COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT CULTURE & SPORT

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 24/04/19

ITEM NO. 9

Ward: Church App No: 181899/FUL

Address: Leighton Park School, Shinfield Road

Proposal: Erection of two storey sports facility with external viewing gallery and

associated parking

Applicant: Mr Keith Eldridge **Date validated:** 01/11/18

Major Application 13 week Target Date: 31/01/19 Extension of time agreed: New date to be confirmed

RECOMMENDATION

Delegate to Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to completion of a S106 legal agreement or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the legal agreement not be completed by the 30 May 2019 (unless officers on behalf of the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement). The legal agreement to secure the following:

An Employment, Skills and Training Plan (construction phase only) or equivalent financial contribution.

Conditions to include:

- 1. Time limit for implementation
- 2. Use of materials
- 3. Approved plans
- 4. Control of noise and dust
- 5. Hours of working
- 6. Bonfires
- 7. Archaeological field evaluation
- 8. Construction Method Statement
- 9. Vehicle parking spaces to be provided in accordance with the approved plans
- 10. Bicycle parking plans to be approved
- 11. Construction Environmental Management Plan
- 12. Lighting scheme
- 13. Landscaping details for approval
- 14. Landscaping implementation
- 15. Landscaping maintenance
- 16. Arboricultural method statement needed
- 17. Noise assessment for mechanical plant
- 18. BREEAM Certificate
- 19. Sustainable Drainage before development
- 20. Community use

Informatives to include:

- 1. Terms and conditions
- 2. Need for building regulations
- 3. Encroachment
- 4. Construction and Demolition subject to Environmental Health

- 5. Highways
- 6. Pre-commencement conditions
- 7. Positive and proactive

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Leighton Park School comprises a large site to the southeast of Reading town centre. The site is bounded to the west by the A327 Shinfield Road and to the north and east by Pepper Lane. The University of Reading Whiteknights Campus is located to the north and east of the site, with residential areas to the south and west.
- 1.2 Leighton Park School contains a number of buildings, which are predominantly located to the northern and eastern reaches of the site, including the Grade II Listed School House. The school currently benefits from a small gymnasium, the size of one badminton court. An internal network of roads extends throughout the site, including an access road adjacent to the Shinfield Road boundary, which runs between the main entrance and West Lodge Gate. The area subject of this application is located towards the southern end of the site, a parcel of land immediately to the south of an existing multi-use games area. The land is set within a slight hollow, with the site topography sloping gradually in a south-westerly direction. The site is subject to TPO 27/07 which includes individual trees, groups of trees and woodlands to the western site boundary. A site visit confirmed that a mature oak located centrally within the site is no longer in place having recently fallen. The closest residential dwellings are located approximately 75m west of the site, on the opposite side of Shinfield Road.



Site Location Plan

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 Full planning permission is sought for the erection of a two storey sports facility with an external viewing gallery and associated parking. The building would have a gross internal floor area of 2216sqm and would provide six badminton courts/a full size basketball court and a fitness suite. Changing rooms, office space and a first aid room would also be located within the building.
- 2.2 The building would be of steel frame construction, clad with brickwork at ground floor level with vertical pattern larch cladding above. The roof would be of profiled metal cladding, coloured to blend with the surrounding landscape. The building would be oriented to face into the school site, with fenestration principally located to the north and south elevations. A secondary entrance would be located to the rear of the building, adjacent to the proposed car park. The building would have a sloping roof with a maximum height of approximately 9m. A viewing gallery, with an external staircase, would be located at first floor level to the northern elevation to look out over the existing multi-use games area.
- 2.3 The building has been designed so that it has direct access at ground floor level, with the provision of a unisex disabled toilet and changing room, alongside male and female toilets and changing facilities. The accesses to the building would have clear and level openings.
- 2.4 To the rear of the building, adjacent to the existing access road, would be located 12 vehicle parking spaces. Four of the spaces would be suitable for disabled access. The car park and external hard landscaped areas would be constructed of permeable paving. To facilitate the proposal, 13 trees are required to be removed.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 890757/FUL - Erection of temporary classroom - Permitted 07/04/89

920258/FUL - Extension to gymnasium - Permitted 15/06/92

920259/FUL - Enlargement of residential and recreational facilities - PER 12/06/92

920491/FUL - New main entrance, alterations to parking and internal road network - Permitted 09/09/92

960447/FUL - Erection of equipment store building - Permitted 07/10/96

980504/FUL - Erection of eight 15m high floodlighting columns to illuminate all weather sports pitch - Permitted 09/12/98

030253/FUL - New catering facility and dining hall - Permitted 02/04/03

150779/PRE - New music and media centre - Observations sent 10/07/15

152304/FUL - Removal of porta cabins, provision of foyer to theatre, alterations to parking and landscaping - Permitted 29/02/16

171089/FUL - Improvements to car park and access route - Permitted 29/09/17

171181/FUL - Outdoor assembly, classroom and performance space - Permitted 12/09/17

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 Neighbouring owners and occupiers at 99, 114, 114a, 116, 116a, 118, 120 and 122 Shinfield Road were consulted by letter. Two site notices were displayed. No letters of representation were received.

