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Sunbury - The Home of London Irish



Established in 1898, London Irish (aka the Exiles) became professional rugby club in 1996. Sunbury has been the home of London Irish since 1931 when club purchased an 11 acre site located just off the then Avenue Road. Excluding the period 1940-1959, during which time the XV played at Blackheath, Sunbury has been the home of Exiles.

When London Irish became a professional rugby club it was one of the few clubs in the UK to retain and support a full amateur rugby club structure. The London Irish Rugby Family today embraces elite professional rugby and traditional amateur rugby.

There have been many developments over the years, including a move to the Madejski Stadium in Reading, where the professional team now plays their home matches, but it is Sunbury that the Exiles consider to be their spiritual home.

The club today:

- is now one of the top four teams in the UK and was a finalist in the 2008/2009 Guinness Premiership.
- is a significant local employer with over 80 people working from its administrative and training headquarters in Sunbury.
- has four pitches on The Avenue site, with the main pitch being used for training by the professional squad.
- provides the base for the 850 members of the London Irish England Rugby Academy and the Amateur Club.
- has grown to include playing, training, administration and hospitality facilities.
- has a very active junior programme with 300 mini-rugby players (girls and boys) playing each Sunday morning.
- currently has 24 teams and could easily meet the demand to add another eight teams of young players.
- is establishing a dedicated community outreach programme and regularly undertakes coaching sessions and masterclasses.





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The Problem



Burnt out pitch at the end of 08/09 season

London Irish has appointed a full team of experienced consultants who have been carefully chosen to advise on the redevelopment of both The Avenue and Hazelwood Golf Centre sites

**The Professional Team:
Urban Initiatives**

Planning Consultant, Masterplanner
and Transportation Consultant

RAE Sport & Leisure Consultants

Sport & Leisure Consultant

Scott Wilson

Environmental Consultant

M&N Communications

Community Relations Consultant

Space limitations

In recent years it has become clear that The Avenue is no longer able to accommodate the requirements of the London Irish family, or allow for future expansion, due to limitations on space.

There is also a significant call for more and better rugby pitches within the Spelthorne area from local schools and community groups.

Lack of suitable sites

London Irish is committed to staying in Sunbury, our spiritual home and an extensive search, considering over 20 sites, has taken place in an attempt to find an alternative sports ground location.

Limitations of The Avenue site include:

- Insufficient pitches to serve both the club and community activities, with a number of coaching activities (particularly involving junior members) having to take place off-site due to lack of space.
- Just four full size pitches which limits the number of teams which can be accommodated at rugby festivals and tournaments.
- The intensive use of the existing pitches, which is causing major issues with pitches being ‘burnt out’ and having to be re-seeded regularly to ensure a safe playing surface.
- Inadequate changing accommodation, which means that it is not possible to establish a ladies’ adult team which can play matches at the same time as the men and therefore players from the junior girl’s squad have to change offsite at a nearby school.
- Antiquated and cramped changing, medical, social and business facilities.





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The Solution



London Irish has identified an excellent replacement site in close proximity to the existing Avenue site and we plan to relocate to new purpose-built facilities at the nearby Hazelwood Golf Centre.

Just a 15 minute walk away, this is the only site that will let us stay in Sunbury and at 22 hectares has the space to serve the growing needs of the Club, compared to the 6.4 hectares of our existing site.

To fund this move the current London Irish premises at The Avenue would need to be redeveloped.

The importance of staying in Sunbury?

London Irish has its roots firmly in Sunbury and the majority of members of London Irish Amateur Club live within a 10 mile radius of the site. We would therefore be reluctant to relocate further than necessary and separate the Club from its members, players and fan base, or indeed from Sunbury, which has been home to London Irish for 78 years.

