

HANWELL COMMUNITY FORUM



Warren Farm Factsheet

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Current Situation

- Warren Farm is accessed via Windmill Lane, Norwood Green, UB2 4NE, and from the Capital Ring at W7 2PE in Olde Hanwell
- The site has an area of 24.8 Hectares and is in Metropolitan Open Land designated as Community Open Space in the Local Plan Policies Map, and is within the Brent River Park
 - The land was sold by the Countess of Jersey to London County Council in 1925 in her role as Executor of her husband's estate, presumably to meet death duties
 - The area is open space giving the feeling of being in the countryside
 - The area not under the footprint of the existing buildings and car park (1,847 m²) is greenfield, and designated by English Heritage as a site of interest for archaeology, specifically Bronze and Iron Age workings. Aerial photographs of the area suggest the remnants of settlement or funerary activity on the site, and finds of flint tools and prehistoric pottery have been recovered from the immediate vicinity
 - The land is adjacent to the Brent River/Grand Union Canal, an important green corridor for wildlife
 - The site is contiguous with Jubilee Meadow and Blackberry Corner, designated as a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation

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- Currently the changing room building has been neglected and is in disrepair due to successive administrations' failure to maintain. The Council claims that they have been 'condemned', and there are reports of asbestos use in the structure
- Currently there are 16 pitches of varying sizes, several full-size, spread over the site available to the community to book for clubs, schools and tournaments, and to use on an *ad hoc* basis for informal matches
 - Distances between pitches allow for simultaneous play, and cricket to be played on one area at the same time as football
 - Numbers of pitches allow for pitches to be left to recover in between usage
 - These pitches are the best in the Borough, with no matches cancelled due to water logging in the last decade
- Currently there are also six cricket wickets and 8 outdoor netball courts
- Until recently, the fields have been accessible to all from the north side ie Olde Hanwell, as well as from the south ie Norwood Green side
 - Access has been gained 'as of right' for more than the designated 20 years for use by the general public in lawful sports and leisure activities
 - A long-established model aircraft flying club has used the land as they need considerable space, which is currently offered, safely, on this site
- Ancient public rights of way across the land which used to cross from Hanwell to the original farm buildings and on across the land to Windmill Lane, were diverted by order of a Justice of the Peace in 1930, presumably to prevent people walking across when matches were in play
 - The diverted public footpath runs around the perimeter of the north east boundary of site to Windmill Lane
 - This is a narrow, rutted, unlit, poorly managed footpath; if this becomes the 'access' for Olde Hanwell residents to the site, then certainly the site will no longer be accessible by many people from the Hanwell side of the facility, especially not by PT classes on foot from Olde Hanwell

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- Income generated from pitch fees is £58K, annual costs are currently £78K in maintenance of the pitches, plus £4,000 in business rates, plus £17K in utilities according to 2010/2011 figures. Hence, given that the business rates go back to the Council, the Council's net outlay is £37K
- Currently no bus routes service this site. The proximity of the Scheduled Listed Monument of Three Bridges (listed as Windmill Bridge) between the Uxbridge Road and the site prevents a bus route being considered.
 - Access to this site is, and will remain, by private vehicle, cycle or on foot

Council-Approved Future Situation

- Ealing Council's Planning Committee approved QPR's application on Wednesday 24 April 2013
 - The Club plans to surround the whole site with an eight foot high, opaque, security fence so that the QPR teams and Academy players can train in private
 - Two thirds of the land would be designated for QPR with:
 - a first team training and academy facility for Queen's Park Rangers Football Club, incorporating
 - a two-storey 13M/42'7", plus basement, training centre building
 - a three-storey 12.9M/42'4" multi-functional operations building
 - an 15.75M/ 51'8" high indoor hall building (equivalent to a 5-6 storey residential block)
 - a single storey 7.6M/24'11" maintenance building adjacent to Jubilee Meadow/Blackberry Corner, a site of interest for Nature Conservation
 - a single storey plant building with a 16M/52'6" emissions stack
 - Ten exclusive, QPR pitches surrounded by opaque security-fenced including
 - three full size QPR First Team pitches
 - seven QPR Academy/Youth pitches, mixture of three full size and four smaller sized pitches
 - a single storey 5.9M/19'4" Community Trust building linked to the indoor hall (shared with QPR)
 - The design of buildings and materials used (being of cladding with small windows), would not look amiss at Heathrow Airport

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- The remaining third of the land would be designated for community facilities comprising:
 - a separate, single storey 3.2M/10'6" community building on a greenfield site close to the community pitches, incorporating changing rooms, showers, WCs and social space
 - This would be the only building designed for MOL; low in height (single storey), sunk into the terracing of the pitches; green roof
 - eleven half size, closely-positioned football pitches, including one artificial pitch, and three overlapping cricket wickets
 - closeness of pitches would mean footballs from adjacent matches interfering with play on adjacent pitches
 - Closeness would mean that cricket could not be played simultaneously with football
- In addition, 305 permanent car parking spaces (plus overspill parking for a further 250 cars on grasscrete)
- Flood lighting: permanent on two pitches, temporary on a third pitch
- An additional new vehicle and pedestrian point of access onto Windmill Lane
- Hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatments
 - Including a cycle track along the southern perimeter of the site, which will rejoin Windmill Lane at the boundaries of the site
- Engineering works to re-grade (ie terrace) the site to provide level playing surfaces
 - Proposed terracing of the site to address level differences would destroy archaeological heritage assets for future generations
- Access to the space by the general public, previously open to all at any time, would be via the main entrance on Windmill Lane, and via a security gate/door
 - It is unclear if an existing , unused and overgrown gate on the south east corner of the site on Windmill Lane might be reopened for access via the perimeter public footpath
 - Access to the QPR premises and pitches would be by invitation only
 - Access to the 'Community' pitches would be signed in via the security ie NOT open access

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- QPR has said that they would provide a shuttle bus for their own staff from key transport hubs/stations, and that when not in use by QPR this could be made available via a booking process to the public

Cabinet-approved Situation

- **Cabinet approved on 20 December 2011 the principle of the leasing of this land for 200 years at a peppercorn rent**

What we need at this site

1. To replace the existing run down changing facilities with 21st century changing rooms/showers and a social space with adequate catering facilities/bar ie an up-to-date Community Sports Pavilion
2. To retain all the existing, well drained, pitches for community use for the next 200 years
3. To put in place an adequate management plan and maintenance budget balanced against income generated from the hire of the pitches
4. We believe that this can be achieved via grants from Sports bodies to build the changing facilities and maintained from income generated by the hiring of the pitches etc

- **There is an online petition in opposition to the plans available to sign at <http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/save-warren-farm-ealing-as-genuine-undeveloped-metro.html>**