

Thames Sailing Club

Portsmouth Road, Surbiton, KT6 4HH

Application for modernisation of boat storage and changing room facilities

February 2017

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2 SUMMARY

This document sets out the rationale for the proposed development at Thames Sailing Club (TSC) whilst also answering key aspects such as: Design, Access, Heritage, Visual Impact, Noise, Traffic, Flood Risk and Ecological issues related to this project.

TSC was established in 1870 and has from that time been a significant contributor to the social fabric and community of the area. It is synonymous with the pioneers of the aircraft industry within Kingston and Surbiton as well as the development of the sport of sailing on the river. However, its facilities are now considerably dated and in need of urgent modernisation so that the club can flourish for a further 150 years.

It is proposed to rebuild the aging changing rooms and boat storage facility on the southern boundary of the site. The intention is to enhance the conservation area by creating new vistas to the river from the Portsmouth Road and to separate the club house from its more mundane functional buildings. It is believed that this will again improve the outlook from the river. Tree planting will further soften the appearance of the building from the road.

TSC believes that this development scheme will not have any adverse impact on any buildings of merit within the area, the Conservation Area, nor on traffic or parking in the area. Most significantly the site will be greatly improved for access and the overall look and functionality of the site will be significantly enhanced.

The Club has commissioned a number of reports which shows there will not be any adverse effects resulting from this application in terms of noise, flood risk or on the ecology of the site. It has become known to the club that a large sycamore tree immediately behind the club house and subject to a TPO (tree preservation order), has 'butt rot' fungus and as such poses a risk to life. It is therefore proposed, as part of this application, that this tree is removed. The club is open to suggestions about planting a replacement tree of merit on the site in a suitable location.

Overall we believe that this application will improve the facilities at TSC, and continue the long established provision of a local sports and community amenity with a sustainable future for the residents of the area.

3 HERITAGE STATEMENT

TSC was founded in 1870 as one of the earliest inland sailing clubs in the UK. Throughout its existence TSC has been fundamental to the development of sailing craft and racing on the River Thames. The early members were technical developers; Tommy Sopwith and Alfred Burgoine were typical creating the forerunners of the 'Thames A Rater' boat which are synonymous with TSC and the Kingston reach. Ultimately the skills that they developed in design and creation of these sailing craft went into the creation of a fledgling aircraft industry at Kingston.

In 1992 the club secured its freehold from Thames Water and has ever since been looking to modernise its facilities to provide a lasting legacy for the community.

Between Kingston Bridge and the end of the borough at Seething Wells there are a number of significant cultural buildings that line the Portsmouth Road looking out on to the Thames: Church of St Raphael (grade II*), Thames Sailing Club, Electricity Substation and Seething Wells pumping station. The electricity substation is surrounded on three sides by TSC, however, being located at the northern end of the site it remains distinct and unaffected by this application. The remaining buildings of note are separated from the Club by some considerable distance and so are unaffected by the proposals. TSC sits on the river side of the Portsmouth Road just south of Ravens Ait, flanked by Harts Boatyard public house and the 'old snow-shute' public car park opposite Grove Road. The other side of Portsmouth Road has a number of blocks of apartments constructed between the 1950s and 1980s which dominate the sky line at this point.



Figure 1 Pictures of Thames Sailing Club from the River Thames

The Club is still the base for the Thames 'A' Rater fleet, half of which are now over 100 years old. It provides essential winter storage for these boats as well as showcasing them by conducting regular racing both on Tuesday evenings as well as Sundays. Alongside the Raters, the Club organises racing in Merlin Rockets (a 2-man high performance dinghy) and Topper Juniors (single handed boats). In addition to providing an attractive racing programme, the club is an RYA (Royal Yachting Association) registered training centre and conducts regular training courses for sailing and powerboating throughout the year. Furthermore, it is used by students from Kingston University Sailing Club, with whom there is a formal affiliation agreement. Stand Up Paddlers are a growing part of the membership who annually host one of the largest Stand Up Paddling events in the UK each year. TSC also works with local Scouts groups for kayaking and canoeing.

The existing boat storage is within a timber frame structure of approximately 70 years. This has moved over time due to normal wear and tear and the structure is now in need of major repairs. The space provided within the boat shed is poor with very limited space to undertake repairs to the boats over the winter as the entire shed is full to overflowing. The current changing room facilities are not only worn out and tired but of poor design with no insulation and numerous hazards and in desperate need of replacement.

TSC sits within the Conservation Area (Riverside South). The Club recognises its heritage and position towards the southernmost end of this area. The Club's current layout means that there are a number of unsightly trailers left continuously in view on the raised car park. The Club wishes to improve the look of the grounds to the Portsmouth Road through the proposals as well as increasing the views of the river to pedestrians and local residents.

