

Planning, Heritage, Design and Access Statement

Land at Briton Ferry Steel Cricket Club, Briton Ferry

Proposed construction of 2no. outdoor padel courts

Padel4Pawb Ltd

Document Control Sheet

Project Name: Briton Ferry
Project Ref: 037
Report Title: Planning, Heritage, Design and Access Statement
Date: February 2026

Originator	Checked	Version	Date Issued	Status
NP	ST	1	February 2026	Final

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1 Introduction

Overview

- 1.1 This Planning, Heritage, Design and Access Statement ('PHDAS') had been prepared by Padel Plan ('the Agent') and is submitted in support of a planning application made to Neath Port Talbot Council ('the Council') on behalf of Padel4Pawb Ltd ('the applicant') seeking full planning permission for the "*Proposed construction of 2no. outdoor padel courts*" ('the proposal') on Land at Briton Ferry Steel Cricket Club, Briton Ferry ('the site').
- 1.2 The PHDAS provides detailed commentary on the application site, its surrounding and the relevant planning history before providing a detailed description of the proposed development. A summary of relevant national and local planning policies and guidance is then provided before presenting an assessment of the proposal in the context of adopted planning policy and other material considerations.
- 1.3 Owing to the site being located within a Grade II listed Park and Garden, the statement will also assess the impact of the proposal on the historic environment and this heritage asset in particular.

Application Submission

- 1.4 In accordance with the Council's validation requirements the application comprises the following submission documents which should be read in conjunction with this PDAS. A comprehensive package of plans and drawings prepared by GT Brace CAD Services is also included with the application as summarised below:

Table 1.1 – Application Documents and Drawings

<i>Document/Drawing Title</i>	<i>Prepared by/Drawing No.</i>
Application Form and Ownership Certificate	Padel Plan
Planning, Design and Access Statement	Padel Plan
Site Location Plan	GT Brace CAD Services
Existing Site Plan	GT Brace CAD Services
Proposed Site Plan	GT Brace CAD Services

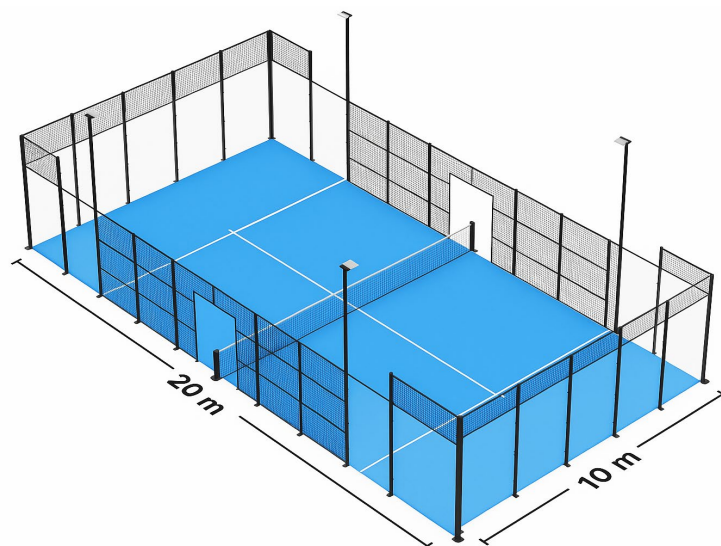
What is Padel?

- 1.5 Padel is a racket sport that blends elements of tennis and squash, typically played in doubles on an enclosed court measuring 10 metres wide by 20 metres long, which is slightly smaller than doubles tennis court. The court is surrounded by a combination of glass and mesh walls, which keep the ball in play and allow for rebound shots, which is one of the defining features that make the game

dynamic and strategic. The court is divided by a low net and surfaced with artificial turf or porous concrete, providing consistent bounce and safe footing.

- 1.6 Players use solid, stringless bats, known as padel rackets, made from composite materials such as carbon fibre or fibreglass. These rackets are perforated with holes to reduce air resistance and improve control. The ball used is similar to a tennis ball but slightly lower in pressure, producing slower, more manageable rallies. The enclosed nature of the court and doubles format make padel fast-paced, interactive, and highly sociable, appealing to players of all ages and abilities.
- 1.7 Padel is one of the fastest-growing sports in the UK, having originating in Mexico and widely played in Spain and other parts of Europe. It's rapid rise in popularity in the UK is driven by its social, inclusive nature and its accessibility to people of all ages and abilities.
- 1.8 The benefits of padel are wide-ranging. The sport promotes both physical and mental wellbeing, fosters a strong sense of community, and provides an accessible route into regular exercise for those who may be less engaged with traditional sports. Its smaller court size and slower-paced rallies make it particularly suitable for older players, beginners, or those returning to physical activity. The inherently social format encourages teamwork, connection, and repeat participation which contributes positively to physical and mental health and community cohesion.

