plan and related Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2011/2014), shown below. The site is located outside a Leigh Park zone, which is one of a number of zones in the Borough where the council is seeking to prioritise urban regeneration under Policy CS6. It was however within the area identified for an earlier (extant) Leigh Park Framework (2006), which has much the same aspirations. This theme of making best use of community buildings and improving life chances for the Borough's citizens will be returned to later. The site is not located within an area at risk of flooding. Lastly, a safeguarded route for a water pipeline is shown running down Fraser Road. As no excavation would be needed to improve the playing surface of the ball court to the west of the clubhouse, this Policy is thought to have no effect on the proposals set out in this statement.



- 1.9 Some photographs of the existing clubhouse are shown in **Appendix 'A'**.
The proposals will now be described in Section 2 below.

2.0 **PROPOSALS AND DESIGN**

2.1 **Use and Amount**

- 2.1.1 Part of the ground floor of the existing clubhouse is proposed to be altered and converted into a children's day nursery for up to 45 children of varying pre-school age. 2 spaces will be created, served by toilet and kitchen accommodation. The nursery are desirous of enclosing part of the soft planted area between the clubhouse and the ball court for use in conjunction with the nursery (new means of enclosure not exceeding 1.8m in height, aligned level with the new fire escape doors to the north and flush with the clubhouse to the south: details to be agreed). If the existing footway there is considered essential for public use, this can be re-provided between the new enclosure and the ball court. The club and day nursery are happy to see details of such means of enclosure made a condition of permission. It would be for the nursery to negotiate this with the council as landowner, but application is made here for change of use from ancillary landscaping to outdoor space to support the nursery for the sake of completeness.
- 2.1.2 The prospective operator of the day nursery is seeking funding from the Government. Funding is made available in January, April and September. The operator would like to take advantage of the January 2016 funding window, hence this planning application is made now, with the hope that phase 1 of the works could commence in October 2015, to enable the day nursery to open 2 January 2016. Children are entitled to 15 hours government funding the term after they turn 2 (depending if requirements are met - See **Appendix B**). With and 3 and 4 year olds, all parents are entitled to this level of provision. The entitlement of free hours are planned to rise from 15 to 30 for working parents of 3 and 4 year old so existing nurseries are going to be more busy as more parents may return to work or extend their working hours. Teresa Newman, Childcare Development and Business Officer, based at Mill Hill Children's Centre (078 9442 5600, teresa.newman@hants.gov.uk) has already made an initial assessment of the suitability of the building for its purpose.
- 2.1.3 Alterations are proposed to the elevations of the clubhouse in terms of new windows and doorways to be inserted and a new external balcony with enclosed storage space beneath.
- 2.1.4 The extension of the rugby club at first floor would allow for the relocation of the President's lounge, currently at the eastern end of the building. In turn, that space would be utilised to create a bigger kitchen and relocated ancillary Club shop.
- 2.1.5 As well as being a rugby club providing recreational facilities for its members, the club would also like the council to formally recognise its extended use as a facility for hire by the community at large, something which has been

occurring for many years. The potential to rent space to local businesses and organisations for meetings, conferences and training days is also intended.

- 2.1.6 The clubhouse will continue to be served by the car park adjoining it to the south. It is considered that the typical hours of use by the rugby club during matches and training evenings will not conflict with the hours of use by the day nursery and parents dropping their children off at Bidbury Mead School.
- 2.1.7 The Club would wish to upgrade the playing surface of the council ball court immediately west of the clubhouse to a 4G playing surface, with surface markings to allow a multitude of different sports to occur, as current markings provide for. A typical specification for a 4G surface, as recommended by the sports facilities industry, forms part of the application particulars.

2.2 Layout

- 2.2.1 The position of the intended children's day nursery within the clubhouse is shown on the submitted ground floor layout plan as is the position of new doors and windows.
- 2.2.2 The ball court and space between that and the clubhouse are clearly distinguishable on the submitted site location plan.
- 2.2.3 The provision of the day nursery will require re-siting of some recycling bins. It is intended that these be placed on a new area of hardstanding positioned between the car park and the entrance to the council changing rooms, still allowing ease of use by the club and public alike. Please refer to the 1:500 block plan and the last two photographs in **Appendix A**.

2.3 Scale

- 2.3.1 The overall scale of the building will not alter. Its mass will slightly increase by the addition of the new first floor balcony to the north elevation. A staircase to this will descend along the west flank of the clubhouse. It is intended to provide screened storage underneath the balcony, for use by both the club and nursery.