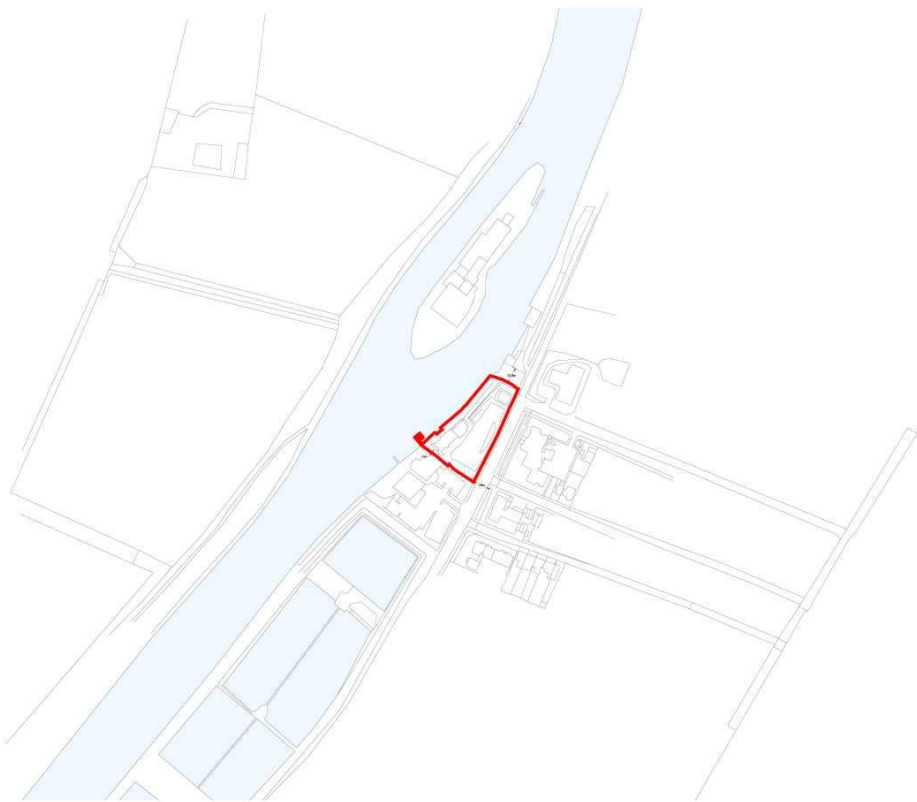


Figure 2 Thames Sailing Club Site Plan

The proposed development will have no impact whatsoever on other buildings of significance in the borough. It is intended to open up entirely new vistas towards the river and across to Home Park and finally set the club house apart from the more mundane buildings required for the sailing club to operate. By moving the boat storage and changing facilities through 90 degrees they appear to have less impact on the river scene whilst providing the necessary storage for the future. As the new building will be set next to Harts Boatyard, and diminutive to it, we believe that it will be in keeping and not overpowering to either the river or Portsmouth Road vistas. Fundamentally the proposed development is there to provide the necessary facilities for the sailing club, including its historic club house, to thrive in the future as a local water and, in particular, sailing sports facility. At its heart this

proposal is to secure a lasting and secure future for one of the most historically important structures and amenities on the river in the borough.

4 BACKGROUND

This Statement is structured in accordance with the advice in Circular 1/2006 (Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System) and the Guidance contained in the CABE document 'Design and Access Statements'. It also takes account of the local requirements of the Council, as well as setting out the appropriate planning background to the proposals.

The existing boat storage is within a timber frame structure of approximately 70 years, the structure has moved over time due to its poor construction and is now in need of major repairs. The space provided within the boat shed is poor with very limited space to undertake repairs to the boats over the winter as the entire shed is full to overflowing.

The changing rooms are constructed on at least three levels due to the topography of the site and run off for sewage, this means that there are multiple trip and slip hazards and thus they are dangerous and not suitable for young members or those with physical impairments, or disabilities. There is no insulation and so as such do not provide a suitable environment for sailors to warm up should they have capsized or generally get wet through the activity. The changing facilities are worn out and tired, and are just not fit for purpose in the 21st century.

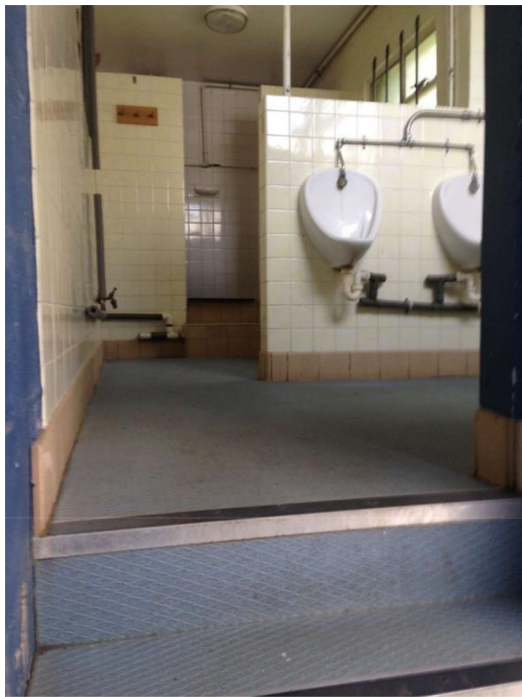


Figure 3 Picture of Existing Changing Rooms

The catering facilities in the Club house next to the main club room are very limited and more space is required to provide modern catering facilities in line with the latest health and hygiene regulation and good practice.

