

Practice Nets Design Criteria

The positioning of the external practice nets within the development has been very carefully considered in consultation with Lancashire Cricket and the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) to take into consideration a wide range of important design and operational requirements.

The England and Wales Cricket Board specifically highlighted adjacency and colocation of the practice facilities and pavilion as a key Safeguarding by design requirement. The facility has also been highlighted as a regional centre for disability cricket by Lancashire. This necessitates an additional focus on reducing travel distances between ancillary and playing facilities and other important facilities such as access to the Changing Places toilet.

We can briefly summarise the key considerations critical to the functionality of the practice nets and the cricket facilities as a whole as follows:

1. North-south orientation of the wickets.
2. Level topography, required for play and good accessibility.
3. Sheltered position, required for play and containment of the activities within.
4. Enclosure to provide privacy, visual and acoustic containment.
5. Close operational adjacency to the Pavilion building, pitches and to accessible parking and drop-off, to protect the building's users, and specifically young and less physically able people.
6. Security and physical separation from visiting public arrival and circulation space.
7. Appropriate access and proximity for grounds facilities maintenance.
8. Appropriate positioning with other built forms to maintain the characteristic sense of openness of the site as a whole.

Further details of the design and positioning of the practice nets can be found within Section 5.3 of the Design & Access Statement. Further justification for the design briefing requirements for the facilities including the Pavilion and Practice Nets is also provided within the letter of support from the ECB.

Practice Nets Position Appraisal

In the accompanying drawing **210002-BDP-ZZ-XX-DR-A-SK0003 - Practice Nets Position**, the four locations explored by the design team during the course of the design process are set out on the site plan, with a summary appraising their relative merits judged against the critical design criteria described earlier as follows:

A | Proposed Practice Nets Location

Key Characteristics

- Excellent very close functional adjacency (26m from Pavilion).
- Excellent visual connection to Pavilion from both floor levels.
- Sheltered position set down by c.2m within the site topography, naturally diminishing the scale of the nets, creating a calm, contained environment for play.
- Visual and acoustic containment provided by landscaped slope, existing hedges, new trees and a perimeter fence to three sides to prevent undue disturbance to the nearest properties.
- Position to west of the Pavilion creates natural secure separation of players (particularly young age groups), and the visiting public arriving from the east.
- Excellent close proximity to both pitches, at lower-ground pitch level.
- Excellent close proximity to grounds maintenance facilities in the Pavilion.
- Location within lower topography and in line with existing built structures to western boundary helps maximise the characteristic sense of green openness across the wider site.

B | Rejected Practice Nets Location 1

Key Characteristics

- Moderate functional adjacency and accessibility (160m from Pavilion)
- Moderate visual connection to Pavilion at the upper ground level only, but too far away for meaningful protection of younger age groups.
- Exposed position in the higher part of the site, sub-optimal for play.
- Poor containment – proximity to adjacent property at the eastern site boundary and lack of space means that introducing landscaped enclosure between the nets and boundary is not possible in this location, resulting in a tall full height fence enclosure very close to the site boundary (i.e. not able to be set down in the landscape like location A).
- Poor security – eastern location breaches the natural secure space around the Pavilion, potentially compromising safeguarding of young players, also compromising match day player security and regulatory separation from members of the public.
- Good proximity to both pitches, but partly compromised by level change from upper ground to pitch level (less accessible).
- Poor accessibility from grounds maintenance facilities in the Pavilion, at a different upper level to the pitches with no road connection for ground vehicles, making this a very challenging location operationally.
- Location close to the eastern boundary helps keep the nets away from the open central part of the site, but the higher topography here creates a much taller and more obtrusive presence within the site, diminishing the characteristic sense of openness.