- 4.2 RBC Environmental Protection raised concerns with regard to potential noise, dust and bonfires associated with the construction process. Conditions were recommended accordingly.
- 4.3 Berkshire Archaeology noted that the application site lies in an area of high archaeological interest, with the potential for the proposal to impact on important buried remains. A condition requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological field evaluation was recommended.
- 4.4 RBC Transport Development Control requested further details on the extent of the proposed community use, with a Transport Statement to be provided. Following the submission of a Transport Statement, it was confirmed that the proposed development and its community use would not have a detrimental impact on the functioning of the local transport network. Conditions were recommended accordingly.
- 4.5 RBC Ecology advised that the proposal would be unlikely to affect priority habitats or protected species, subject to conditions. A Construction Environmental Management Plan would be needed to be approved in writing prior to the commencement of the development. A further report detailing the lighting scheme and how this will not adversely affect wildlife would also need to be approved in writing prior to the commencement of the development.
- 4.6 RBC Natural Environment noted that the site is subject to TPO 27/07 which includes multiple individual trees, groups of trees and woodlands. It was advised that the footprint of the proposed development would be outside of the root protection areas of the trees to be retained. The 13 trees to be removed to facilitate the proposal were advised to be of not good quality individually, albeit with some significance as a group. The removal of the trees would be acceptable subject to replacement planting to retain coverage. Subject to conditions requiring the approval of full details of hard and soft landscaping, and an Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan, no objection was raised to the proposal.
- 4.7 RBC Leisure and Recreation raised no objection to the proposal. Clarification was sought on whether the school would be letting the facility to local sports clubs.
- 4.8 Sport England advised that the land on which the proposal would be located does not constitute playing field land under its statutory definition. The intention to open the facility to community use when not in use by the school was welcomed, advising that a community use agreement be established. Badminton England and Basketball England would be keen to make use of the facility. As such, Sport England offered its support to the application.
- 4.9 Thames Water raised no objection to the proposal, based on the information provided.
- 4.10 SSE Power and Southern Gas did not respond to their consultations.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework, among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.
- 5.2 The application has been assessed against the following policies:
- 5.3 National Planning Policy Framework
- 5.4 Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2008)

Policy CS1: Sustainable Construction and Design

Policy CS2: Waste Minimisation

Policy CS4: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

Policy CS5: Inclusive Access

Policy CS7: Design and the Public Realm

Policy CS20: Implementation of The Reading Transport Strategy

Policy CS22: Transport Assessments

Policy CS24: Car/Cycle Parking

Policy CS28: Loss of Open Space

Policy CS31: Additional and Existing Community Facilities

Policy CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

Policy CS34: Pollution and Water Resources

Policy CS35: Flooding

Policy CS36: Biodiversity and Geology

Policy CS38: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands

5.5 Reading Borough Local Development Framework Sites and Detailed Policies
Document (2012)

Policy SD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy DM4: Safeguarding Amenity

Policy DM12: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

Policy DM17: Green Network Policy DM18: Tree Planting Policy DM19: Air Quality

5.6 Reading Borough Proposals Map

6. APPRAISAL

- (i) Principle of development
- 6.1 Planning permission is sought for the erection of a new sports facility. The facility would principally be used by the school, representing a significant upgrade on the existing indoor sports provision, which is inadequate both in terms of its size and offer. Outside of the school use, the facility would be used by the community during weekday evenings and on Sundays. The proposal would enable the school to improve its sporting offer, suitable for modern use and occupation. The community use of the building is also an attractive proposition. Subject to the policy considerations outlined below, the principle of the development is acceptable.

