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Dear Sir / Madam,

APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION FOR DRAINAGE ENGINEERING WORKS AND OTHER ASSOCIATED WORKS

DARLAND HIGH SCHOOL, CHESTER ROAD, ROSSETT, WREXHAM, LL12 0DL

Introduction

On behalf of our client, Wrexham Association Football Club Limited ("WAFC"), Savills is instructed to submit a planning application to Wrexham County Borough Council ("WCBC") for drainage engineering works and other associated works in respect of the WAFC Academy football pitches at Darland High School, Chester Road, Rossett, Wrexham, LL12 0DL ("the Site").

Whilst the application proposes a series of minor works, this is an important proposal which will enable improvements to the existing pitches and therefore will enhance the existing training facilities and ensure the Site meets the requirements for EFL Category 3 Academy status. The proposed works have been carefully considered and this application is supported by a suite of documents explaining the technical and environmental acceptability of the application.

Accordingly, please find enclosed the following documents submitted as part of this application:

- Application forms and Ownership Certificates;
- Covering Letter (this document);
- Various Drawings (Milieu Landscape Design);
    - Site Location Plan
    - Existing Site Plan (WRX-MLD-XX-XX-DR-L-1104 Rev P07)
    - Phase 2 Works General Arrangement (WRX-MLD-XX-XX-DR-L-1105 Rev P10)
    - Site Maintenance and Irrigation Compound (WRX-MLD-XX-XX-DR-L-1110 Rev P02)
    - Proposed Section / Elevation (WRX-MLD-XX-XX-DR-L-1111 Rev P01)
- Design and Access Statement (Milieu Landscape Design, WRX-MLD-XX-XX-RP-L-9010 Rev P03, dated 24/10/2025)
- Drainage Strategy (Buro Happold, WRX-BHE-DAR-ZZ-RP-C-00001 Rev P02, dated 23/10/2025)
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Tetra Tech, 784-B074479 Rev 2, dated 22/10/2025)
- Green Infrastructure Statement (Milieu Landscape Design, WRX-MLD-XX-XX-RP-L-9011 Rev P03, dated 24/10/2025)

Offices and associates throughout the Americas, Europe, Asia Pacific, Africa and the Middle East.

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Background to Academy

The delivery of a new Academy Training Facility for players from ages 9 to 18 at Darland High School was considered a key component in WAFC gaining status as an EFL Category 3 Academy from the 2024/25 season. In March 2025, Planning Permission was subsequently approved (ref. P/2024/1293) for new Academy Training Facility buildings to provide essential facilities for players and staff at Darland High School.

The existing sports fields at Darland High School are served by an existing land drainage system, formed of a herringbone network of perforated pipes laid in gravel trenches. Throughout the summer of 2025, the Club delivered the Phase 1 works which comprised the improvements to one full-size football pitch (located within the western field) including the restoration of the structured drainage system to meet the requirements of the EFL Category 3 Academy status. These works also included a temporary irrigation tank and pump house being placed on the northern boundary, temporary surfacing along the north and eastern boundary, a crushed stone maintenance access surface on the southern boundary and a porous asphalt path running through the Site.

Now, this application relates to the next phase of improvement works. Phase 2 requires works to be undertaken to renovate the remaining playing surfaces and the existing drainage system, to ensure the facility is constructed to the correct standard and can accommodate the required use for both the Club and the School. As such, the purpose of this application is to obtain planning permission and to subsequently deliver the engineering works required for the proposed drainage and surface water attenuation, and to facilitate the installation of permanent structures for the operation, irrigation and maintenance of the Site.

Proposed Development

Full planning permission is sought for a development with the following description:

> "*Full planning application for the undertaking of drainage engineering works, in addition to the erection of shipping containers, landscaping and other associated works.*"

Drainage Engineering Works

The drainage engineering works comprise the construction of two swales (attenuation ponds) to attenuate surface water run-off from the Site. As shown on plan reference WRX-MLD-XX-XX-DR-L-1105 Rev P10, Swale 1 will be located along the north-western boundary with Swale 2 along the western boundary. A small borehole pumping house and permanent irrigation infrastructure is proposed within the southern corner of the Site, as shown on plan reference WRX-MLD-XX-XX-DR-L-1110 Rev P02.

