



Edmonds Park Sports and Community Pavilion
Park Road, Didcot OX11 8QE

Design, Access and Planning Statement
May 2021



RIBA 

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Site and Background

Didcot Town Council maintains a number of Parks, Gardens and Play Areas as well as Green Open Spaces and the Town Cemetery. Edmonds Park is centrally located and accessed primarily from Park Road but also from Newlands Avenue. Providing approximately 21 acres for sports and recreational use, it is an important site which has long been without any built facilities to enhance and support its widespread use.

Appended to this document is a 'Community Value Statement' prepared by the applicant, Didcot Town Council, which sets down the history and consultation processes which lie behind the development of the proposal to build a new Sports and Community Pavilion – a facility which will meet a demonstrably strong demand.

Planning history

P21/S1430/D – Demolition of existing condemned pavilion
approved 13 May 2021

P17/S3581/FUL – Replacement outdoor services depot and sports equipment
storage compound
approved 22 November 2017

The proposal

The proposal is to construct a new single storey pavilion of high quality in order to provide the following facilities;

- A covered entrance and foyer
- A multi-functional community space for use by local clubs etc
- Toilets to serve the community space
- A kitchen to serve the community space and outside areas
- Two break-out rooms for meetings and smaller activity groups

- Two sports changing rooms meeting national standards
- Showers and toilets to serve the changing rooms
- A changing room, toilet and shower for use by match officials
- An accessible changing room and first aid facility
- Ancillary spaces including a cleaner's store, general storage, bin storage and a plant room

Externally the scheme will provide the following;

- Pedestrian access from Park Road
- Pedestrian and service vehicles routes to the building from the existing parking area
- Retention of the existing outdoor gym
- Play areas
- Outdoor table tennis tables
- A paved terrace area
- Bicycle storage
- Delineation of spaces for standard car parking, accessible parking and minibus parking
- External bench seating associated with the changing facilities
- Hard and soft landscaping proposals

Design

The building will be located in the north west corner of Edmonds Park. To the north there are houses fronting Park Road and Samor Way. On the opposite side of Park Road there are further residential properties, primarily bungalows but also one or two houses. The park has a long frontage to Park Road, measuring more than 300 metres, and its nearest neighbour to the south is the Didcot Children and Family Centre.

The building will be fully accessible and inclusive, a major factor in determining that it should remain single storey. In addition to car and bicycle parking provision a relocated and direct pedestrian access will benefit the many users who will live in the immediate vicinity.

The chosen location for the building means that the existing vehicular access can be retained and the existing car park re-utilised. White-lining will improve use and management of the car park and provision has been made for accessible parking.

The design will minimise any perceived impact on neighbouring properties. Scale, massing and carefully selected materials will ensure that it is easily absorbed into its setting and environment.

Importantly, whilst the building will provide sports changing facilities as well as a large community space and smaller meeting rooms, the design is such that these functions can operate simultaneously or independently.



Sustainability

Didcot Town Council are keen to build with the longer term future in mind. To that end the building will incorporate many 'green' solutions. A 'fabric first' solution will be adopted and in addition photovoltaic and solar-thermal panels are proposed. Specialist advice will also be sought regarding the geo-technical suitability of ground conditions for the provision of ground-source heat pumps.

Trees

To ensure that there would be no adverse impact on nearby trees an arboricultural report was commissioned. The site is not within a conservation area, however there is an oak tree to the north east of the proposed building which is subject to a Tree Protection Order. In addition it is recognised that trees fronting Park Road, surrounding the car parking area and forming a screen to the northern boundary are all an important part of the history and setting of the site.

The arboriculturist concludes that no existing trees will be adversely affected by the proposed scheme.

Landscaping

Equally important when considering any scheme is the inclusion of appropriate hard and soft landscaping proposals. To that end landscape architects were commissioned to provide a Landscape Statement, Landscape Layout and detailed Planting Plan. These documents accompany the application and the incorporation of the features and solutions which are recommended will complete and speed the assimilation of the new building into its surroundings.