(ii) Design and impact on the character of the surrounding area

- 6.2 Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy requires that all development be of a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The area in which the proposed building would be erected currently comprises an area of undeveloped land, adjacent to a multi-use games area. The site is well screened from public view by trees to the western site boundary, set down slightly in a hollow due to the site topography. A three storey building is located to the south of the application site.
- 6.3 The proposal is for the erection of a building of substantial size, with a gross internal floor area of 2216sqm. The building would have a modern appearance, with a large sloping roof and distinctive vertical timber cladding to the upper elements. Due in part to the site topography, the proposed facility would be set comfortably lower than the adjacent building. The proposal would constitute the largest building within the Leighton Park School site, but it is considered to be sufficient in its design and proportion that it would not detract from the character of the surrounding area. The appearance of the building is considered to be appropriate given the nature of its use.
- 6.4 While there are listed buildings within the Leighton Park School site, the proposed building would be sited a considerable distance from them and is not considered to detract from the setting of the listed buildings. As such, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policies CS7 and CS33 of the Core Strategy.
- 6.5 The building has been designed to offer level access, with facilities suitable for all potential users. The proposed car park includes disabled accessible spaces which are considered appropriate and acceptable. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy.

(iii) Impact on neighbours

- 6.6 Leighton Park School is well established in the local area. The site includes a number of buildings used for various educational purposes. The closest residential dwellings to the application site are located approximately 75m to the west of the site, on the opposite side of Shinfield Road. Policy DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document requires that development will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties.
- 6.7 The building would be set comfortably within the school boundaries, and would be well screened by existing tree cover to Shinfield Road. The development is not considered to cause a significant detrimental impact in terms access to sunlight or daylight, or visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development. It is acknowledged that the proposal includes the provision of a first floor external viewing platform, the purpose of which is to look out over the existing multi-use games area. The viewing platform would be sufficiently distant and screened from neighbouring buildings and the residential dwellings that no significant loss of privacy through overlooking would occur.
- 6.8 The proposal does not include any external artificial lighting. This is considered acceptable and appropriate. Full details of light spill from the

building would be secured by condition. There are concerns about potential noise, dust and fumes associated with the construction of the proposed development and the possible likely impact on nearby residents. Accordingly, conditions will be applied to control noise and dust emanating from the site during the course of construction. Hours of working during the construction phase would also be secured by condition, as would the prevention of the burning of waste on site. As such, subject to conditions the proposal would be in accordance with Policy DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document.

(iv) Trees and landscaping

6.9 Policy CS38 of the Core Strategy requires that individual trees, groups of trees and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal, and the Borough's vegetation cover will be extended. The site is verdant in character and is subject to TPO 27/07 which includes multiple individual trees, groups of trees and woodlands. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment supplied with the application details 13 trees that would be removed to facilitate the proposal. One of these trees is a mature oak, located centrally within the site, but which has unfortunately recently fallen. In accordance with the consultation response received from the Council's Natural Environment Officer, the trees to be removed are generally not of good quality individually, albeit they are fairly significant as a group. However, the removal of these trees is not considered to have a significantly detrimental impact on the aesthetic qualities of the site, particularly when viewed from Shinfield Road. Sufficient trees would be retained to screen the building from public view. In addition, replacement planting would suitably mitigate the loss of the removed trees and would ensure that the level of overall treed coverage within the site is not diminished as a result of the proposal. Subject to conditions requiring full details of hard and soft landscaping and an Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan, to be submitted for approval the proposal is in accordance with Policy CS38 of the Core Strategy.

(v) Ecology

- 6.10 Policy CS36 of the Core Strategy requires that development retains, protects and incorporates features of biodiversity. The site comprises amenity grassland with scattered trees and a strip of mixed plantation woodland and tall ruderal to the west of the site. In accordance with the consultation response received from Ecology, though the proposal would include the removal of several trees, none of the habitats to be directly affected are 'priority habitats' as defined by the NPPF.
- 6.11 The site offers suitable habitat for foraging and commuting bats. The Ecological Appraisal supplied with the application details two trees to the southwest of the site, which would be removed to facilitate the proposal, but which have a low potential to support roosting bats. The Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Survey Guidelines state that as long as precautionary measures are implemented, this should not be a constraint to the proposal. However, as a result of the proposed development, light spillage will increase in this part of the site. Full details of external lighting have not been provided with the application. As per the consultation response from Ecology, a wildlife friendly lighting scheme will need to be implemented. Full details of this can be secured by condition in addition to requiring the approval of a Construction Environmental Management Plan.

6.12 With regard to other wildlife, woodland scrub located to the west of the site provides suitable habitat for birds. As above and secured by condition, the Construction Environmental Management Plan would detail that vegetation removal undertaken would be carried out outside the bird nesting season. The Ecological Appraisal also details a pond within the Leighton Park School site. Due to evidence of water fowl and fish present, the pond is not suitable for great crested newts and it is unlikely that reptiles are present at the site. The Ecological Appraisal confirms that foxes may use the site and would require protection during the course of development. This detail would be secured by condition with the approval of a Construction Environmental Management Plan. Therefore, subject to conditions, the proposed development is in accordance with Policy CS36 of the Core Strategy.