The drainage system and its management will remain in the ownership of WAFC and maintained by the Club.

Hard and Soft Landscaping

The soft landscaping proposals include new hedgerows and low management grassland to be planted adjacent to the existing hedgerows on the Site boundaries. Grassland is proposed above the swales. No existing trees or hedgerow will be removed.

The hard landscaping works include the addition of a bound gravel and crushed stone maintenance route along the outer permitter of the Site, which will be elevated to provide storm water control and management. A 1.5 metre high timber framed stock fence will be installed between the existing and proposed hedgerow.

Storage

Shipping containers are proposed within the southern corner of the Site for the storage of maintenance and training equipment. The existing shipping containers approved under Planning Permission ref P/2024/1293 will also be relocated to this part of the Site.

This application seeks Planning Permission for the proposed works, as described above, which are located within the red line boundary, to help facilitate the wider improvement works to the land drainage systems below the football pitches (which lie outside of the red line boundary).

A separate SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) Approval Body (SAB) application is being submitted to deliver these wider works. Therefore, whilst the works to the football pitches are not technically being assessed as part of this application, they have been shown on the proposed general arrangement plan and the supporting documentation to demonstrate how the planning application relates to the wider improvement works.

Analysis

Principle of Development

The Site is identified in the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011 (2005) as being within the Green Barrier, which is protected under Policy EC1. Within the unadopted emerging Wrexham Local Development Plan (LDP) (2013-2028), the Site is designated as Green Wedge, which is protected under Policy SP6. The intention of these allocations are to ensure the protection of the openness of the land.

Notwithstanding this, paragraph 3.75 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, 2024) states that the construction of new buildings for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, and other uses of land which maintain the openness of the Green Wedge and do not conflict with the purpose of including land within it, is considered appropriate development. It is also material that the existing use of the site is for education, sport and recreation, so no change of use of the land is proposed.

Rather, the proposed works facilitate improvements to this use, as described above. With these works, the openness of the land will be maintained due to the modest nature of the works, which will also be sited along the boundaries of the existing sports fields. As such, the development proposals are considered acceptable from a land use policy perspective.

Drainage

The application is supported by a Drainage Strategy (Buro Happold, WRX-BHE-DAR-ZZ-RP-C-00001 Rev P02), which has been prepared to present the surface water drainage design for the new football pitches. A Flood Consequence Assessment has been incorporated within the Strategy.

The submission concludes that the proposed drainage strategy will provide a betterment on discharge rates over the existing drainage system, and a 15% betterment over existing greenfield rates. The two attenuation swales will reduce flood risk both on and off the development Site and have been sized to not only attenuate run-off from the Site, but also to accommodate and attenuate the existing flood volume at these locations.

As such, the works will deliver a significant betterment in relation to drainage and flood risk for the football pitches.

Biodiversity

The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Tetra Tech, 784-B074479 Rev 2), which summarises the findings from ecological surveys undertaken in July 2025.

The proposed development will retain and reinforce the existing natural features such as the hedgerows and trees along the boundaries and will introduce low-management grassland areas to promote ecological connectivity and resilience. As evidenced within the supporting Green Infrastructure Statement (Buro Happold, WRX-MLD-XX-XX-RP-L-9011 Rev P03), the development will deliver a net gain in biodiversity.

Conclusion

The proposed drainage engineering works to the Darland High School sports pitches will enhance and improve the existing training facilities and ensure the Site meets the requirements for EFL Category 3 Academy status. The works have been carefully considered to deliver high-quality sports infrastructure while safeguarding and enhancing the ecological value of the Site and being technically acceptable with regard to drainage and flood risk.

I trust that the application is in order and that the application may be registered without delay. If there is anything I can do to assist you with validation and determination, then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Potts
Director – Planning Sport & Major Leisure
Enc.