The decline of Golf

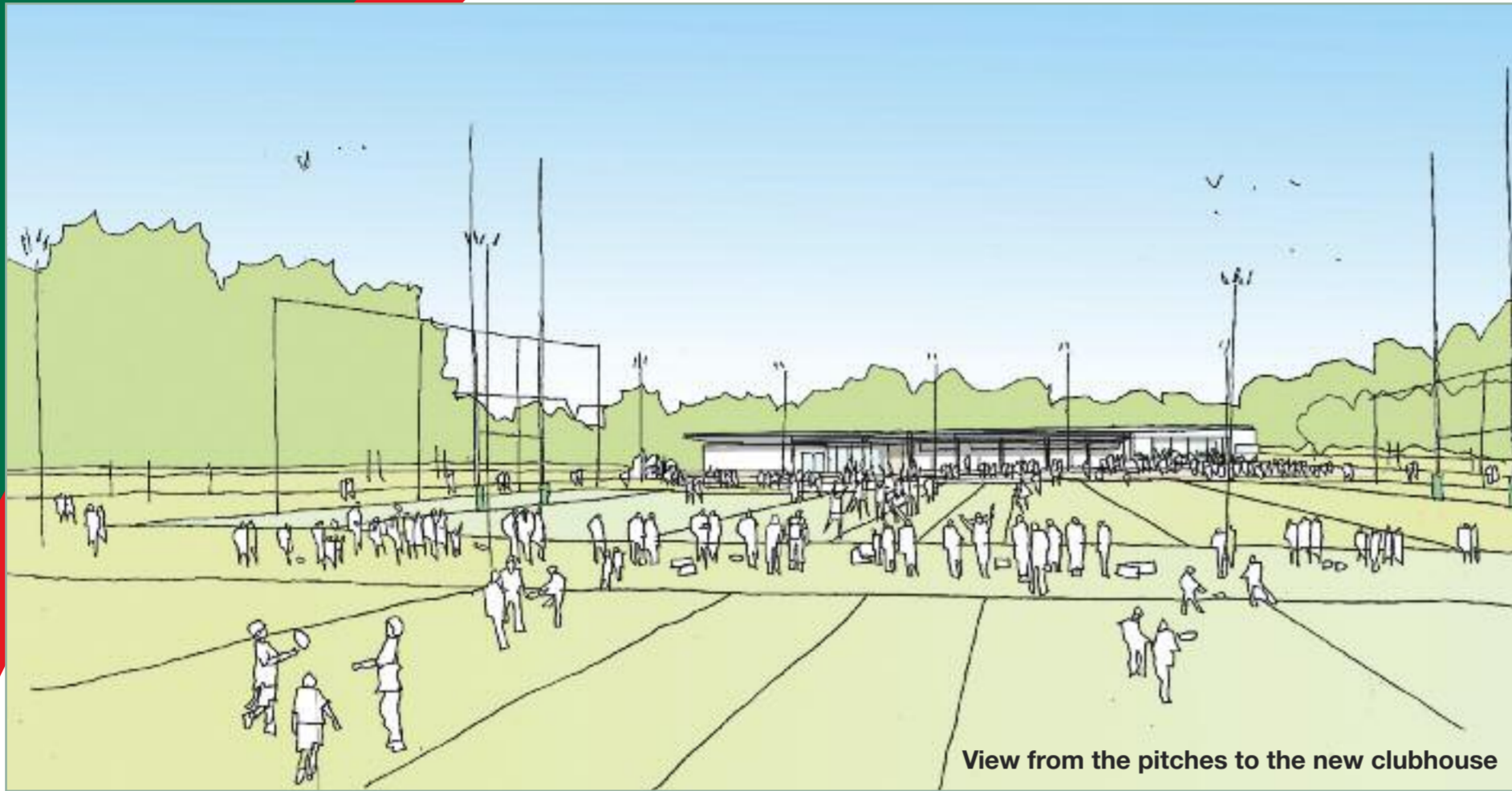
There has been a downturn in the number of people using golf centres in recent years. There are a number of alternative golfing facilities in close proximity which provide comparable and better facilities than those provided at Hazelwood.





