



## Committee Report

**Planning Committee South** – 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023

**Application no** DC/22/1746/FUL

**Location**

Ipswich Town FC Training Ground  
Playford Road  
Rushmere St Andrew  
Suffolk  
IP4 5RG

**Expiry date** 5 July 2022

**Application type** Full Application

**Applicant** Ipswich Town Football Club

**Parish** Rushmere St Andrew

**Proposal** Proposed 3no new camera towers and retention of existing camera towers for Ipswich Town Football Club Training Ground, existing towers previously approved under now expired application ref C/01/1883

**Case Officer** Rachel Smith  
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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 The application site is Ipswich Town Football Club's training ground located off Playford Road in Rushmere St Andrew, to the east of Ipswich. The proposal involves the retention of existing camera towers located around the training pitches and the siting of additional towers.
- 1.2 The application was presented to the Referral Panel on 14 March 2023 as the Officer's 'minded to' recommendation of approval is contrary to the Parish Council's recommendation of refusal as follows:

*"Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council recommends REFUSAL. The reasons are that the Parish Council is concerned about overlooking of neighbouring properties, loss of privacy and disturbance to neighbouring properties particularly in Playford Road and Bent Lane. The structures are out of keeping with the character of the locality and it would have a detrimental impact on the character of the area and neighbouring properties."*

- 1.3 At this meeting, Members of the panel voted that they felt the nature of the proposal warranted debate by Planning Committee.
- 1.4 While the structures are relatively tall and visible from within the site and neighbouring properties, they are also of a lightweight appearance, not being of permanent construction and have a modest depth and width. They are not of such a height that they would be overly dominant in wider views nor are they noticeable taller than other structures on and surrounding the site such as other club buildings, ball stop netting and neighbouring dwellings. While some views towards neighbouring properties would be possible, these would not be in close proximity to private amenity areas, many of which have some vegetation providing screening. A condition is proposed to restrict their use to be in accordance with the Method Statement submitted and only for professional purposes while training is in progress. It is therefore considered that the proposed towers to be used for the development of the club would not result in such significant harm to the character or appearance of the area or residential amenity to warrant refusal.
- 1.5 It is recommended that the application be approved.

## **2. Site Description**

- 2.1 The application site is Ipswich Town Football Club's training ground. It is located within the Parish of Rushmere St. Andrew to the east of Ipswich. The site is located off Playford Road with the main entrance to the site and associated car park, buildings and the majority of the pitches being located to the north of Playford Road with additional parking and playing pitches being located to the south of Playford Road. The southern part of the site has an additional access onto Bent Lane to the south.

## **3. Proposal**

- 3.1 The proposal involves the siting of three new camera towers and the retention of six existing camera towers to include improvements/replacement of the surrounding mesh. These are sited such that each training pitch is visible for players to be filmed to aid with

their training programme. Two towers were originally approved under C01/1883 however this was a temporary permission only and expired in 2003.

- 3.2 The proposed towers would be a maximum height of 6330mm high and approximately 1.5 metres square. They are constructed in tubular scaffold poles with green nylon mesh around the sides. The viewing platform is access by a ladder. Two types of tower are proposed - one with a single aspect viewing platform, the other with dual aspect. The platform height is just under four metres high. Seven of the nine towers would be single-aspect with two (one located centrally on the southern part of the site with the other adjacent to the 3G pitch on the northern part of the site) being dual aspect.