(vi) Transport

- 6.13 Policy CS24 of the Core Strategy requires maximum parking standards be applied in relation to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport. Policy DM12 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document states that development will only be permitted where the proposal would not be detrimental to the safety of users of the transport network.
- 6.14 The Leighton Park School site is served by three principle vehicle entrances. The main entrance is located close to the junction of Shinfield Road and Pepper Lane, with further entrances on Pepper Lane and at West Lodge Gate. The West Lodge Gate is located adjacent to the application site. Vehicle parking extends across the wider site, with a total provision of approximately 150 spaces. A recently constructed car park close to the main entrance provides 78 spaces.
- 6.15 The proposed development includes the provision of 12 additional vehicle spaces to the rear of the sports facility. Four of these spaces would constitute accessible parking spaces. The spaces would be located adjacent to the West Lodge Gate on the internal road linking to the main entrance.
- 6.16 The Transport Statement by TPP Consulting confirms that there would be no change to the existing pedestrian and vehicular accesses to the site, and that all parking demand would be accommodated on site. The proposed sports facility would be principally in school use. While the proposal would improve the existing facilities available to the school, it would not result in any change to existing staff and pupil numbers. A community use of the facility would occur during weekday evenings and on Sundays. The facility would not be available for private bookings or parties, but instead would be hired to trusted key holders. The expectation is that the key holders would have an educational or sporting purpose. A maximum of 24 visitors would use the facility during the community sessions, with an average visitor duration of 60 minutes. The site is well served by local pedestrian and cycle routes. Regular local bus services to and from Reading town centre pass the site, with stops located approximately 90m from the West Lodge Gate entrance. Deliveries and servicing for the proposed facility would take place in partnership with the school's existing arrangements. The Transport Statement includes a calculation of likely trip generation. It has been calculated that approximately 13 vehicles would arrive and eight vehicles

- would depart during the peak hour. This is considered unlikely to have a detrimental impact on the local road network.
- 6.17 The community use of the facility would not generate a material increase in the level of vehicle movements. Indeed, the majority of vehicle movements associated with the community use would be outside of the AM/PM peak hours and would therefore be unlikely to affect the operation of the local road network.
- 6.18 As secured by condition, a Construction Method Statement would protect the amenities of local land uses and neighbouring residents during the course of the development. Conditions would also be applied to ensure that bicycle parking facilities are provided on site and that the proposed vehicle parking is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. Therefore, subject to condition, the proposal is in accordance with Policies CS22 and CS24 of the Core Strategy and Policy DM12 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document.

(vii) Archaeology

- 6.19 Policy CS33 of the Core Strategy requires that historic features and areas of historic importance will be protected and where appropriate enhanced. Regard must be had to Reading's buried archaeological evidence, some of which is known, and much of which remains to be discovered. Berkshire Archaeology have confirmed that site lies in an area of high archaeological potential. A number of recent archaeological discoveries have been made in close proximity to the site, including a ring ditch and various remains dating to the Iron Age and Roman settlement.
- 6.20 The land where the sports facility is proposed to go has not been previously developed and therefore there is the potential for the development to impact on important buried remains. Berkshire Archaeology recommend that further archaeological investigation is merited, but that this can be secured by condition. This would be in accordance with Paragraph 141 of the NPPF which states that Local Planning Authorities should 'require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and their impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publically accessible'. A programme of archaeological field evaluation would be required, approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, prior to the commencement of the development. As such, subject to condition the proposal would be in accordance with Policy CS33 of the Core Strategy.

(viii) Open space

6.21 Policy CS28 of the Core Strategy states that development proposals that will result in the loss of open space or jeopardise its use or enjoyment by the public will not be permitted. The policy relates to all open space in the Borough; publically or privately owned. However, in exceptional circumstances, development may be permitted where it is clearly demonstrated that improvements to recreational facilities on remaining open space can be provided to a level sufficient to outweigh the loss of the open space.

6.22 The open space subject of this application is previously undeveloped land within the Leighton Park School site. Due to the sloping site topography, it provides little usable function for recreational purposes. The proposed development would provide quality functional indoor recreational space, a significantly improved offer than the existing open space. So while the proposed development would result in the loss of open space the benefit afforded by the facility would outweigh the loss of the open space in this case and thereby complies with Policy CS28.