C | Rejected Practice Nets Location 2

Key Characteristics

- Very poor functional adjacency and accessibility (300m from Pavilion).
- Very poor visual connection to Pavilion, compromising natural surveillance and safeguarding.
- Exposed position in the higher part of the site, although able to be sheltered by proposed landscape bunds.
- Poor containment – like Location B, proximity to adjacent property at the eastern site boundary and lack of space means that introducing landscaped enclosure between the nets and boundary is not possible in this location, resulting in a tall full height fence enclosure very close to the site boundary (i.e. not able to be set down in the landscape like location A).
- Poor security – close proximity to the arriving visitors in this eastern location breaches the natural secure space around the Pavilion, potentially compromising safeguarding of young players, also compromising match day player security and regulatory separation from members of the public.
- Poor proximity to both pitches, particularly the match pitch to the south. Also compromised by level change from upper ground to pitch level (less accessible).
- Poor accessibility from grounds maintenance facilities in the Pavilion, at a different upper level to the pitches, and with operational conflict of grounds and visitor vehicles, making this a challenging location operationally.
- Location to the north east in an otherwise open part of the site, away from any existing built structures, along with the higher topography here creates a much taller and more obtrusive presence within the site, significantly diminishing the characteristic sense of openness.

D | Rejected Practice Nets Location 3

Key Characteristics

- Very poor functional adjacency and accessibility (400m from Pavilion).
- Very poor visual connection to Pavilion, compromising natural surveillance and safeguarding.
- Exposed position in the higher part of the site (i.e. not able to be set down in the landscape like location A), although able to be partly sheltered by proposed landscape bunds.
- Relatively good visual containment – able to be enclosed visually within landscape bunds enclosing car parking. Distance from adjacent properties means a lower fenced enclosure can be utilised in this location.
- Poor security – close proximity to the arriving visitors in this eastern location breaches the natural secure space around the Pavilion, potentially compromising safeguarding of young players, also compromising match day player security and regulatory separation from members of the public.
- Very poor proximity to both pitches, particularly the match pitch to the south. Also compromised by level change from upper ground to pitch level (less accessible).
- Poor accessibility from grounds maintenance facilities in the Pavilion, at a different upper level to the pitches, and with operational conflict of grounds and visitor vehicles, making this a challenging location operationally.
- Location to the north east site boundary, creates distance from nearby properties – in addition to offering enclosure within the proposed landscape bunds enclosing the car parking. The characteristic sense of openness of the site as a whole is aided by virtue of this location close to the site boundary, although unlike Location A, there are no other nearby structures clustered along this site boundary.

E | Rejected Practice Nets Location 4

Key Characteristics

- Very poor functional adjacency and accessibility (260m from Pavilion).
- Moderate visual connection to Pavilion at the upper ground level only, but too far away for meaningful protection of younger age groups.
- Exposed position in the higher part of the site, sub-optimal for play.
- Poor containment – like Location B and C, proximity to adjacent property at the eastern site boundary and lack of space means that introducing landscaped enclosure between the nets and boundary is not possible in this location, resulting in a tall full height fence enclosure (i.e. not able to be set down in the landscape like location A).
- Poor security – close proximity to the arriving visitors in this eastern location breaches the natural secure space around the Pavilion, potentially compromising safeguarding of young players, also compromising match day player security and regulatory separation from members of the public.
- Good proximity to community pitch, but poor proximity to the match pitch to the south. Also compromised by level change from upper ground to pitch level (less accessible).
- Poor accessibility from grounds maintenance facilities in the Pavilion, at a different upper level to the pitches, and with operational conflict of grounds and visitor vehicles, making this a challenging location operationally.
- Location to the north east in an otherwise open part of the site, away from any existing built structures, along with the higher topography here creates a much taller and more obtrusive presence within the site, significantly diminishing the characteristic sense of openness.
- Location conflicts with critical space needed in this important arrival focal point on major event days to manage to security, ticketing and movement of people.

Summary and Conclusions

Each of the alternative locations B, C, D & E were rejected on the grounds of not fulfilling the critical functional requirements of the brief as outlined above, which cannot be satisfied in these locations.

After careful consideration, Location A was therefore selected as the optimum setting for the practice nets facilities, with demonstrable justification as the only location that is able to meet each of the critical functional requirements for the practice nets, a sensitive design approach to mass, openness and topography, and the operational requirements for the facilities as a whole. Significant work has been undertaken by the design team to ensure that the practice facilities are sensitively treated in this location, working with the natural site topography and landscape both visually and acoustically, such that adjacent properties are not unduly affected by the proposals. This position is also important strategically in creating the arrival space required to manage occasional larger events around the visitor entrance focal point in the north-east of the site, away from residential properties.