The various elements of the site are shown on the following image in Figure 4 below:



Figure 4 Existing Site Plan

The site and its surroundings are discussed in more detail above, in Section 3: Heritage Statement.

This application has the support of the RYA (Royal Yachting Association), who have kindly supported the Club's proposal and are able to assist in securing funding for this project.

The application is supported by the following documents:

- a. Sound Impact Assessment
- b. Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)
- c. Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- d. Ecological Appraisal

4.1 PLANNING POLICY

The national policy context is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in March 2012. The NPPF is based on the presumption in favour of sustainable development, a positive and proactive starting point for planning decisions. It sets out the importance of good design as a key aspect of sustainable development. Section 8 encourages Councils to plan positively to promote healthy communities and for the provision of (inter alia) sports facilities. It recognises the importance of access to high quality opportunities for open space and recreation. It also contains advice on how to address flood risk. This aspect of the NPPF is considered in the Flood Risk Assessment which accompanies the application.

The approach to encouraging sports facilities is reflected in the London Plan which provides the regional tier of planning policy. Policy 3.19 states that proposals which increase or enhance the provision of sports facilities will be supported.

The Council's planning policy is established in the Core Strategy which was adopted in 2012. The most relevant policies in this are as follows:

1. DM 4 Flood Risk (addressed in the FRA)
2. CS 4 seeks to improve infrastructure and facilities for boat users and improve riverside and river based recreation. These principles are at the heart of the proposed scheme.
3. DM6 and DM7 requires that proposals for these facilities demonstrate no adverse impact on wildlife, flooding, navigation or biodiversity (addressed in the biodiversity report).
4. CS 8 Character and Design address in section 5.
5. DM 10 requires new development to adhere to the principles of good design listed in the policy. This is assessed in Section 5.
6. DM 11 requires applications of this kind to be supported by a Design and Access Statement.

This is part of the London Plan Thames Policy Area and Blue Ribbon Network. The Plan notes that the number of boats on the river has decreased dramatically in recent years and seeks to reverse this trend. Again, the proposed scheme will play its part in this.

4.2 PLANNING HISTORY

The planning history on the site relates to relatively minor works which are not relevant to the design of the current scheme. The most recent planning permission was for the widening of an existing slipway and the installation of timber landing stages. This was approved in 2004 under reference 04/12485/FUL.

Pruning works to the TPO tree on the site were permitted in 2010 (10/12024/TPO).

EN/14343 – The removal of trees within the Conservation Area without prior application or approval. New trees have been planted on the southern boundary, with approval of the council's tree officer, closing this case.

4.3 EVALUATION CRITERIA

In an evaluation of the site, the following constraints and opportunities have been identified:

Opportunities	Constraints
<p>To improve the appearance of this group of buildings facing the river.</p> <p>To improve the appearance of the site from the Portsmouth Road</p> <p>To open new vistas to the river from the Portsmouth road.</p> <p>To have sports activity clearly visible from the roadside.</p> <p>Improve changing facilities so that they are fit for purpose and not dangerous.</p> <p>Improve boat storage such that they are secure and maintenance can be undertaken throughout the year.</p> <p>Improve access to all areas of the site.</p>	<p>The topography of the site which means the buildings are at road level but significantly lower than the raised carpark.</p> <p>The TPO trees to the rear of the club house buildings.</p> <p>To protect amenities of neighbouring properties.</p> <p>The need to address the flood risk associated with the site.</p>

