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Nathaniel Lichfield  
and Partners

Planning Design Economics

Tim Furnell  
Head of Development  
East Staffordshire Borough Council  
Development and Regeneration Directorate  
Town Hall  
King Edward Place  
Burton upon Trent  
Staffordshire, DE14 2EB

14 Regent's Wharf  
All Saints Street  
London N1 9RL

020 7837 4477  
london@nlplanning.com

[nlplanning.com](http://nlplanning.com)

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Date 24 February 2010  
Our ref 40509/NT/SW/965285v1  
Your ref

Dear Tim

**East Staffordshire BC: Revised Proposals for the National Football Centre (NFC) at St George's Park**

On behalf of the National Football Centre Limited ('the applicant'), a subsidiary of The Football Association, we are pleased to enclose the following planning applications for development at St George's Park:

- 1 full planning application seeking permission for the development of the National Football Centre to include the erection of buildings to accommodate a full size indoor synthetic football pitch, sports hall, including associated facilities for sports fitness/science/medicine, changing rooms and ancillary office/training accommodation, a 228 bedroom hotel including conference, seminar rooms and dining and leisure facilities, a building to accommodate community changing facilities and a gatehouse, together with associated car/coach/cycle parking spaces and access, a feature wetland area, landscaping and infrastructure (referred to as 'the NFC application'); and
- 2 outline planning application seeking permission for residential development comprising 28 detached houses (open market) with approval for access and the alignment of the internal estate road (referred to as the 'residential application').

The two applications are inextricably linked. The residential development is required to 'enable' the implementation of the NFC. A number of issues (such as on biodiversity and the social/economic/sports benefits associated with the delivery of the NFC) relate to both proposals and some documents that accompany the applications have been written to reflect this. It is also anticipated that the two applications will be determined at the same time. It is assumed that a grant of planning permission for both proposals will require a S106 Agreement to ensure that no housing is developed (or available for occupation) before a certain stage in the development of the revised proposals for the NFC has been reached.



## **Background to Revised Proposals**

ESBC granted planning permission for the development of the NFC in 2001. A number of pitches, access from the B5234, internal estate road and other structures have been constructed and the existing facilities are currently used by a number of football teams (including the junior England team and Burton Albion) for training. However, financial constraints meant that construction was suspended in 2004.

The 2001 planning permission has been implemented and could be completed at any time. In the absence of any material changes in policy since then, these planning applications assume that the principle of developing the wider site for the NFC has already been established and the accompanying documents, therefore, assess the impact of the changes to the approved scheme.

## **Accompanying Documents**

The NFC application is accompanied by ten copies of the documents and drawings listed in the schedule at Appendix 1. The residential application is accompanied by the documents and drawings listed at Appendix 2. We have also enclosed 10 CDs for each application, which contain electronic copies of the accompanying documents and drawings.

The following documents are also attached to this letter:

- 1 Official Copy of Register of Title (Title number SF316296), and corresponding Title plan, which show that the National Football Centre Limited is the freehold owner of both application sites as well as the wider St George's Park site;
- 2 Transport Assessment/Statement Validation form signed by Staffordshire County Council and Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners on behalf of the applicant;
- 3 draft Heads of Terms of the potential S106 Agreement for the NFC;
- 4 draft Heads of Terms of the potential S106 Agreement for the enabling residential development; and
- 5 a letter from Alistair Maclean at The Football Association which confirms that the applicant will cover reasonable costs incurred by the District Valuation Officer and Legal Services at ESBC and Staffordshire County Council (variations to these budgets can be agreed should that be necessary).

The submission of all these documents ensures that the applications meet ESBC's validation requirements.

## **The Rationale for The National Football Centre**

Unlike most major football nations, England does not have its own bespoke training and education centre. St George's Park will provide such a centre. It will create a critical mass of expertise and experience in a central and accessible location and have a profile as the home of football development in England. The objectives for St George's Park include:





- 1 developing an inspirational centre for coach education;
- 2 creating a route to a career path in football coaching;
- 3 delivering courses, in association with higher and further education providers, for all football related careers;
- 4 establishing a leading centre for research and development for sports science and sports medicine; and
- 5 ensuring an inspirational training home for Club England (i.e. all England men's and women's teams across all age groups).

