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Architecture and Planning



SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Retrospective Application for the Retention of a 3G Artificial Grass Football Pitch and Two Covered Standing Spectator Terraces

Spalding United Football Club
Sir Halley Stewart Playing Field
Kings Road, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 1DA

Prepared for:

Spalding Football Club

September 2026

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a retrospective planning application submitted on behalf of Spalding United Football Club Ltd 2017 for the retention of:
- a 3G artificial grass football pitch; and
 - two standing spectator terraces situated behind the goals at the northern and southern ends of the pitch,
- at Sir Halley Stewart Playing Field, Kings Road, Spalding.
- 1.2** The application is made pursuant to Section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and seeks planning permission for works which have already been completed.
- 1.3** The development comprises improvements to an established football ground and does not introduce a new or unrelated land use.
- 1.4** The artificial grass pitch replaced the former natural grass playing surface and provides a high-quality, durable and more intensively usable football facility.
- 1.5** The two standing spectator terraces provide additional designated accommodation for spectators and form part of the established sporting infrastructure of the football ground.
- 1.6** The retrospective nature of the application does not alter the planning merits against which the development should be assessed. The principal consideration is whether the development, as constructed and operated, is acceptable having regard to the Development Plan and other material planning considerations.
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2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1** The application site comprises Sir Halley Stewart Playing Field, an established football and sporting venue located within the built-up area of Spalding.
- 2.2** The site is bounded principally by Kings Road, Winfrey Avenue and surrounding residential and commercial development.
- 2.3** The football ground has an established sporting use and contains spectator accommodation, dugouts, perimeter fencing, floodlighting and associated football-related infrastructure.

- 2.4** The application therefore concerns the retention of additional sporting infrastructure within an established football ground rather than the creation of a new sports use.



3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The site has an established planning history relating to its use and development as a football ground.
- 3.2 Of particular relevance is South Holland District Council planning application:
- H16-1091-24 – Erection of 100-seat spectator stand, standing terrace and two dugout shelters – Retrospective.**
- 3.3 Planning permission was granted on 8 May 2025.
- 3.4 That permission approved a further phase of football-related spectator infrastructure within the same ground and was supported by a Flood Risk Assessment, Storm Water Calculation Report, Drainage Strategy and Exceedance Flow Plan.
- 3.5 The previous permission is relevant insofar as it confirms the established sporting character of Sir Halley Stewart Playing Field and the Local Planning Authority's previous acceptance of additional football-related infrastructure at the site.
- 3.6 The current application is separate and falls to be determined on its own planning merits.
- 3.7 The previous permission included a covered, open-sided standing spectator terrace approximately 70 metres in length at the northern end of the pitch. The northern terrace was constructed to approximately 55 metres in length from the outset and positioned closer to the pitch than shown on the previously approved drawings. The current application seeks permission for its retention in this as-built position and form. The submitted drawings identify its location and dimensions and show its relationship to the previously approved arrangement.



Figure 2. Previously approved & existing (as built) block plans

4.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT

4.1 3G Artificial Grass Pitch

The development comprises an approximately 110 metre × 70 metre synthetic grass football pitch.

4.2 Covered Standing Spectator Terraces

The development includes two covered standing spectator terraces positioned behind the goals at the northern and southern ends of the artificial grass football pitch.

Each spectator structure extends approximately 55 metres in length across the width of the pitch and has an approximate depth/roof projection of 2.15 metres.

The structures have an approximate maximum height of 3.1 metres and comprise relatively lightweight steel-framed spectator accommodation.