#### **4. Third Party Representations**

- 4.1 Objections have been received from three neighbouring properties (four letters). Two additional letters making comments or querying the height of the towers have been received. The objections raise the following main concerns:
- 4.2 Specifically in relation to tower 5 and generally:
- Tower 5 has remained in situ notwithstanding expiration of its planning consent.
  - The tower is unsightly and also carries an advertising banner.
  - The tower has been used on only 2 occasions during the past year.
  - This tower offers persons (with video recording devices) direct line of sight into bedrooms and bathroom.
- 4.3
- Since the existing towers have been in situ, performance has not improved.
  - Ipswich Rugby Football Club (a local amateur outfit) record all their training and matches using drone technology.
  - Suggested that on the few occasions they wish to video games, these could be on an outer pitch perhaps with a temporary tower.
- 4.4 Specifically in relation to camera tower 3:
- Less established planting at garden boundaries results in overlooking of garden areas resulting in a loss of privacy to the garden and bedrooms.
  - Incidents where players have been in the towers, supporting their team, resulting in a loss of privacy and noise and disturbance in gardens.
  - One person quietly filming only during training is less intrusive but this cannot be controlled.
  - The wind may cause damage to the side enclosures.
  - Concern over health and safety as gate to the towers may not always be closed.
- 4.5 General concerns:
- Towers are rarely used and therefore there seems no need for additional towers.
  - There are currently two towers that look into our bedroom windows.
  - They are particularly ugly and impose on privacy.
  - There is no longer any respect for neighbours. Other recent includes unsightly fencing and ball netting, large permanent marquees.
  - Manchester City, Manchester United, Arsenal, Tottenham training grounds do not have video towers. If these clubs don't have such facilities, it proves this requirement for

Ipswich Town who state they need these towers to improve performance in the league to be misguided and irrelevant.

## 5. Consultees

### Parish/Town Council

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council	19 May 2022	15 June 2022
Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council recommends REFUSAL. The reasons are that the Parish Council is concerned about overlooking of neighbouring properties, loss of privacy and disturbance to neighbouring properties particularly in Playford Road and Bent Lane. The structures are out of keeping with the character of the locality and it would have a detrimental impact on the character of the area and neighbouring properties.		

### Publicity

None

### Site notices

General Site Notice

Reason for site notice: General Site Notice

Date posted: 25 May 2022

Expiry date: 17 June 2022

## 6. Planning policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

SCLP11.1 - Design Quality (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP11.2 - Residential Amenity (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

## 7. Planning Considerations

- 7.1 A previous application considered the provision of camera towers at the Ipswich Town training ground. This application approved two towers but for a temporary period for only just over one year. This application expired almost 20 years ago and therefore is not relevant to consideration of this application. The current application was submitted following an enforcement complaint regarding the towers, made at the end of 2021. At this point it is understood that there were a total of seven towers at the site - two on the area to the south of Playford Road and five on the area of the site on the northern side of Playford Road. Since the application was submitted, one of the five towers on the northern

side of Playford Road has been removed from the application. The original complaint makes reference to the towers having been in situ 'for years' however the precise number, siting and length of time they have been in situ is unknown. Therefore, this application concerns all of the towers, both existing and proposed.

- 7.2 The current application proposes retention of six of the existing towers and three additional towers. Two of the new towers would be on the southern part of the site with one additional tower on the northern part of the site.
- 7.3 Since the previous application for camera towers was considered, the site has developed significantly with much improved training facilities suitable for a large, professional football club. This has included floodlights, changing rooms, classrooms, an artificial pitch and ball stop netting. The camera towers are said to be necessary as part of the training programme for players.
- 7.4 Given the height of the towers, they would be visible from neighbouring properties and from around the site. Having said this, their modest size would limit this visual impact and they would not appear unduly out of character with the wider site given the prevalence of relatively tall ball-stop netting, flood light columns and buildings. The green mesh would help to reduce their visual prominence in longer views against the backdrop of vegetation in many areas.

#### Consideration of each tower

- 7.5 Existing tower 1 is situated close to the western boundary of the southern part of the site. It is single aspect and faces west. The nearest residential property is 50 metres to the south. There is mature vegetation along the shared boundary in this location with the rear wall of the neighbouring dwelling being approximately 90 metres from the tower. Given this separation distance and intervening vegetation, it is not considered that the siting or use of this tower would adversely affect the visual outlook from the neighbouring gardens or privacy that occupiers can enjoy.
- 7.6 Existing tower 2 is centrally located on the southern part of the site and would be a dual aspect tower. Looking south, the tower is 90 metres from the site boundary of neighbouring properties, again with boundary vegetation in place and looking north, the nearest residential boundary is just over 50 metres away (20 Playford Road) with the rear of the dwelling itself being just over 80 metres from the tower. This boundary is delineated by a dense hedgerow, approximately two metres in height. The existing boundary treatment and distance from the tower means that it is unlikely there would be any degree of overlooking.
- 7.7 Proposed tower 1 would be located to the eastern side of the playing pitches on the southern part of the site, close to the overflow parking area. This would be a single aspect tower facing west into the site. The nearest property to the north (30 Playford Road) is just over 40 metres away with the dwelling being just over 60 metres away. The southern site boundary would be approximately 50 metres from the tower. There is some vegetation providing screening to the southern boundary of no. 30.
- 7.8 Proposed tower 2 is also on the southern part of the site and faces west, across a playing pitch towards the rear garden of 20 Playford Road, at a distance of just over 70 metres.