St George's Park will also feature pitches and changing facilities for use by the local community which will be used by and inspire young people in the area, enhancing what is currently available for use by local people. It will also continue to be the training centre for Burton Albion Football Club.

In this context, the 'need' for St George's Park is based on the principle that:

- 1 a strong professional game is fundamental to creating interest in football at the grassroots level; and
- 2 one of The Football Association's core objectives is to see England teams winning.

The development of St George's Park will assist in developing world class players and coaches and provide a focus for community participation in football which will, in turn, play an integral part in achieving these objectives.

### **The Need for Enabling Development**

The applicant has submitted financial information which demonstrates that the development of St George's Park will be funded principally by The Football Association, Umbro, 'the football family', sponsorship, development of the hotel and public sector grant. However, even with these revenue streams, there is a gap in funding.

Housing is the most appropriate form of enabling development in this location because it is capable of generating higher land values (compared to other uses such as employment) and can be delivered without any material harm to other interests of acknowledged importance (such as trees and ecology).

The report explains how 28 detached houses (open market) will 'fill' about 50% of the funding gap. Whilst less than the 'minimum' that is required to secure the delivery of St George's Park, the funding that has already been secured from other sources will enable the development of the revised proposals for the NFC to commence. It is expected that additional funding will be secured should planning permission be granted. A planning permission indicates a scheme is certain and deliverable which results in greater interest from developers/lenders/sponsors and investors.



### **The Benefits to be Secured by the Delivery of St George's Park Through Enabling Development**

The planning applications confirm that the social, economic and sports benefits that will be secured by the delivery of St George's Park through enabling development are significant. These include:-

- 1 the creation of employment opportunities and additional expenditure in the economy;
- 2 contributions to National Forest objectives;
- 3 long term ecological and landscape enhancement;
- 4 improvements to the distribution and provision of high quality pitches and associated facilities;
- 5 increasing the demand for, and participation in, sport;
- 6 assisting in improving the health and well-being of residents by providing sports and physical activity opportunities;
- 7 raising the profile of the Borough; and, of course
- 8 contributing to national/international sporting success.

Furthermore, the documents that accompany the applications confirm that the revised proposals for the NFC and the enabling residential development have been carefully conceived to minimise impacts on interests of acknowledged importance. They demonstrate that through appropriate mitigation and management, the proposals accord with policy requirements relating to trees/biodiversity, visual/landscape, the National Forest and sustainable construction. Moreover, technical issues relating to design, flood risk, highways, ground conditions and noise have been thoroughly addressed.

### **Conclusion**

St George's Park will provide a much needed national football facility, which will also have significant benefits at all levels; local, regional and national. Residential development is required to enable the delivery of the revised proposals and, for the reasons given in the application documents, is acceptable.

We trust the local planning authority will agree with the conclusion set out in the accompanying documents which explains why planning permission is justified and accordingly, results in the Council supporting this project.

We look forward to receiving confirmation that the applications have been validated. Please do not hesitate to contact me, or Sophie Waring, should you require clarification on any aspect of the applications.



Yours sincerely

**Nicholas Thompson**  
Director

Enc.

cc. Frank McArdle - National Football Centre Ltd  
David Sheepshanks - National Football Centre Ltd  
Bob Murray - National Football Centre Ltd  
Barry Bright - National Football Centre Ltd  
Alex Horne - The Football Association  
Alistair Maclean - The Football Association  
Graham Fryer - Drivers Jonas  
Geoff Aucock - Drivers Jonas  
Alan Smith - Red Box Design  
Malcolm Foster - AECOM  
Matthew Hignell - AECOM  
Gordon Mungall - Arup  
Katy Stiles - Baker Shepherd Gillespie  
Paul Mace - Macesport