2.4 Landscaping

- 2.4.1 None is intended, but if the council is amenable to the nursery using part of the green space between the clubhouse and ball court, the applicant is happy to see a scheme of works for soft planting and enclosure of such an area to be made subject of a planning condition. It is not intended to fell any trees in that area, which can be seen in **Appendix A**.

2.5 Appearance

- 2.5.1 The doors and windows proposed to be inserted in the fabric of the building will match the style and proportions of the existing. The Nursery would like to install roller shutters to their openings, to make them secure when the premises are closed. These will be retract into small projecting housings

above each opening. The housings, guide rails/framework and shutters themselves will be power-coated colour finished and the nursery is happy to see the actual colour finish agreed by way of a planning condition. The addition of more colour to what is currently a rather utilitarian looking building is seen as a positive enhancement to the building.

- 2.5.2 The steel framework to the balcony and its balustrade is to be colour finished navy blue to match the colour of the stand storage doors. The staircase leading down from it will be galvanised steel as will any security mesh and lockable gate at its base. The gate will be opened when the club is open, as it is intended to be a fire escape route. It will be locked when that part of the club is not in use, in the interests of crime prevention and community safety.

2.6 Access

- 2.6.1 The club will continue to be accessed by pedestrians via existing openings in the south elevation, one of which will be shared with the Children's Day Nursery. The main stand side entrances and new balcony will provide access from the north elevation. A central exit through the stand will also remain at ground floor level. Side entrances to the stand are kept locked outside rugby use of Hooks Lane Recreation Ground.
- 2.6.2 Toilets will be provided to comply with Part M of the Building Regulations. A lift will give access for all to the first floor of the first time. Ramped access to the proposed nursery entrance exists and a similar one is proposed for the new side exit doors.

3.0 PROPOSALS AND THEIR FIT WITH PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1 Aside from national guidance from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF - 2012), and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG – 2014) the following policies and guidance are considered to be relevant/pertinent from the Development Plan for Havant Borough Council have informed the proposed design solution:-

Havant Borough Core Strategy (2011)

CS1 - Health and wellbeing
CS3 - Sustainable Development and Design
CS6 - Regeneration of the Borough
CS7 - Community support and inclusion
CS8 - Community safety
CS14 - Efficient use of resources
CS15 – Flood risk
CS16 - High quality design
CS19 - Effective provision of infrastructure
CS20 - Transport and access strategy
DM5 - Control of ... entertainment uses
DM10 - Pollution
DM11 - Planning for more sustainable travel
DM14 - Car and cycle parking

Havant Borough Local Plan (Allocations)(2014)

AL1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development
AL6 - Havant Thicket Reservoir Pipeline

Havant Borough Council Borough Design Guide (2011) & Appendix 1

- Seven key principle diagram (p.13)
- Area 7d in Appendix 1: Leigh Park West (pp.141-143)

Leigh Park Regeneration Framework (2006)

Consultation draft SPD on Car parking (2015)

- 3.1.1 NPPF/NPPG: The proposed works and day nursery use sought would perform economic and social roles, whilst having a neutral effect on the environment, required for sustainable development under paragraph 7. Economically, it would support the club in its aspirations to develop the sport of rugby union at Hooks Lane, whilst also helping an established local day nursery to relocate and grow ensuring the viability of that business and the people it employs. This will make better use of existing social infrastructure in the community. Socially it will improve life chances for children through pre-school education and continue to enable people from all walks of life to socially interact in the club premises. Environmentally it will have a neutral

effect on the locality and not be likely to disturb its neighbours from the day-time operation of the day nursery.

