

CROYDON PLACE REVIEW PANEL



PANEL REPORT

Crystal Palace Football Stadium

Crystal palace Football club, Whitehorse Lane, South Norwood, London SE25 6PU

Project Description

Selhurst stadium is located on the south side of Whitehorse Lane in South Norwood Ward (noting that the north side of Whitehorse Lane is within Thornton Heath Ward). There are 4 stands at the stadium (i.e. 1 stand at each end of the football pitch).

The southwestern stand (which adjoins the Club's carpark and the carpark associated with the use of the Sainsbury supermarket) is known as the 'Main Stand' and it is proposed to extend the Main Stand. The stadium (on average) accommodates approximately 26,000 spectators on match days. The extension to the Main Stand would increase capacity overall by approximately 8,000 spectators.

The Main Stand currently has seating for approximately 6,000 spectators. Beneath the stand are hospitality facilities (bars and lounges etc.) as well as player changing facilities and 'back of house' ancillary spaces (plant and equipment storage areas).

The indicative plans and elevations show that the extended stand would project to the rear of the Main Stand, and encroach into the Clubs Car Park. Beneath the extended Main Stand would be a considerable amount of additional floor space (used mainly as hospitality space).

It is of note that the extension to the Main Stand would encroach onto land currently occupied by housing. The Club consider some of the houses would need to be demolished to make way for the extended Main Stand.

Place Review Date & time

Thursday 18th December, 13:00 – 14:00

Review Location

BWH, Room 1.14, Croydon, CR0 1NX

Attendees

Applicant Team

Client and Developer: Guy Wickett (Crystal Palace Football Club)
Architect: Nick Marshall (KSS Architects)
Transport: Jennie Ward (Mott MacDonald)
Engineering: Rob Hazell (Mott MacDonald)
Planning Consultant: Luke Raistrick (MRPP)

Place Review Panel

Chair

Oliver Richards (ORMS, Founding Director)

Panelists

Prisca Thielmann (Maccreeanor Lavington, Associate Director)

Tim Murphy (Historic Environment Manager, Place Services, Essex County Council)

Barbara Kaucky (Erect Architecture, Founding Director)

Donald Hyslop (Tate, Head of Regeneration & Community Partnership)

Darryl Chen (Hawkins Brown, Partner)

Croydon Council

Pete Smith	Head of Development Management
Matt Duigan	Strategic Team Leader (Development Management)
Tom Selby	Project Officer (Placemaking)
Ruth Coulson	Senior Project Officer (Placemaking)
Angelica Rodriguez	Apprentice (Spatial Planning)

Conflicts of Interest

None declared

Panel Response

Summary

The panel thanks the applicant team for presenting the scheme. It lauds the Club's commitment to the existing site and strongly supports the ambition to enhance facilities which presents a wonderful opportunity for Crystal Palace Football Club and the surrounding area. The way that the large size of the scheme is given mass is supported as is the bold and striking design concept to incorporate the Crystal Palace Football Club branding and strengthen the identity of the building. However, there are several aspects of the design which require further work in order to ensure this large scheme sits well in its context so as to maximise the potential of the scheme and its community benefits. The elevational treatment of the front and flank elevations requires design development to increase the coherence of the design and there could be a technical issue with glare caused by the large amount of west-facing glazing. It is strongly recommended that the VIP parking is relocated and replaced with a public square to provide a destination space where fans and the local community can congregate and enjoy views of the stand. The ground floors of the building require activation with commercial uses and openings to enliven the public realm. Several houses proposed for retention on Wooderson Close are located too close to the stand and specific proposals for the replacement of affordable housing proposed for demolition must be provided. A coherent wayfinding strategy to and within the ground incorporating innovative design could significantly enhance the experience of the stadium. This is a thrilling and visionary scheme and its design deserves to offer maximum benefits to the community and to club supporters.