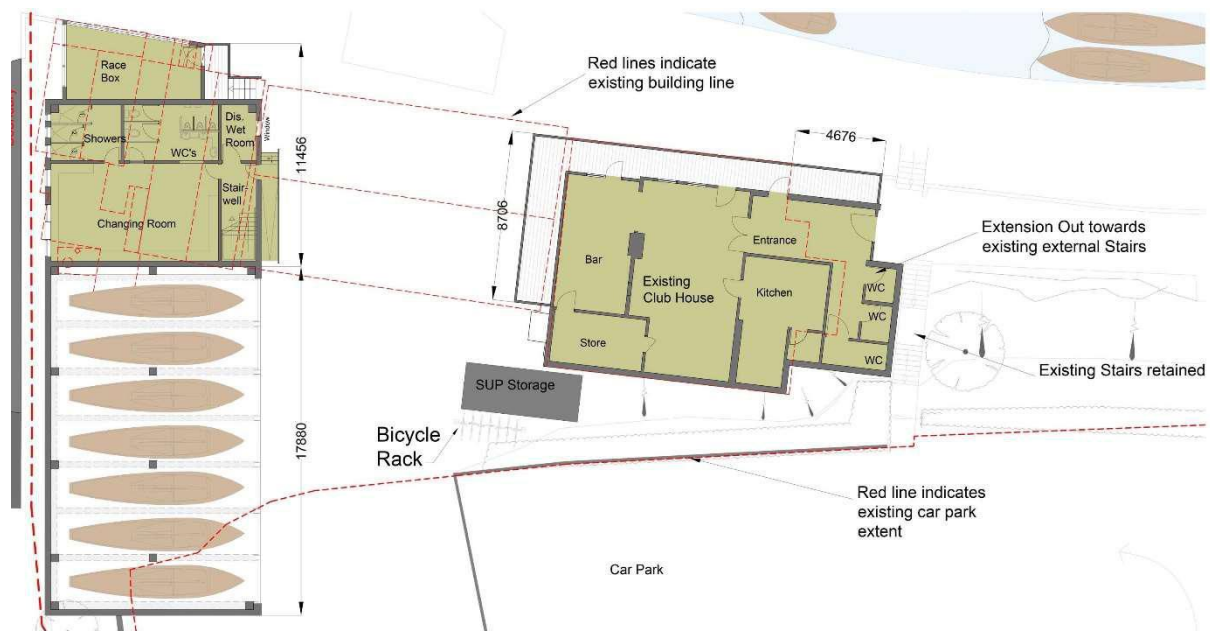
5 DESIGN

The proposal is for modernisation of existing facilities on site at broadly within the same footprint. In considering the design of the proposed modernisation, the club's committee assessed a number of options based on the criteria above. The key options were to design the structures based on the current layout alongside the river or at 90 degrees to the river.

The proposal is to opt for the boat storage and changing rooms to be at 90 degrees to the river as this allows to significant improvements in access, safety and allows trailer storage to be behind the brick wall frontage on the Portsmouth road, thus significantly improving the outlook of the club. By making the boat shed accessible with ramps of low gradient, this facility becomes much more useful, and storage is accessible even for a person on their own.

It is therefore proposed to rotate the boatshed 90 degrees so that it runs along the southern boundary of the site. This has two major benefits; first that through the excavation of part of the carpark there will be direct views from the Portsmouth road to the River Thames and the water-sports activity at the club whether this sailing or stand up paddling. The second is that there will be a much-improved access, and safety improvements, to the launching facilities at the club thus greatly improving the accessibility of boats to the river. Finally, pedestrian and disabled access to the whole site will be transformed with the ability to access the club house, changing facilities and waterside by ramps rather than steps of today.

It is proposed that the floor level of the boat storage will be higher than the existing levels above the mean flood level thus improving the resilience of the building to flood. However, this is not done at the expense of the existing runoff of the river thus preventing any impact to the waterway. The proposed layout is shown in the following extracts.



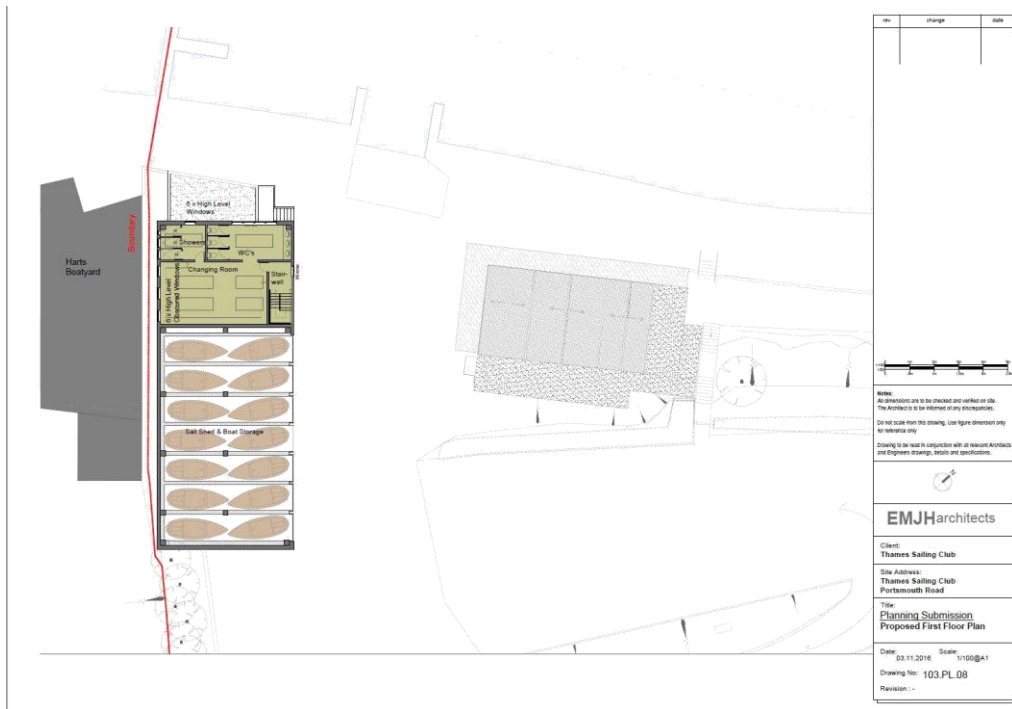


Figure 5. Proposed Ground and First Floors

The bulk of this accommodation is achieved by cutting back into the embankment and making the new two story building. The embankment man-made, is of no significance and is a result of soil disposal from excavations by Thames Water in the creation of the original filter beds at Seething Wells. As the proposed ground floor is some 1.5m below the road height, the overall structure sits low in profile from the road, is diminutive to the much taller Harts Boatyard and so will have little impact on the River frontage.