- 3.1.2 The proposals will “...*enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives*” and “..*secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity...*” recognising encouragement for “..*the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings...*” and “*effective use of land...not of high environmental value*” promoting “...mixed use developments and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban...areas..”, where the local authority is charged with a duty to “*take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs*”. (Paragraph 17, 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th, 9th and 12th bullet points).
- 3.1.3 Paragraph 19 calls on local planning authorities not to act an impediment to sustainable economic growth, with significant weight being placed on the planning system to support that. The proposals represent the sustainable growth of two enterprises – the day nursery and the rugby club.
- 3.1.4 It is asserted that under paragraph 35, the site is a sustainable place to locate a children’s day nursery. It would be well located in an area where most of its existing custom resides and so facilitate walking and cycling and is also well located in terms of public transport halts on New Road (both bus and train) a short walk away from the site. For those arriving by car, recognising that dropping children off is often part of a journey to work, adequate car parking would exist to allow the safe transit of children from the vehicle to the entrance door. Staff working at the rugby club and day nursery would be able to securely park bicycles within each premises. The car park would serve duality of usage as the day nursery would generally operate when the club was no open and vice versa.
- 3.1.5 It is asserted that good design required under Section 7/ID26 would result and that interest and colour would be added to the building’s elevations – “..*adding to the overall quality of the area*” and indeed all other criteria listed in paragraph 58. The addition of an internal lift and ramped entry points would ensure access for all encouraged under paragraph 57. Giving the Day nursery an adjacent enclosed open space will also ensure the maintenance and security of that area under paragraph 61.
- 3.1.6 By expanding the clubhouse facilities, the club can attract a wider membership and encourage more people to participate in the sport of rugby union, thus providing for social interaction and healthy, inclusive communities envisaged under paragraph 69/ID53. Whilst it is acknowledged that two squash courts would be lost, sufficient other facilities exist locally and the number of squash members had declined considerably in the last decade. The day nursery will have physical activity as part of its curriculum, encouraging healthy eating and lifestyles into the future and fitting rather well with the concept set out in the first bullet point of paragraph 70. A qualitative improvement to the playing surface of the adjacent ball court would also offset the loss of the squash courts. Under paragraph 73, 158 and 171/ID37, no

assessment of community need for squash facilities could be found on the council's website to justify a prescriptive interpretation of strand 4 of Policy CS1, albeit reference is noted in paragraph 2.23 of the Core Strategy to a "Sports Facility Report".

- 3.1.7 Paragraph 72 places great weight on the government's aspiration to create/expand schools, where local planning authorities are asked to "*..take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement*".
- 3.1.8 Under paragraphs 93, 95 and 99 and ID6, the club and day nursery operator are committed to fitting out the refurbished areas of the building with energy efficient lighting and water efficient sanitary fittings.
- 3.1.9 It is not considered that the location of the children's day nursery would cause noise disturbance and the nearest residential properties are some distance away (paragraph 123/ID30).
- 3.1.10 Whilst some engagement with the local council has taken place via its estates service (paragraph 188/ID20), the windows of opportunity for the funding of the day nursery have prompted the early submission of this planning application.
- 3.1.11 The hours of use sought for the day nursery are to also allow flexibility of use when the day nursery is not operating, allowing its reasonable use to host supervised children's birthday parties and perhaps a crèche when parents are watching a game of rugby. The council is asked to be mindful of this when imposing any planning conditions under the advice in paragraphs 203 and 206 and ID 21a.
- 3.2 Havant Borough Core Strategy (2011)/Leigh Park Framework (2006)/Borough Design Guide (2011)/Draft SPD on Car Parking (2015)
 - 3.2.1 **CS1/CS19** (1)/(5) – arguments to allow an exception to strand 4 of policy CS1 have been made out above. Strand 10 also provides for the betterment of community facilities through refurbishment, where and greater flexibility of use to provide "community events" is spoken about in CS paragraph 2.39. There is a clear need for further children's day nursery provision in the area which Hampshire County Council will no doubt confirm if consulted on this application. Better use of social infrastructure will result.
 - 3.2.2 **CS3** – Havant town centre and Leigh Park District centre are close by providing a great deal of local employment. Strand 6 of the policy seeks the provision of childcare facilities in close proximity to such employment centres. Whilst the policy is about driving up skill levels in the existing workforce, the provision of pre-school learning is the first step to a productive and useful life cycle and adequate childcare can often be a barrier to those entering the labour market, recognised in paragraph CS 3.38.
 - 3.2.3 **CS6/CS7/CS8** – notwithstanding the changed boundary of Leigh Park between the Leigh Park Framework (2006) and the Core Strategy, the

proposals as set out are argued to offer positive regenerative opportunities for the Borough. The Club has strong links with its surrounding community and is inclusive, allowing those from either sex, age and of varying degrees of ability to participate in organised sport. In total there are 125 playing members of the senior club (including 22 women players), 300 mini and junior players and 110 basic club members, remembering that informal participation in sport through spectating is also inclusive of the wider community. Rugby is an inclusive sport and it is therefore argued that these proposals assist in achieving the regeneration of Leigh Park and building pride in the local community. This will support healthy lifestyles, enhance community safety and improve life chances for employment through pre-school education. The proposed outdoor space for the day nursery has been planned with CS16 (2[a]) and CS paragraphs 5.03, 5.06 and 7.43 in mind. It is also noted under Appendix 1/7d 'Challenges' for Leigh Park West, is that – *"The quantity of spaces makes management and maintenance difficult and costly"* with 'Opportunities' cited as ensuring *"left over areas of space"* are avoided. Care for that space by the day nursery would lessen that burden.