(ix) Community use

- 6.23 The proposed sports facility would be principally for the use of Leighton Park School, however, outside of school hours the facility would be made available for community use. During term time, the community use would be restricted to 18:30 21:00 Monday to Friday and 09:30 19:30 on Sunday. There would be a similar arrangement during school holidays. The facility would be hired to trusted key-holders, with the expectation that hirers would have educational or sporting purposes. The community use would be an ancillary function to the principal use as a school. The Community Use Statement indicates that an affordable pricing policy would be adopted in order to encourage use by local groups.
- 6.24 The site is well served by public transport, with bus stops located on Shinfield Road (approximately 90m away). Good walking and cycling routes also extend into the surrounding area. Cumulatively with the onsite parking provision, there is a good choice of means of travel available which is considered appropriate and acceptable. The extent of the community use would be secured by condition. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy CS31 of the Core Strategy.

(x) Flooding

6.25 Policy CS35 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will not be permitted for development would reduce the capacity of the floodplain to store floodwater or increase risks to life and property arising from flooding. The site is located in Flood Zone 1. This is land assessed as having less than 0.1% annual probability of river flooding. In accordance with the NPPF, development for schools in this Zone will have no restrictions other than ensuring that impermeable areas do not increase flood risk elsewhere. The site also has a low probability of flooding from groundwater, surface water, overland flows and reservoirs. Permeable paving is proposed for the car park and external hard landscaped areas which is considered appropriate and acceptable. Officers are satisfied that the proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy CS35 of the Core Strategy.

(xi) Sustainable construction

6.26 Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy states that new development will be acceptable where the design of buildings and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change. The building has been designed to maximise energy efficiency and to reduce overall energy demand. Roof mounted solar panels would offset carbon emissions. Windows have been positioned to reduce lighting demand and consider the balance of solar gain. A condition is recommended to secure BREEAM standards are achieved.

X(ii) Employment & Skills Plan

6.27 In accordance with the Council's Employment Skills and Training SPD the proposal would be required to provide an Employment Skills and Training Plan for the construction phase of the development (or make an equivalent financial contribution and this is normally secured by a section 106 legal agreement. In this case the applicant is considering if they can produce their own Plan, in which case its implementation can be secured by a planning condition. The outcome on this matter will be presented by an Update Report for the Committee meeting.

(xiii) Equality

6.28 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics including age and disability. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in the context of national and local planning policy, as set out in this report. The application is recommended for approval on this basis.

8. PLANS

8.1 Design & Access Statement

Drawing No: 23527A/01 - Site Location Drawing No: 23527A/02 - Existing Site Plan

Drawing No: 23527A/03 - Proposed Site Plan

Drawing No: 23527A/04 - Proposed Ground Floor Plan Drawing No: 23527A/05 - Proposed First Floor Plan

Drawing No: 23527A/06 - Proposed Roof Plan

Drawing No: 23527A/07 - Proposed North and East Elevations Drawing No: 23527A/08 - Proposed South and West Elevations

Drawing No: 23527A/09 - Proposed Sections

Community Use Statement

Arboricultural Impact Assessment by Future Tree, dated 30/08/18

Energy Strategy Report by Price & Myers, dated September 2018

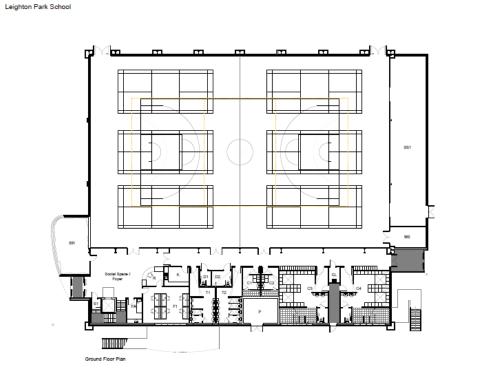
Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy Report by Price & Myers, dated September 2018

BREEAM Statement, dated 18/07/18

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by Soltys Brewster, dated 27/09/18

Transport Statement by TPP Consulting, dated March 2019

Case Officer: Tom Hughes



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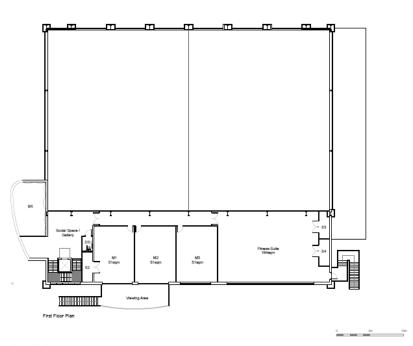
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Proposed New Sports Facility

Proposed Ground Floor Plan

Leighton Park School



Proposed New Sports Facility

Proposed First Floor Plan

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