The separation of the new building from the Club House means that the historical nature of the club house is retained and not compromised by the new building. The extension of the catering facilities is set back from the club house frontage and its flat roof means that the impact is minimal compared with the bank behind. Whilst more of TSC’s facilities are visible from the Portsmouth Road, this is countered by improved vistas to the river and softened through sensitive planting of trees.

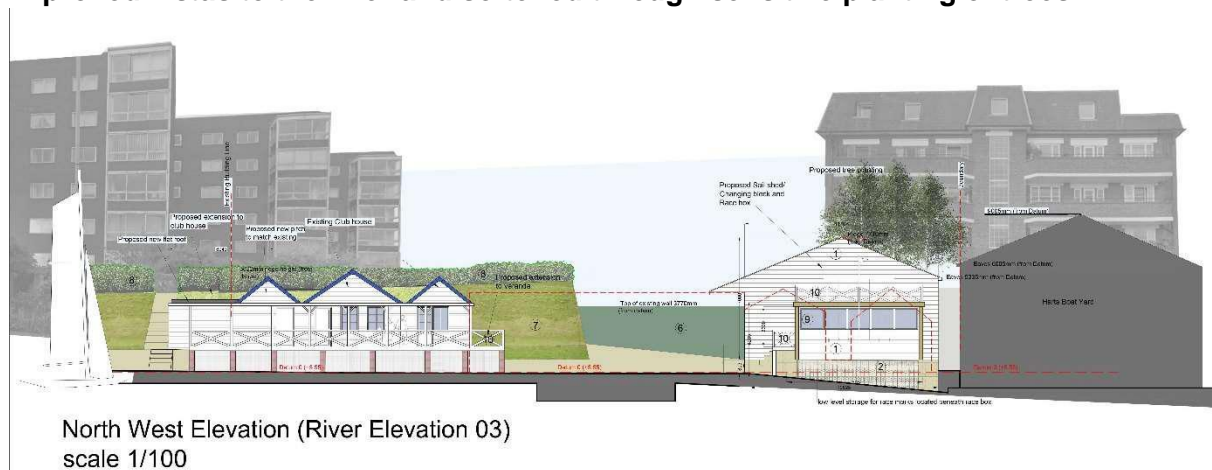


Figure 6. Proposed Elevation From the River

The design is based on meeting the Club's needs for water-sports activities now and in the future. It does not seek to alter the nature of the club's historic past, but enhance this with modern changing and boat storage facilities.

5.1 AMENITY

The position of the building on the site and the location of the site itself mean that it will have no adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring uses. Indeed, it is proposed that this will be enhanced as the water activity will be more readily visible from the road and the local community.

Overall, TSC is an amenity to its members who are, in the main, local residents. The strong desire of this application is to make the club more attractive to the residents of the local area both at an aesthetic level as well as providing a sporting activity on their doorsteps.

5.2 CHARACTER, APPEARANCE AND MATERIALS

The proposed changes to the building will result in significant improvements to the appearance of the buildings currently on the site. The gable end of the Boatshed from the river is broken up by the single-story race box which provides much interest and on the Portsmouth Road side this is softened by Planting along the southern boundary. This can be seen below.