- 3.2.4 **CS14/CS16 (6)** – adequate waste facilities would be provided. The recycling bins would be re-located from their current position to an equally accessible location, both from the perspective of users and those collecting/recycling the waste. Water and energy efficiencies have already been referred to elsewhere in this statement, expected under CS paragraph 7.28.
- 3.2.5 **CS15** – the site is in the lowest zone of flood risk and the development will not increase flood risk off site, envisaged in CS paragraph 7.37. Indeed, alteration of the tarmac surfaced ball court to a 4 G surface could improve water attenuation.
- 3.2.6 **CS16/DM5/DM10** – An improvement to the look of the clubhouse would result, with new openings adding interest to elevations, whilst coloured shutters/housings providing security when the building is not in use. The new internal lift will allow access for all to all parts of the building for the first time and ramps will provide ease of access to entry points. Flexible spaces would be created within the refurbished building allow for flexibility of use and adaptation to alternative use if that is required in the future. This will facilitate social integration envisaged under CS paragraph 7.39. The intended use of the building would not be likely to disturb its neighbours, nor affect their privacy through overlooking. Adequate external lighting would be maintained in the interests of health and safety, with light fittings angled downwards to the car park surface, to avoid unnecessary glare. The childminding business is already in operation close-by and **Appendix C** is testimony to the professional care and management of that community service, recognised by Ofsted. Adequate space would be provided for the number of children to be cared for, as can be checked by going to paragraph 3.56 on page 24 of **Appendix D** to this statement. Examples of the proposed entrance door to the nursery, which will match the existing entrance doors to the clubhouse and a typical detail of the roller shutters - (new shutters, housings, guide rails and lathes to be colour finished) - are shown on the next page.



3.2.7 **CS20/DM11/DM14** – The new day nursery use would be sustainably located for travel modes other than the car. Those arriving at the site by car will be catered for by the existing 52 space car park, where 2 spaces are marked out for disabled use. Overspill parking for another 24 cars also exists immediately to the south of Fraser Road. Staff working at the premises would be able to store bicycles securely inside the building.

3.3 **Havant Borough Local Plan (Allocations)(2014)**

3.3.1 AL1 – the applicant asserts their proposals to be sustainable development, worthy of the council's support

3.3.2 AL6 – for reasons set out earlier, the upgrading of the ball court surface to a 4G playing surface is not judged to prejudice this safeguarded route for a water pipeline in Fraser Road, in terms of the guidance of CS paragraph 2.24.

4.0 **Conclusions**

- 4.1 The club is seeking more flexible use of the building and a change of use of part of the ground floor to a children's day nursery. Alterations to the building are considered to be respectful of the host building and would not harm, but rather enhance the visual amenities of the area. If the construction of the new balcony should require a footpath diversion before that aspect of the development can be constructed, the red line identifying the application site has been drawn to accommodate that. Such a diversion was accepted when the main stand obtained planning permission and was built out.
- 4.2 Associated with this is a request that part of open land between the clubhouse and the ball court to the west be enclosed and allowed to be used as an external space supporting the day nursery, subject to agreeing means of enclosure, landscaping and re-provision of a footway passing through that area (latter if deemed necessary/desirable).
- 4.3 It is also proposed to upgrade the surface of the ball court to the west of the clubhouse from its current impermeable tarmac surface to a 4G playing surface. Separate discussions are also in train with the council to help it manage that space and derive a better income stream from it.
- 4.4 The club has reasoned an exception to strand 4 of Policy CS1 and asserts that the planning balance should weigh in favour of the proposals which are considered to represent sustainable development, compliant with the development plan for Havant Borough.
- 4.5 Should the case Officer, any elected Member or interested person have any queries or require and clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me via the details given below.

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