5.0 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1** The development forms part of continuing investment in Spalding United Football Club and Sir Halley Stewart Playing Field.
- 5.2** The principal purpose of the artificial grass pitch is to provide a high-quality playing surface which is more resilient to intensive use and adverse weather conditions than the former natural grass pitch.
- 5.3** Natural grass pitches require periods of recovery and are susceptible to deterioration, waterlogging and fixture cancellation.
- 5.4** The artificial surface considerably improves the reliability and availability of the playing area and enables the site to accommodate a greater intensity of football activity throughout the year.
- 5.5** The development therefore supports:
- first-team football;
 - training;
 - youth football;
 - development football;
 - women's and girls' football;
 - grassroots football; and
 - wider community sporting use.
- 5.6** The two standing terraces complement the investment in the pitch by providing improved designated spectator accommodation.
- 5.7** Taken together, the development contributes towards the long-term viability, functionality and sporting capacity of Spalding United Football Club.

6.0 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.2 The principal Development Plan document relevant to the application is the:

South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011–2036.

6.3 Relevant policies include those relating to:

- Policy 1 — Spatial Strategy;
- Policy 2 — Development Management;
- Policy 3 — Design of New Development;
- Policy 4 — Approach to Flood Risk;
- Policy 28 — The Natural Environment;
- Policy 30 — Pollution;
- Policy 32 — Community, Health and Well-being;
- Policy 33 — Delivering a More Sustainable Transport Network; and
- Policy 36 — Vehicle and Cycle Parking.

6.4 The National Planning Policy Framework is also a material consideration and provides support for:

- sustainable development;
- healthy and safe communities;
- improved sporting and recreational facilities;
- high-quality design;
- sustainable transport;
- protection of residential amenity;
- flood-risk management; and
- effective use of existing land and community infrastructure.

7.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

- 7.1** The principle of retaining the development is strongly supported by the established sporting use of the site.
- 7.2** The site is an existing football ground and the application does not introduce an unrelated land use.
- 7.3** The former natural grass football pitch has been replaced by an artificial football pitch.
- 7.4** The land therefore remains in active sporting and recreational use.
- 7.5** There has been no loss of the principal football use.
- 7.6** Instead, the development increases the practical capacity and resilience of the existing sporting facility.
- 7.7** The standing terraces are ancillary to the football use and provide infrastructure ordinarily associated with an established football ground.
- 7.8** The proposal therefore represents an improvement to existing sporting provision rather than the loss or displacement of sporting land.
- 7.9** The proposal is located within a service centre and relates to an existing and established sporting facility and therefore, the principle of such development is considered to be appropriate, comprising an appropriate form of development for the location.
- 7.10** As such, the proposal is considered to be acceptable with the requirements of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) when viewed in principle. This is subject to the assessment against site specific criteria; including (but are not limited to) the impact of the proposal on the character or appearance of the area, impact on the residential amenities of neighbouring occupiers, and impact on highway safety, which are discussed in turn as follows.

LAYOUT, DESIGN AND CONSIDERATION OF THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA

- 7.11** The covered spectator stands have a length of 55m and a width of roughly 2.15m, with a height of 3.1m. Similar to the existing seated stands, it is made from corrugated sheets for both the roof and walls. Internally there are various beams for support. The stands are located to the north and south of the pitch behind the goals. It is reasonable in respect of the area in which it is located and fits well within the current use of the site.
- 7.12** As the materials and designs accord to existing stands on site, as well as fitting into the site itself in respect of character, the retrospective erection of standing terrace is considered to be suitable and acceptable within this area and are of a size that is proportionate.
- 7.13** Taking account of the design, scale and nature of the development, as detailed above, the proposal is considered to be acceptable. The proposal would not cause an adverse impact to the character or appearance of the area and would therefore be in accordance with Policies 2 and 3 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024).