Again, this separation distance is considered sufficient not to significantly impact privacy. No 30 Playford Road is closer to this tower but views towards this property would be screened by the mesh around the sides and rear.

- 7.9 On the northern part of the site, existing tower 3 is located towards the southern site boundary, close to the northern boundary of residential dwellings fronting Playford Road. This is a single aspect tower facing away from the closest dwellings, into the site and would have the mesh screening views to the rear.
- 7.10 Existing tower 5 is single aspect and faces west. The nearest dwellings are located to the south of this tower, just over 60 metres away and therefore direct views towards these properties would be restricted by the mesh on the side of the tower.
- 7.11 Existing tower 6 also faces west towards the north of the site. There are no neighbouring dwellings affected by this tower.
- 7.12 Existing tower 7 is single aspect and faces north. It is 90 metres from the site boundary which faces onto the access drive to a neighbouring residential development and Ipswich School's sports pitches.
- 7.13 Proposed tower 3 would be double aspect and face into the site onto the artificial pitch and to the east. The nearest dwelling to this tower would be 15 Rushmere Street with the shared boundary being 55 metres from the tower and the dwelling itself 80 metres away. There is mature planting on the boundary of this residential property.

#### Noise

- 7.14 Concern has been raised from third parties regarding users of the towers chatting and creating a noise/disturbance audible in their rear gardens. While it is not disputed that conversations on the towers may be audible, this should not include any amplification of sound, nor would it be at times when the pitches were not otherwise being used and, as a result, the training/matches would generate noise from participants. It is therefore not considered that the towers would result in any significant impact on residential amenity as a result of increased noise and disturbance.

#### Frequency of use

- 7.15 Some of the third-party comments received note that the towers are not used frequently. While it is unknown exactly how often they would be used, and whether this would change as a result of additional towers and improvements to the existing, if they are not used regularly, this would also limit the impact on neighbours. It is also noted that following a number of Officer site visits, the towers have not been in use while training has been taking place. While these have only been for limited times, it does indicate that it is unlikely the towers would be in use frequently.

### **8. Conclusion**

- 8.1 While the structures are relatively tall and visible from within the site and neighbouring properties, they are also of a lightweight appearance, not being of permanent construction and have a modest depth and width. They are not of such a height that they would be

overly dominant in wider views nor are they noticeable taller than other structures on and surrounding the site, such as other club buildings, ball stop netting and neighbouring dwellings. While some views towards neighbouring properties would be possible, these would not be in close proximity to private amenity areas, many of which have some vegetation providing screening. A condition is proposed to restrict their use to be in accordance with the Method Statement submitted and only for professional purposes while training is in progress. It is therefore considered that the proposed towers to be used for the development of the club would not result in such significant harm to the character or appearance of the area or residential amenity to warrant refusal.

## **9. Recommendation**

9.1 Approve, subject to controlling conditions as detailed below.

### **Conditions:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.  
Reason: This condition is imposed in accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
2. The development hereby permitted shall be completed in all respects strictly in accordance with drawing no 4015-1 01 received 28 April 2022 and 4015-1 03 B received 24 January 2023, for which permission is hereby granted or which are subsequently submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority and in compliance with any conditions imposed by the Local Planning Authority.  
Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to what has been considered and approved.
3. The materials and finishes shall be as indicated within the submitted application and thereafter retained as such, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority.  
Reason: To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development in the interests of visual amenity.
4. The use and maintenance of the camera towers hereby permitted shall only be in strict accordance with the Method Statement prepared by Hoopers (received 13 October 2022) and shall only be used when training is taking place on the pitch(es) directly adjacent to the tower(s) being used. No one shall use the towers when the adjacent pitch is not being used for training. Within six months of the towers being no longer required by the club for training purposes, they shall be removed from the site.  
Reason: To restrict the use of the towers to professional use for limited periods in the interests of residential amenity.