A Masterplanning Opportunity

- To maximise the huge potential of the scheme, the Panel recommends a masterplanning approach to be taken to include adjoining sites beyond the Crystal Palace Stadium – in particular the adjacent Sainsbury's supermarket which blocks views from the East, its car park and the nearby housing to the site.
- The masterplan should include transport planning. (See also Pedestrian Routes below).
- The masterplan should consider the future expansion of the stadium to help ensure the current and future design is future-proofed.

Scale & Massing

- The Panel is happy with the scale of the building given it is no taller than the Holmesdale Road Stand.

- The rationale for the curved form of the stand to reduce its imposing nature on neighbouring development is accepted.

Elevational Treatment

- The panel supports aspects of the elevational treatment, however, it requires further development to realise its full potential.
- The Panel considers the bold approach to the design and the aim to create an iconic building appropriate for the use of the building – given it is home to a much-loved local football club, with a strong identity where sporting excellence is enjoyed by many.
- The panel encourages refinement of the design, especially considering the scale of the building.

Front Elevation

Branding

- The panel is supportive of the concept of incorporating bold and striking motifs in to the elevational treatment that relate to the existing branding of Crystal Palace Football Club to celebrate its identity – namely the Eagle mascot of Crystal Palace Football Club and the silhouette of the outline of the historic Crystal Palace.
- The panel encourages the refinement of this design, especially considering the scale of the building.

Composition

- Although the incorporation of branding is enjoyed, the panel feels that the composition of the front elevation is overly complex and incoherent with too many elements. The projecting fins of some of the glazed curtain walling conflict with the outline of the Crystal Palace and the wings. Potentially one of the motifs or elements could be removed or reduced to simplify and strengthen the design.

Glazed Curtain Walling

- The dark tinted, glazed curtain walling is not supported as it lacks the celebrated bold character of the motif inspired aspects of the design. It has a bland appearance and character, more suited to shopping mall or a corporate office building than a sporting stadium. This area of the elevation would benefit from more texture and strength.
- There is concern that an undue level of glare could be created by low western sunlight on the elevation.
- It is suggested that the fritting options being explored by the applicant to address this issue could become an integral part of the design.

- Another means of addressing the glare and increasing the coherence of the composition could be to break up the glazing more and incorporate more of the architecture of the wings.

Flank Elevations

- The flank elevations will be visible from Whitehorse Lane and Holmesdale Road and entrances to the ground on these streets and their design requires enhancement since these are the principle arrival points.
- Potentially their design could continue the wing architecture of the front elevation.
- Further information is requested on how the proposed new stand will integrate at its edges with the existing stands, as this will be key to the success of the stand.

Ground and First Floor Elevations

- To increase the attractiveness of the stand at a pedestrian level from the Outer Concourse and encourage fans and the general public to spend longer at the stadium, it is strongly recommended that the ground and first floor frontages are designed at a human scale and activated further – with more potential commercial outlets, transparency and perhaps the use of CPFC super graphics.

Gateways to the New Stand

- The gateways into the stand are underwhelming and lack articulation. They could be celebrated more and made more welcoming to enhance the experience of entering the stadium.

Wooderson Close Housing

- It is key for the planning application to include specific proposals on how the housing proposed for demolition on Wooderson Close will be replaced to give The Council confidence there will be no net loss of housing or affordable housing. The tenants of the affordable housing that is to be demolished need to understand where they would be rehoused. Proposals could be within the site or on a donor site.
- Even after demolition of some housing, the proposed stand is located too close to the remaining 5 houses located within the northeastern residential terrace on Wooderson Close. This results in the circulation space between the housing and the proposed stand being too small, prevents views of the stadium from this entrance in to the site, causes the stand to have a very imposing impact on the houses and is likely to create noise disturbance and undue daylighting and sunlight

issues for the residents of the houses. The panel would like to see further assessment and analysis of these likely impacts.

- From the panel's experience, the proposed acoustic fencing would not be an effective means of screening the noise from the football ground for the housing on Wooderson Close.
- To address the above issues, the panel is strongly of the view that there should be a more comprehensive redevelopment of the housing on Wooderson Close. Taller blocks of flats than the current housing would have a higher density than the existing housing and therefore could deliver the existing quantity of housing on Wooderson Close over a smaller area than currently provided. To arrive at the best solution for this difficult design problem, a variety of options should be explored that range between redeveloping a larger or smaller proportion of Wooderson Close.
- The applicant and The Council should be mindful that the larger the scale of the housing redevelopment, the greater its viability.