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The Vision - A New Home at Hazelwood



View from the pitches to the new clubhouse

Key features of the proposed masterplan for Hazelwood include:

- High quality building and landscape design that befit the Club's status among the leading clubs not just in England but also in Europe.
- 17 rugby pitches to accommodate the growing demand for rugby.
- A 3G artificial grass pitch, the first in Spelthorne.
- Modern purpose built facilities including reception and administrative areas and a club shop.
- A serviced bar and lounge with dining facilities, which will overlook the playing fields to the west, with a terrace for outdoor viewing, barbeques and family events.
- Improved changing facilities including separate changing rooms for amateurs, professionals and officials.
- Dedicated female changing facilities.
- Fitness facilities including a fully equipped gymnasium, a rehabilitation gymnasium, and physiotherapy and medical suites.
- Car parking for 150 cars (plus overspill for major events) and dedicated space for two team coaches.
- Increased access to the new facilities by non London Irish Rugby Family groups, such as local clubs and schools.

The London Irish amateur teams currently have to play at a number of pitches throughout the Spelthorne area, which means players and supporters have to travel from site to site. This is not ideal for anyone, not least our younger players.

A larger site will provide training for both the professional and amateur clubs of London Irish, as well as for home matches of the amateur club. The grounds will also be used by Club's academy which is sponsored by the Rugby Football Union. Access to the ground will not be restricted solely to the London Irish Rugby Family, local clubs and schools will also be able to use the extensive new facilities.

The proposed site layout shows **10 formal pitches** laid out to the east of the public footpath which crosses the site. There are four full sized adult pitches, including a third generation (3G) artificial grass pitch and two mini rugby pitches each for the under 11/12, under 9/10 and under 8/9 teams. To the west of the footpath there is also the space to set out an additional six mini rugby pitches and one full-sized adult pitch.

Associated with these pitches will be a **new club house**. Located in the same position as the existing Hazelwood Golf Centre, the **high quality design** of the new single storey building, incorporating all facilities under one roof, will result in a more elegant and compact building layout than the existing club house and driving range. This will therefore reduce the overall effect of the building on the Green Belt and the total area will not exceed the present building's floor space.

Every attempt has been made to minimise noise and disturbance to neighbours. We will not put playing pitches too close to homes and will keep them away from the cemetery. We will create a landscape setting for the pitches around the boundaries of the site so that the whole of Hazelwood becomes a highly attractive green space.

Floodlighting will be required for the main match pitches which will be located near to where the current driving range is sited, which already has lighting columns in place.

