

PRESS RELEASE 18 October 2024

Exeter Civic Society objects to Exeter College swapping Changing Rooms for Classrooms on the site of the former Exwick Changing Rooms.

Exeter Civic Society has sent a letter of objection to Exeter City Council planners for Exeter College's new proposals to construct classrooms at the site of the former changing rooms instead of the promised new changing rooms, with classrooms on the first floor. Proposals for the sports pavilion and an artificial turf pitch nearby on Flowerpot fields, received planning approval from Exeter City Council in February 2023.

Chairman of the Society, Keith Lewis, said 'In February 2024 the College submitted a planning application to make amendments to the changing pavilion and the all-weather pitch. The changes to the pavilion were primarily to relocate the plant room to the roof, effectively adding a third level which we consider would have made the building unattractive. So when we received notification in September from the planning department that revised plans had been submitted, we were not initially concerned because the description states that it is for a **new Sports Pavilion and All-Weather 3G Pitch – not Teaching block and All-weather 3G Pitch**. However, upon inspecting the amending proposals it became clear that the college is now applying for a single storey classroom block with sports changing now intended to take place at the Exwick Hub off Exwick Road.'

Our objection is in two parts.

First, we believe that it is not legally possible to apply for a variation of the approved application that fundamentally changes the proposals from changing rooms to classrooms - it's like substituting apples for pears in your shopping basket and hoping nobody notices.

Second, Exwick playing fields are located in the Riverside Valley Park, and the city council's local plan says that no buildings are permitted unless they support the use of the area. In this case, changing rooms would support the sports use of the area, but a teaching block clearly does not.

In all the planning applications for these proposals the College says the facilities will support their arrangement with Exeter Chiefs Rugby club to support their Academy, and previously said that there will be access for community use outside of core use. However, if the current proposals are approved, it will clearly be supporting a private arrangement between the College and Exeter Rugby club, and also represent a loss for community sports access for city residents.

Even more worryingly, the College has already demolished the former changing rooms and have started constructing the classroom block. We know they are not building the changing rooms because all the required drainage pipes for the showers are not installed into the floor slab.

if residents of Exeter have concerns about these proposals they can view the planning application on the city council's planning portal and email the planning department with their observations to planning@exeter.gov.uk .

Further information: Keith Lewis, Chairman. keithatecs@gmail.com , telephone 07964219153.



Fig. B: Approved Scheme (app ref. 21/1710/FUL) - Perspective View.



Fig. C: Revised Scheme- Perspective View.

Extract from Design & Access Statement addendum. August 2024.

The September description of the application is (RECONSULTATION OF REVISED SCHEME - Demolition of existing building to provide a new Sports Pavilion and All-Weather 3G Pitch. (Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 21/1710/FUL to amend the design of the sports pavilion and, including new roof plant, and amend the position, fencing and visitor/player viewing areas of the 3G Pitch.)

A picture of the construct site will be attached to the email.

Approved Application for the Sports Pavilion and 3G pitch can be found here:
<https://publicaccess.exeter.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=externalDocuments&keyVal=R23V49HB JPN00>

Planning application to vary the proposals can be found here:
<https://publicaccess.exeter.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=S8E4MRHBLUW00>