Planning Considerations

It is felt that key planning considerations relevant to this application are as follows;

- The principal of development
- Design and character
- Access and parking
- Residential amenity

The principle of development

There is broad support for developments of this nature within the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 and the Didcot Garden Town Masterplan. Local support is evidenced by the community engagement work carried out on behalf of Didcot Town Council by Focus Consultants (see the Town Council's Community Value Statement for further detail).

Design and character

The proposed location, orientation, scale and form of the proposed development have been carefully considered taking account of any potential impact on neighbouring properties. All existing trees are retained and where required they will be protected during construction. Herbaceous and wildflower planting will further enhance the proposal. The proposal is one which the community can be proud of.

Access and parking

The existing car park will be retained and no new vehicular access is proposed. An existing pedestrian access from Park Road will be relocated by approximately 13 metres in order to serve both the new building and the footpath connecting Park Road to Newlands Avenue. Parking capacity and efficiency will be substantially improved by whitelining the parking area.

Residential amenity

The nearest property, no.47 Park Road, is 17 metres from the proposed new building and the shared boundary in this location is 13.5 metres from the new building. The boundary comprises a 1.8 metre high fence, dense hedging and a row of mature horse chestnut trees which are 10-12 metres tall. There will be no adverse loss of light or overlooking and other residential properties in the vicinity are felt to be sufficiently far from the proposal as to be unaffected.

Summary

Great care has been taken in the development of the proposals which are submitted for consideration. It is felt that as a consequence a sympathetic and appropriate solution has been found to an evident need for facilities which are sorely missing in this location. At the same time the scheme will provide an exciting new asset and venue for the local community - it is hoped, therefore, that the application will be viewed favourably.



Edmonds Park Pavilion Community Value Statement

Introduction:

Edmonds Park provides approximately 21 Acres of green space near the centre of Didcot. It contains Play Areas, an Outdoor Gym, Senior & Junior Football Pitches and Sports Courts. A car park is accessible via Park Road and the gates to this are locked at night. Free parking is also available in the Didcot Wave Leisure Pool car park on Newlands Avenue. Changing rooms built in the 1950's were condemned and subsequently closed on health and safety grounds in 2019



Community Usage

The park has been used since opening by many community groups and local clubs including the likes of Didcot Football Club and Didcot Rugby Club. It has also been used for community events such as the town fayre and fun days for the local barracks. The Park is well used by families, social groups, dog walkers and people carrying out exercise.

Since the changing rooms have been closed there has been a lot of interest and support from the local community in their replacement. Community engagement work was carried out by Focus Consultants on behalf of Didcot town Council in March 2018, the key findings being:

- There is strong demand from local people for a community venue at Edmonds Park Recreation site.
- 90% of people consulted stated they would use a new facility.
- This is echoed by stakeholders, who see it as essential for local sports groups.
- There is strong support for flexible space and versatile facilities.
- 30% of local people are keen to get involved in the future direction and governance.

Benefits of the Proposed New Facility.

The new modern facility will offer the residents and community of Didcot a valuable new versatile space. The combination of modern changing facilities for clubs to use and a large hall that can be used by community groups will support the immediate local area, an area that has been missing these facilities for a number of years.

This new facility will not only provide modern, safe and environmentally friendly changing rooms for local sports clubs and visiting teams, but also adaptable spaces and resources for their families and other users. The building will allow existing groups to re-engage with local community members and the wider community outside Didcot Parish such as Harwell, East and West Hagbourne, Wantage and Wallingford.

Local clubs have grown through the years due to the expansion of the town, and an example of this is that Didcot Youth Football Club now has 30+ teams and over 350 members.

A range of activities that have been identified by the Focus report that could benefit from this project are:

- Crafter meets.
- Arts and crafts workshops and groups
- Buggy fitness.
- Covered seating area.
- Adult Activities (Walking Football, etc).
- Teen Activities.
- Childrens activities and camps.
- Basketball Club.
- Zumba and Dance.
- Girl Guides.
- Quiz and Social Evenings.
- Go Active (Tai Chi).
- Didcot Netball.