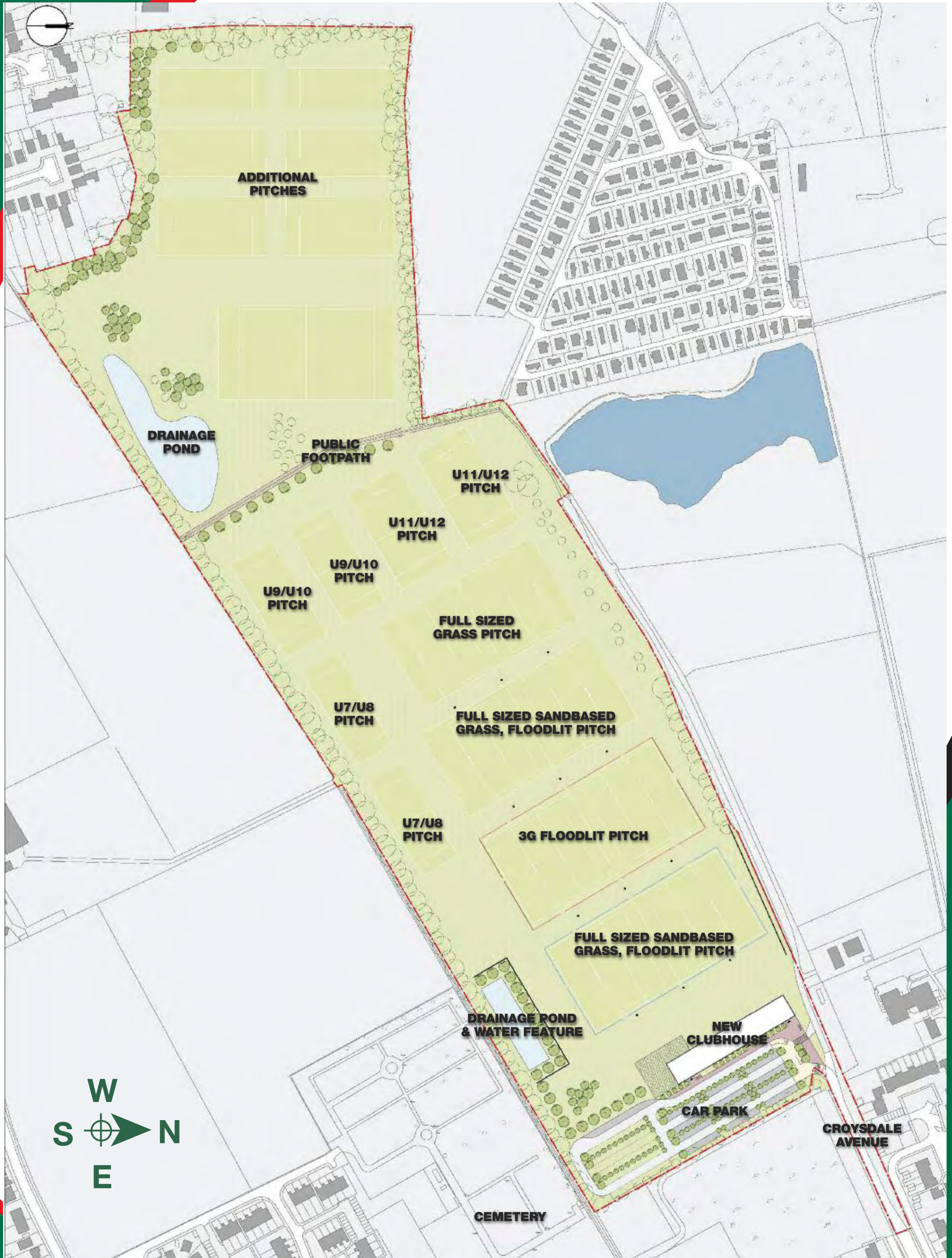


Aerial view of the new rugby ground



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Proposed Site Layout - The Hazelwood Development





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Our Legacy - A High Quality Residential Development



Key features of the proposed masterplan for The Avenue site include:

- High quality urban design.
- Two new areas of public open space.
- 212 one and two bedroomed apartments with access to enclosed landscaped courtyards.
- 39 two bedroomed cottages with their own back gardens, laid out on smaller streets and mews lanes.
- 62 three bedroomed houses.
- Moderate density (well within the planning policy requirement of 35-55 dwellings per hectare).
- All buildings located away from the site boundaries and into the centre of the site.
- A 'green heart' within the site through dedicated open space and play areas.
- Keeping most of the existing trees and planting new ones.
- Sympathetic landscape treatment.
- Creation of 'view corridors' through the site.
- A new care home for the elderly.

Our objective for The Avenue site is to leave a lasting legacy of a high quality and well designed residential development, laid out around attractive open spaces. Our desire is to ensure the new homes complement and add to the character of the area. We are proposing a mix of homes and house sizes including affordable housing, to ensure a mixed community, with the proportion determined by the housing policies of Spelthorne Borough Council. We will also provide a residential care home for the elderly.

All dwellings will have direct access to open space: a private garden in the case of the houses and cottages, a patio space, balcony or a shared, semi private, landscaped courtyard in the case of the apartments. Two large public open spaces will be provided.

All ground floor units will have their own front door access, set back from the street by a two metre wide privacy strip, or private front garden.