IMPACT ON RESIDENTIAL AMENITY/ LAND USERS

- 7.14** Overall, due to the distances from any neighbouring properties, there would be no material overlooking or overshadowing from the retrospective stands with the neighbours to the east and north of the site keeping their existing levels of privacy and sun light.
- 7.15** It should be noted that through the increase in standing, in addition to the fact that the club recently gain promotion, that this could lead to an increase in noise pollution. The proposal itself does not necessarily result in an increase to the overall quantum visitors that access the site during matches. This is because the supporters would still have access and opportunity to visit the site, to stand around the pitch, without such development. In this regard, the stands do not actually increase the capacity, as it only provides additional spaces for people to be sheltered. As such, there is not considered to be a harmful increase in noise as a result of this.
- 7.16** As detailed above, the scale and design of the proposal is considered to be such that there would be no significant or unacceptable impact on the residential amenities of the occupiers of adjacent properties or land users. As such, the proposal is considered to accord with the provisions of the Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024), and Policies 2 and 3 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019)

FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

- 7.17** The site has been identified as lying within Flood Zone 3.
- 7.18** The site is located in an area of no hazard as identified in the South Holland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, as such, there is a low actual risk of flooding. Further to this, the site does not feature habitable accommodation in any aspect due to its use and the stands should not increase flood risk on site or elsewhere as the ground in which the stands are located on are hardstanding which of course is not a permeable surface. The accompanying FRA outlines that the proposed development is appropriate for its location, as it is classed as 'water compatible'. In addition, the risk from fluvial flooding is addressed through flood resilient design and a preparation of a Flood Evacuation Plan

HIGHWAY SAFETY AND PARKING

- 7.19** There are 70 existing parking spaces in the adjacent public car park with good connections to the site
- 7.20** The proposed development is to facilitate the comforts of attendees of matches by providing shelter. These facilities are required to comply with the leagues rules and are not related to the number of visitors to the site.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

- 7.21** This application seeks retrospective planning permission under Section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for the retention of the completed 3G artificial grass football pitch and two covered, open-sided standing spectator terraces. Government Planning Practice Guidance expressly confirms that statutory biodiversity net gain does not apply to retrospective planning permissions made under Section 73A. Accordingly, the application is not subject to the statutory biodiversity gain condition, and there is no requirement to demonstrate mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain or submit a statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan.
- 7.22** The development has taken place within an established and actively managed football ground. The spectator terraces occupy areas of pre-existing hardstanding, while the former natural grass pitch was regularly maintained for football use. These circumstances provide relevant context for considering the ecological effects of the development.

8. SPORT ENGLAND AND PLAYING FIELD CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1** The development affects an existing playing field and its sporting function must therefore be considered carefully.
- 8.2** The development does not result in the removal of the football pitch.
- 8.3** The former natural grass pitch has been replaced with a professionally constructed and FIFA Quality Pro certified 3G football pitch.
- 8.4** The development therefore retains the principal sporting use of the site while significantly increasing the capacity, reliability and potential frequency of sporting use.
- 8.5** The artificial surface is capable of supporting substantially greater use than a conventional natural grass pitch.
- 8.6** The development therefore provides a qualitative and practical enhancement to the site's sporting function.
- 8.7** The standing terraces are ancillary spectator facilities and do not prevent continued use of the principal playing area.
- 8.8** The development should therefore be regarded as an enhancement of the established football facility.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1** This application seeks retrospective planning permission for the retention of:
- 3G artificial grass football pitch; and
 - two covered standing spectator terraces
- at Spalding United Football Club, Sir Halley Stewart Playing Field, Kings Road, Spalding.
- 9.2** The development represents improvement and modernisation of a long-established football facility.
- 9.3** The artificial grass pitch maintains the sporting use of the land while considerably improving its reliability, quality and capacity.
- 9.4** The completed football turf system has passed independent technical testing and achieved FIFA Quality Pro certification.
- 9.5** The two standing terraces provide logical and appropriate ancillary spectator accommodation behind the goals.

9.6 The development therefore:

- supports the long-term operation of Spalding United Football Club;
- increases opportunities for football and physical activity;
- improves sporting infrastructure;
- supports grassroots and community football;
- makes more effective use of an established sporting site; and
- improves spectator facilities.

9.7 It is therefore respectfully requested that South Holland District Council grant retrospective planning permission for the retention of the 3G artificial grass football pitch and two standing spectator terraces.



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