Figure 1.1 – Typical padel court



2 Site Context

Site Description

- 2.1 The site currently comprises hardstanding adjacent to outdoor cricket nets on the eastern edge of the wider cricket club. The immediate surrounding area consists of a range of sport and leisure uses including a children's play area and small concrete football pitch to the east, and the cricket club and bowls club to the west.
- 2.2 Further afield the area is primarily residential with dwellings approximately 76m to the north. Beyond the cricket club, to the south is an area of woodland called Parc Jersey Park. A cemetery is located to the west beyond the aforementioned play area.
- 2.3 Aerial site imagery is provided in Figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1 – Aerial Site Location Plan (site outlined in red)

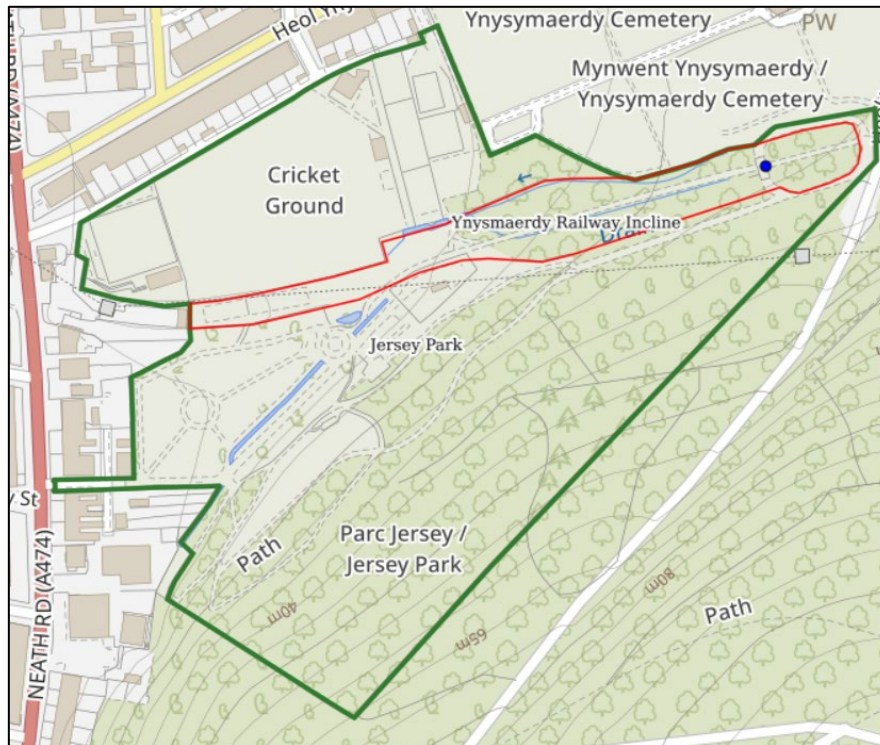


Designations

- 2.4 The site is within an area designated as a Grade II listed Historic Park and Garden called Jersey Park (bound in green in Figure 2.2). There is also a Scheduled Monument to the south of the site which

comprises the former Ynysmaerdy Railway Incline but the site is entirely outside of this heritage asset. The extent of these heritage assets is shown in Figure 2.2 below as taken from the Cadw online mapping tool.

Figure 2.2 – Extent of nearby heritage assets (bound in red)



- 2.5 The site is outside of the development limits for Briton Ferry as is the rest of the wider cricket club site. However, it is directly adjacent to the boundary as shown on the Local Development Plan Policies Map.
- 2.6 There are no other designations or allocations on the site or in the locality.
- 2.7 The site is entirely within Flood Zone 1 according to the Natural Resources Wales Flood Risk Map for Planning and is not identified as being at risk of surface water flooding.

Planning History

- 2.8 There is no relevant planning history on the site or the surrounding area according to the Council's online planning database.

3 Proposed Development

Application Proposal

- 3.1 The proposal is for two outdoor uncovered padel courts. As shown in Figure 1.1 above, the courts comprise glass panels and mesh fencing and measure 20m x 10m. They have a functional design as they are used as part of the game, with the ball hit off the sides of the courts in-game. The two courts will be sited side by side in the centre of the site.
- 3.2 Each padel court comprises a dedicated playing area enclosed by a combination of wire mesh fencing and tempered glass panels. The enclosure heights range from approximately 3m along the sides to 4m behind each end of the courts. Each individual court measures 20.2m x 10.2m.