### **Informatives:**

1. The Local Planning Authority has assessed the proposal against all material considerations including planning policies and any comments that may have been received. The planning application has been approved in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning

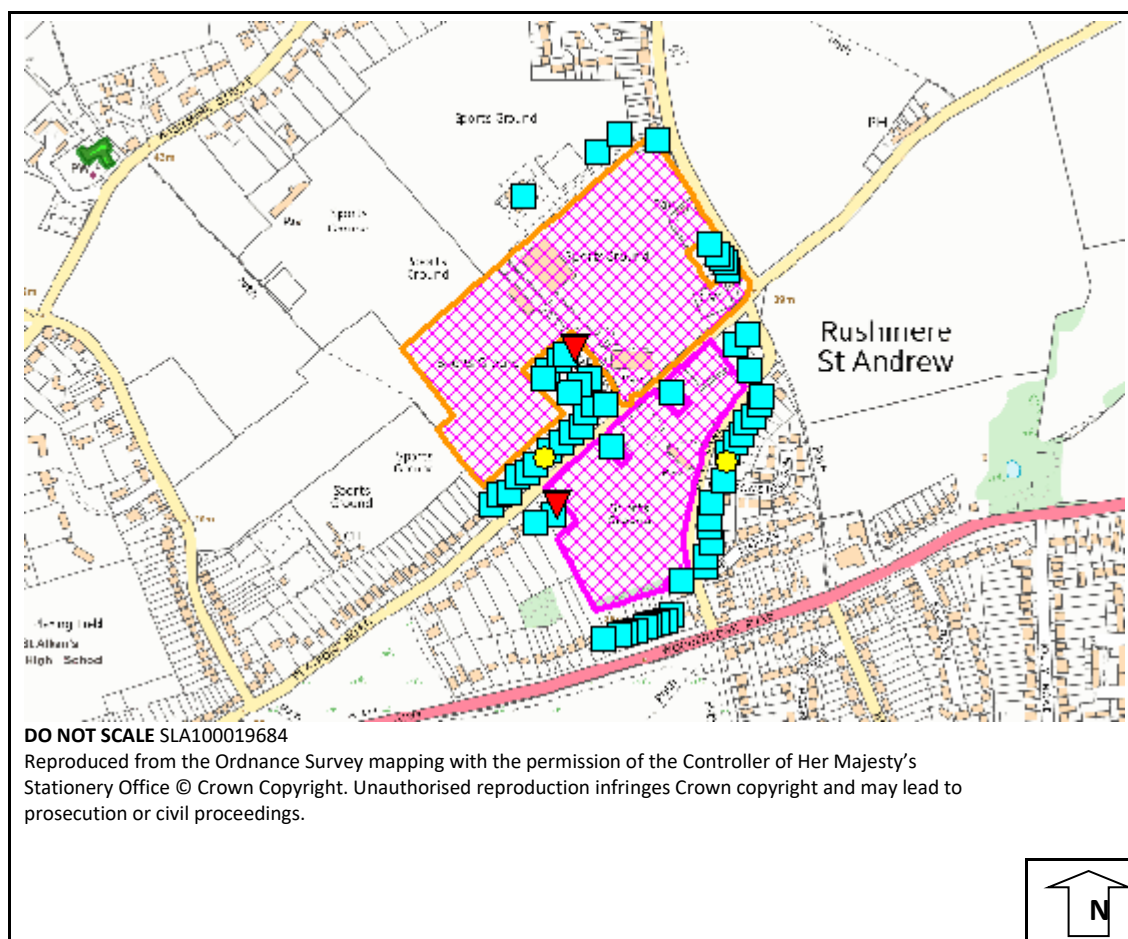
Policy Framework and local plan to promote the delivery of sustainable development and to approach decision taking in a positive way.

**Background information**

See application reference DC/22/1746/FUL on [Public Access](#)



## Map



## Key



Notified, no comments received



Objection



Representation



Support