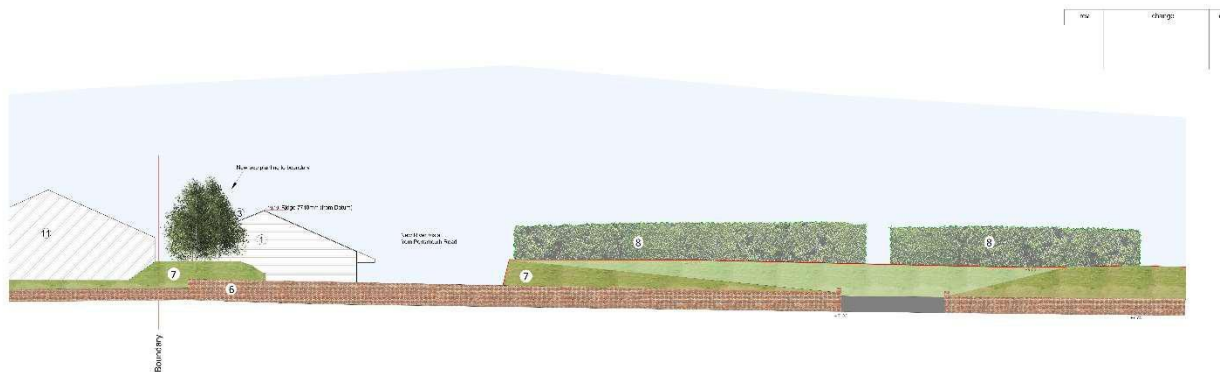


Figure 7 Elevation From the Portsmouth Road

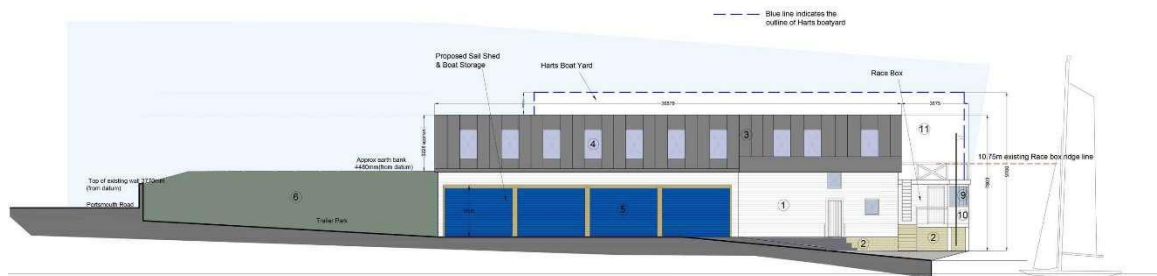
The new building will use white shiplap cladding, which we believe is an attractive element of the building and well suited to this waterside location. This will be extended to the soffit treatment. This is similar to the Restaurant building and the club house, thus in keeping with the local surroundings.

The roof will use a typical steel square profile roofing material and will be coloured green to minimise impact on the surroundings. There will be fixed roof lights incorporated into the pitch to provide extra illumination during the day to the changing and boat storage areas.

The veranda will be extended around the club house to enhance access to the club house. There will be disabled changing facilities and wheelchair access to the changing facilities, boat storage and launching areas.

Any plant associated with the changing facilities will be hidden to the rear of the building without impinging on views from the waterside.

Overall, the intention is to create a crisp, clean, contemporary building that sits comfortably in this waterside location



North East Elevation (Elevation 01)
scale 1/100

Figure 8 Elevation of New Building From the Club House

6 IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

This section of the report considers the site's immediate and wider context in terms of physical, social and economic factors as well as the relevant planning policy context.

6.1 VISUAL

The site lies on the Surrey bank of the Thames, west of Portsmouth Road and just to the south of Ravens Ait. The site occupies a narrow strip of land with a raised embankment car park closest to the Portsmouth Road which was formed during the creation of the filter beds at Seething Wells. This car park forms a blockage between the road and river, and as such many passers-by do not even know that there is a sailing club so close to their homes. From the car park there is a set of steps down to the Club House level, this means that gaining access is very difficult for those who are less able. And then, a further set of steps down to the river edge adds an additional challenge.



Figure 9 View of Thames Sailing Club

The club buildings themselves are a collection of, generally, White or Blue timber clad buildings with asbestos roof sheeting. These buildings house the existing clubhouse and the associated facilities such as boat storage, changing facilities etc.

The club's immediate neighbour is the adjacent pub/restaurant (Harts Boatyard) which is visible in Figure 10 as the much taller building with the mono pitch roof design.



Figure 10 View of Thames Sailing Club and Harts Boatyard on the Right

6.2 SOCIAL

The social impacts of the scheme have to be considered against two main factors; the impact on neighbouring occupiers, and the impact of the Club itself as a sports club within the community.

As noted, the building's immediate neighbour is the adjacent public house. There are no buildings immediately to the north. To the east of Portsmouth Road are a number of apartment blocks. These lie on the other side of the road to the Club and are at a higher level, some distance from the buildings. There is little impact on these buildings as the club's main activities are during the weekend (daylight hours) and during the evenings in the summer. There is no activity for significant periods of the week and this is not proposed to change as a result of this application.

The main aim of these proposals is to improve the Club's watersports facilities which are out of date and no longer fit for purpose. This impacts on the services the club can offer and its attractiveness. The proposed scheme will address these problems and enable the Club to continue into the future with more suitable premises.

The Club plays a significant role in encouraging use of the river and promoting sailing in the area with the benefits associated with participation in sport and active lifestyles. It has a partnership with a local gym and its members are involved in many other local groups and activities.

At present the Club has 260 Members including 32 Juniors.

6.3 ECONOMIC AND SUSTAINABILITY

Over the past two decades TSC has seen its membership decline from approximately 400 to the current levels of 260. Much of this decline has been due to older members moving away from the area and the club not having the appropriate facilities to attract new members with reasonable expectations on club facilities, such as easy river access, disabled access, modern changing facilities and secure boat storage. The changes and improvements will help the Club to maintain and grow its membership back to former levels, which assists with the economic sustainability of the Club.

6.4 SOUND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Attached to this application is a Sound Impact Assessment prepared by Acoustic Associates South West Ltd which concludes that there will be no impact on the amenity of our neighbours. This is driven by the fact that our neighbours have direct line of sight of the club house (being the main source of noise) currently and this will not be affected by the removal of the earth at the northern end of the site.

The boat storage and changing rooms are not considered areas of noise generation and, so the fact that these are more visible again, does not increase the potential impact on these neighbours.

6.5 ECOLOGICAL

Attached to this application is a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by Dr Peter Webb MCIEEM. In the report Peter sets out that he conducted a thorough survey of the site and found no existence of Bats, being the main protected species of note, and given that there is no change to the use of the waterfront, that there is no potential impact of this scheme ecologically.