- 3.3 The indicative specification of the court construction materials includes:
- Glazing: 2 m × 3 m, 12 mm thick toughened glass panels.
 - Wire mesh fencing: 50 × 50 × 4 mm electro-welded galvanised steel mesh, coloured black
 - Steel framework: 40 × 40 mm galvanised steel profile base and lateral supports with 50 × 100 mm galvanised steel profile columns
- 3.4 It should be noted that the final specification may vary slightly depending on the court manufacturer ultimately selected.
- 3.5 As they will operate as part of the wider cricket club and other sport uses on the wider site, no dedicated vehicular access is provided. Instead visitors will utilise the existing access to the cricket club off Ynysymaerdy Road to the north of the site.

3.6 A full suite of plans has been provided as part of the application but for context the proposed Site Plan is provided in Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1 – Proposed Site Plan



4 Planning Policy

Decision Taking

- 4.1 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 ('the 1990 Act') states that where an application is made to a local planning authority for planning permission, the authority shall have regard to the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application. The development plan in the instance comprises the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan ('NPTLDP') which was adopted in January 2016.
- 4.2 The Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 document is also part of the statutory development plan but is designed to offer a national development framework which is more relevant at a strategic level. It is therefore not entirely relevant at a site level for development management purposes and therefore will not be referred to further in this PDAS.
- 4.3 The Strategic Development Plan for North Wales will eventually form the middle tier of the development plan between the FLDP and the Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 but at the time of writing this is at a very early stage of preparation.
- 4.4 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 ('the 2004 Act') requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Planning Policy Wales ('PPW') document sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government and is a material consideration, as are any adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes ('SPGN') and Local Planning Guidance Notes ('LPGN').

The Development Plan

- 4.5 The development plan is the starting point for the consideration of planning applications. The relevant NPTLDP policies are outlined in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 – Relevant NPTLDP Policies

<i>Policy Ref.</i>	<i>Policy Title</i>
SP1	Health
SP3	Sustainable Communities
SC1	Settlement Limits
SP15	Biodiversity and Geodiversity

SP16	<i>Environmental Protection</i>
TR2	<i>Design and Access of New Development</i>
SP21	<i>Built Environment and Historic Heritage</i>
BE1	<i>Design</i>

Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes

- 4.6 SPGNs are a material planning consideration. At the time of writing, the Council has 16 adopted SPGNs but none are considered relevant to the proposal on this occasion.

Local Planning Guidance Notes

- 4.7 The Council also has 5 informal LPGNs which have been approved for development management purposes and are material planning considerations but carry less weight than SPGNs. However, none of these are considered relevant to the proposal on this occasion.

Planning Policy Wales – February 2024

- 4.8 The PPW sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government. It is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice Notes (TANs), Welsh Government Circulars, and policy clarification letters, which together with PPW provide the national planning policy framework for Wales.
- 4.9 Paragraph 1.2 states that *“The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales”*.
- 4.10 The PPW outlines seven goals in order to achieve the well-being of future generation. These are: a globally responsible Wales, a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities, and a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.
- 4.11 It goes on to state at paragraph 2.8 that *“Planning policies, proposals and decisions must seek to promote sustainable development and support the well-being of people and communities across Wales. This can be done through maximising their contribution to the achievement of the seven well-being goals”*.
- 4.12 Figure 4 of PPW outlines a number of key planning principles which will ensure *“the right development in the right place”* is achieved. This includes making the best use of resources (including land) and facilitating healthy environments.

- 4.13 Particularly relevant to this proposal is the PPW strategic aim to promote healthier places. Paragraph 3.19 states that *"The planning system should identify proactive and preventative measures to reduce health inequalities. This will include enabling opportunities for outdoor activity and recreation, reducing exposure of populations to air and noise pollution, promoting active travel options and seeking environmental and physical improvements, particularly in the built environment."*

5 Planning and Design Assessment

5.1 Taking into account the characteristics of the site, the nature of the development proposal and the planning context, it is considered that the key issues to be assessed in the determination of this planning application are as follows:

- Principle of Development;
- Impact on the Historic Environment;
- Design;
- Residential Amenity;
- Access and Highway Safety; and
- Flood Risk and Drainage

Principle of Development

5.2 As noted in Section 2 above, the site is outside of the development limits for Briton Ferry but the wider cricket club is directly adjacent to the boundary of the settlement. Policy SC1 of the NPTLDP directs development to within settlement limits, however, it also identifies a number of exceptions to this general rule.

5.3 One such exception is when *"It constitutes the small-scale expansion of an existing business"*. Whilst the cricket club is not strictly a business in the traditional sense, it is part of an area directly adjacent to the development limits that has evolved into somewhat of a sport/leisure 'hub' which includes the cricket club, bowls club, children's play area, and small football pitch.

5.4 The proposal would provide an additional sport and leisure facility as part of the existing 'hub' and therefore be a small-scale expansion of this existing use. It is therefore a logical location for the proposed padel courts that broadly meets the exception outlined above.