Views, Public Realm and Car Parking

- Because the building will be an iconic destination for many people, further consideration is required of improving views of the new stand to maximise the visual enjoyment of it as a whole.
- It is unfortunate that many views of the new stand would be blocked by the existing development that surrounds the site (housing and supermarket) and there won't be views of the new stand from the main pedestrian approaches and entrances to it. In the current design most of the good views of the whole of the stand would be from the rear of the VIP car park.
- The scheme lacks a destination space for fans to congregate outside of the stand and enjoy views of the stand and the atmosphere before and after matches. The proposed Outer Concourse is a large space but it is much more of a route than a destination in itself.
- To address the above three points, the applicant is strongly recommended to replace the proposed VIP car parking in front of the stand with an attractive public square for flexible use. This could also be a commercial opportunity for the club as it would encourage fans to spend more time at the stadium which would be likely to increase refreshments and merchandise sales. There are many precedents of such spaces in stadiums in the USA and Germany.
- The panel questions whether the VIP car-parking could it be relocated in to the adjoining Sainsbury's car park during matches because the Sainsbury's store is closed at these times and possibly an arrangement could be made with Sainsbury's for Crystal Palace Football Club to use its car park during matches.
- Alternatively, if car parking is required to be accommodated within the scheme then two storeys of basement car parking could be a preferable solution to allow for the creation of a high quality public space.
- Potentially the square could be designed as a flexible space to also serve as a car park when required.

- A public square would be likely to provide great television footage of fans which would feature the stand in the background.
- This space could also accommodate events and other temporary uses and be also enjoyed by the local community even if they are not attending the matches.
- The square could also be used by the local community on non-match days (the majority of the year).
- The proposed trees are supported, but might be better located at the edges of the car park to prevent them blocking views of the building and being overscaled by it.
(See also Wooderson Close Housing above and Pedestrian Routes below).

Pedestrian Routes

- A travel plan must be supplied which includes further analysis of pedestrian flows.
- Many of the pedestrian routes from the local railway stations to the ground are in poor condition and to improve the experience of walking to the stadium from the three local railway stations it is considered important to invest in improvements to these streets. This would also provide a wider public benefit to the scheme for the local community.
- It would be wonderful if there could be a pedestrian route to the stadium that directly faces the new stand to maximise enjoyment of views of the stand, however, it is accepted that this would be very challenging given the housing that lies adjacent to the south-west edge of the site. (See also Views, Public Realm and Car Parking above.)
- It is recommended that the proposal take the opportunity to look at improving permeability within the ground which is a particular challenge for the Crystal Palace Football Stadium. By this we do not mean a comprehensive redevelopment of the whole of the ground, but instead looking for practical remedial measures that could improve pedestrian flows.
- A coherent and distinct wayfinding and signage strategy is required to improve the pedestrian experience of accessing the ground and within it.
- A large amount of signage will be required and it will greatly enhance the visual appearance of the scheme if it can form part of a coherent design solution. It is strongly recommended that the signage is integrated in to the landscape and overall architecture. It could incorporate super-graphics and/or public art sculpture and thus also play a key role in enlivening the ground floors.
(See also Ground Floors above).

Community Uses

- The Panel advises that the application should include details on how community use of the large new facilities within the stand will be encouraged and activities provided on non-match days. For

example, local school groups could visit the ground and local people could be trained. (See also Views, Public Realm and Car Parking above.)

Panel members are to provide independent, non-statutory and impartial place critique and design advice for development proposals; such advice (verbal or written) to be provided on the basis that Applicants are strongly advised by the Place Review Panel that the panel feedback is not actioned until officially fed back into the application process by Council officers and that any advice which is actioned before this is fed back into the application process will be done at the Applicant's own risk.