7 ACCESS AND TRANSPORT STATEMENTS

Access refers to both the locational characteristics of the site and the consideration of the needs of people with a disability. It should be noted that Thames Sailing Club has been in existence since 1870 and throughout that period has had some access to Portsmouth Road for the transport of people and boats, in and out of the site.

It is worth noting that the site is well served by its existing car park, with some 30 spaces, which means that most club activities have little impact on the surrounding neighbours. Whilst it is proposed to remove some of the carpark on the upper level, in fact more usable space will be created by removing the changes in levels such that there will be no loss of car park space, boat or trailer storage overall.



Figure 11 Current Vehicle Access Routes and Car Parking Spaces

7.1 TRANSPORT STATEMENT

Currently there are 30 car parking spaces on an artificial raised embankment. These spaces are sufficient for all club activities. Many members are local residents and often walk to the club. The main use of the club is in the evening or at the weekend and has minimal impact of current traffic flows nor a need for parking off site.

The proposed development has 30 car parking spaces with spaces available for disabled drivers at the lower level, greatly enhancing the usability of the site. It is not anticipated that the development should increase demand for further parking as the principle target audience for new members are local residents who will be able to walk to the site.

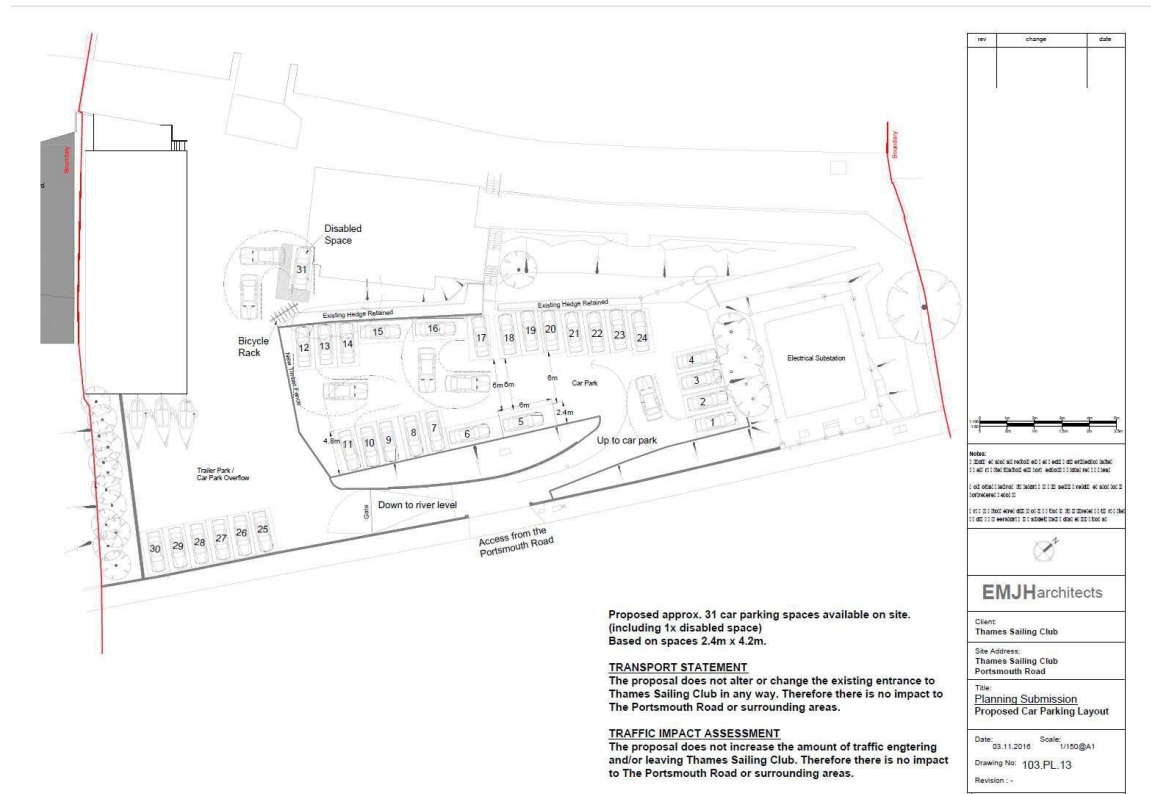


Figure 12 Proposed Vehicle Access Routes and Car Parking Spaces

7.2 DISABLED ACCESS

The issue of accessibility for people with a disability has been a key consideration in the design process. The creation of disabled car parking space, a separate disabled changing room on the ground floor of the new building, the ability to drive a car to the water’s edge to assist the recovery of boats, access to the Club house all mean that the proposed layout makes the use of the site considerably better for disabled and able bodied members alike. All this is achieved without the need to install and maintain expensive lifts.

8 LANDSCAPING ASSESSMENT

The major landscaping work is to remove approximately one quarter of earth embankment that separates the club house from the road. There will be a rising bank to the southern boundary of the site which will flow into the banking on the Harts Boatyard side. There will also be banking to remaining car park, this will follow the same structure as exists currently on the roadside, that being brick wall and grass banking.