5.5 Furthermore, it is pertinent to note that the boundary of the settlement is directly to the north of the wider cricket club and therefore whilst not strictly within the development limits, the site is still in a highly accessible and sustainable location within the community that it will serve. In addition, given the site already contains an area of hardstanding, the proposal would constitute the re-use of previously developed land which is an inherently sustainable approach to development as set out the PPW document.

- 5.6 As a result, it is considered that this is a suitable location for the proposal that complies with policy SC1 of the NPTLDP and therefore is acceptable in principle.

Impact on the Historic Environment

- 5.7 Policy SP21 of the NPTLDP requires historic heritage to be conserved and enhanced through measures such as encouraging high quality design standards and safeguarding features of historic importance.
- 5.8 As already outlined, the site is within a Grade II listed registered Park and Garden. That said, the site is previously developed land within the wider cricket club, all of which is also within the designated heritage asset. The proposal will not materially change the impact on the Park and Garden given the padel courts will be on previously developed land adjacent to existing cricket nets and therefore will be similar features with a functional design within the wider sporting complex.
- 5.9 On this basis it is considered that there will be no impact on the Park and Garden given the surrounding context and the existing development on site. The proposal will therefore have an acceptable impact on the historic environment and complies with policy SP21 of the NPTLDP.

Design Considerations

- 5.10 Policy BE1 of the NPTLDP relates to design and requires all development to demonstrate high quality design which fully takes into account the natural, historic and built environmental context and contributes to the creation of attractive, sustainable places.
- 5.11 The proposal is functional in terms of its design as the courts are utilised as part of the game. They are directly adjacent to the existing cricket nets and aren't dissimilar in appearance, both being examples of sport facilities that are what one would expect to see in an area characterised by the sport and recreational uses.
- 5.12 Given they are within the confines of the existing cricket club, the impact on the character and appearance of the wider area will be negligible.
- 5.13 Consequently, it is considered that the proposal complies with policy BE1 of the NPTLDP and is acceptable in design grounds.

Residential Amenity

- 5.14 Policy EN8 of the NPTLDP relates to pollution and requires development to ensure no unacceptable adverse effect on local amenity in terms of noise pollution, amongst other things.

- 5.15 The site is approximately 75m away from the nearest residential dwellings. Furthermore, there are also existing buildings, fences and landscaping between the site and the nearest dwellings which will further mitigate the limited level of noise that will be generated by the proposal.
- 5.16 There will be external lighting installed but these will be small LED columns which are designed to cover only the courts and not the surrounding area, ensuring no light spill that could impact surrounding properties.
- 5.17 On this basis it is considered that the proposal is acceptable with regard to amenity and complies with the requirements of policy EN8.

Access and Highway Safety

- 5.18 The proposal will make use of the existing access and car parking that serves the wider cricket club. Given the small scale of the proposal and there only being two courts proposed, the level of vehicular traffic will be very limited and not have a material impact on the wider highway network.
- 5.19 It is also pertinent to note that the site is within Briton Ferry and therefore not all visitors would travel to the site by car. The site is walking distance from the town centre and there are also frequent train and bus links from the surrounding area, providing convenient alternatives to car travel, ensuring the site is accessible via sustainable methods of transport and further mitigating the very minimal highway impact.
- 5.20 On the basis there will be no impact on the wider highway network or highway safety.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 5.21 The site is entirely within Flood Zone 1 and therefore categorised as being at the lowest risk of flooding. As the site is previously developed land which comprises hardstanding and cricket training nets, the proposal will not change the drainage characteristics of the site and increase the risk of surface water flooding elsewhere.
- 5.22 As a result, the proposal is acceptable on flood risk and drainage grounds.

6 Summary and Conclusions

- 6.1 The proposal seeks planning permission for the construction of two outdoor padel courts within Briton Ferry Steel Cricket Club.
- 6.2 Whilst the site is outside of the development limits for Briton Ferry, it is directly adjacent and as it is part of the established cricket club, in both spatial and functional terms it remains part of the settlement. Furthermore, as an expansion of this existing sporting facility, it meets one of the exceptions outlined in policy SC1 of the NPTLDP and is therefore acceptable in principle.
- 6.3 The site is located within a Grade II listed Park and Garden but given the proposal is for the redevelopment of previously developed land through the replacement of existing cricket nets with a similar sport facility, there will be no material change to the impact on this heritage asset.
- 6.4 The assessment outlined above demonstrates that the proposal is also acceptable with regard to all other material planning considerations including design, amenity, highway safety, and flood risk.
- 6.5 On this basis it is considered the proposal complies with the development plan as a whole and consequently it is requested the Council support the application and planning permission is granted at the earliest opportunity.