There has been the removal of trees on the southern boundary without prior approval EN/14343. Twelve Hornbeam trees have been planted on the southern boundary, in agreement with the local Tree Officer, thus closing the case. Once mature, these trees will provide a significant screen between Harts Boatyard and TSC, and soften the proposed new building.

The tree behind the club house, which is subject to a Tree Preservation Order (RBK 21.94 – Sycamore), has ‘butt rot’ fungus and it has been assessed as of potential danger to life. It sits precariously on the edge of the embankment behind the club house and therefore would likely collapse on the club house and the members within. It is therefore proposed to remove this tree. It is anticipated that a tree of significant merit would be planted on the site and we are open to suggestions in terms of location and species of this tree.

The application is accompanied by an arboricultural impact assessment. This describes the trees that will be affected by the works, and outlines a programme of replacement trees which have been chosen to complement the extended building and provide strong visual interest. We are of course open to suggestions that would further enhance the character of the site.

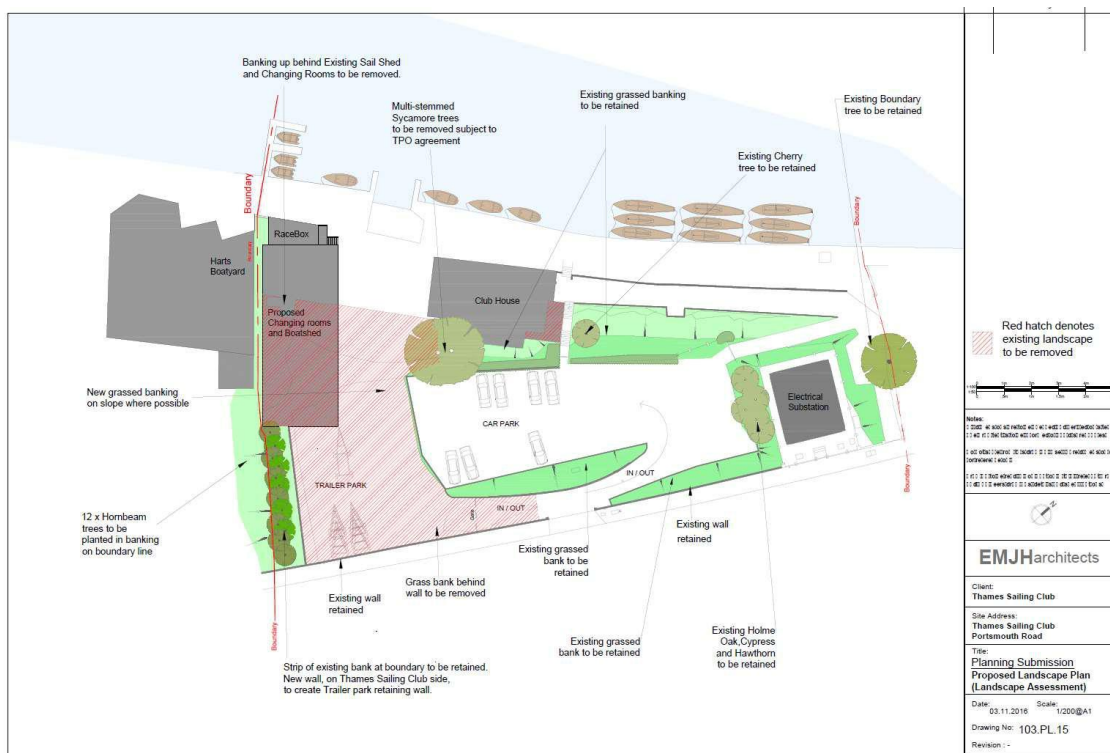


Figure 13 Plan of Site Showing New Planting

9 CONCLUSIONS

This application seeks Full Planning Permission for the modernisation and alteration of the existing clubhouse and associated buildings of Thames Sailing Club, Surbiton. There is minimal impact to the overall footprint of the buildings on site with significant benefits to all communities through:

New views to the river and to the water sports activity on the site

**Much improved changing facilities that remove significant dangers to members
Modern, secure boat storage facilities with adequate capacity
Improved accessibility to able and disabled members through a significantly improved layout**

Minimal impact to the Conservation Area and our neighbours.

Sustaining a community sailing, and other water sports, asset for the present and future generation

These changes have been carefully designed to ensure the building will meet the future needs of the Club whilst being assimilated into this important waterside location.

The provision of sporting facilities such as this is supported by national and local planning policy. This is reflected in the support received for the proposals from key bodies during the funding stage of the scheme.

The application is supported by an Flood Risk Assessment, Arboriculture Impact Assessment, Sound Impact Assessment as well as an Ecological Assessment which shows these issues are addressed satisfactorily.

We would therefore respectfully ask that the Council grants planning permission for these proposals.

**Flag Officers of Thames Sailing Club.
February 2017**

10 APPENDIX A: SOUND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

11 APPENDIX B: FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

12 APPENDIX C: ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

13 APPENDIX D: ARBORICULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

14 APPENDIX E: APPLICATION FOR REMOVAL OF A TREE WITH A TREE PRESERVATION ORDER