On street and mews car parking and parking spaces grouped in bays, will be provided in accordance with local and county policy requirements and **best practice in street design.**

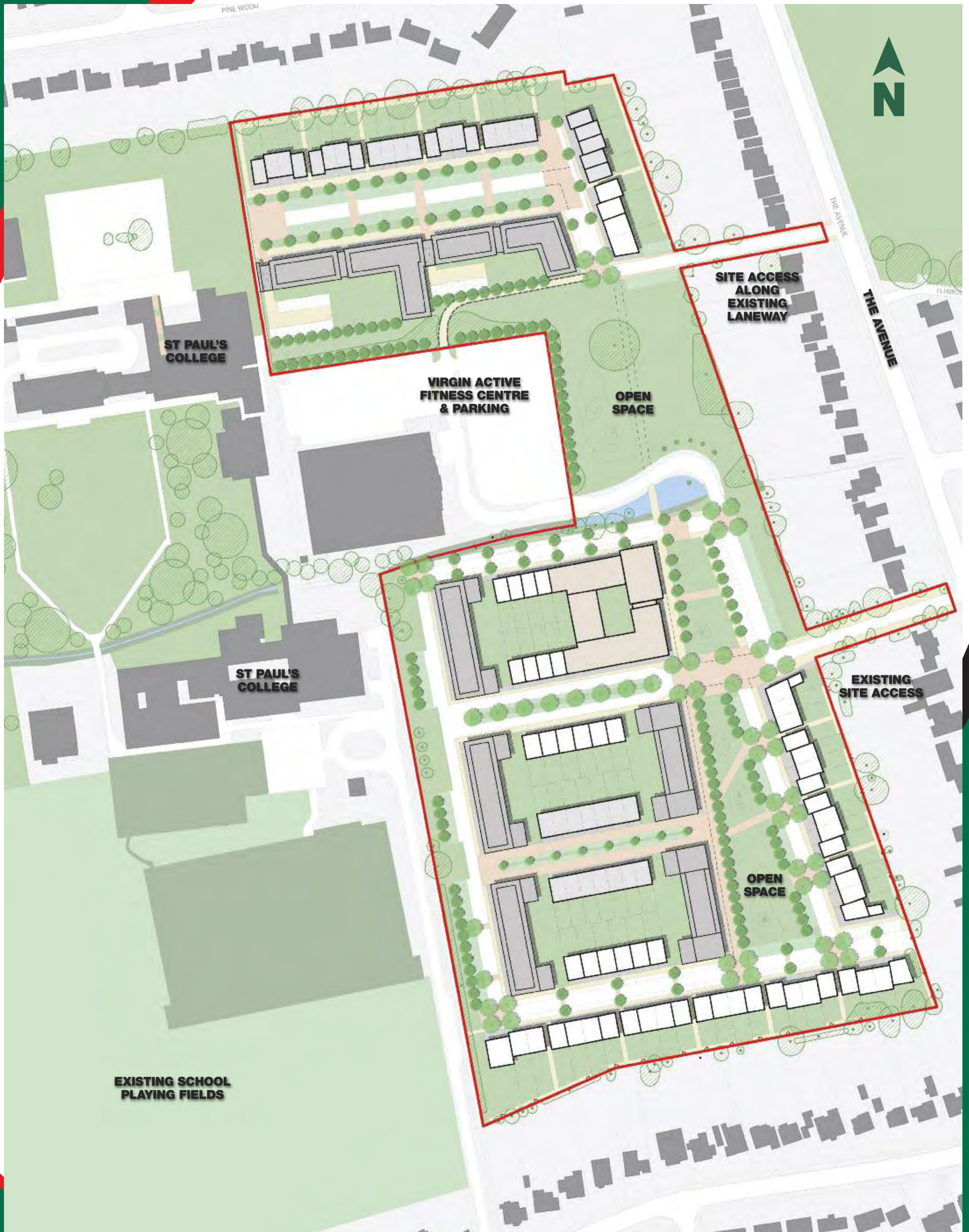
The majority of homes will be two storey, arranged in short terraces, with three storey feature buildings at the corners and features such as gateways.

A high standard of design with open space as an important feature of the scheme. A mix of house size and type will ensure an interesting and varied development, creating a successful neighbourhood with a distinct character and identity.



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Proposed Masterplan - The Avenue Residential Development





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Transport & Access - Our Approach



London Irish is committed to addressing all issues regarding the impact of the proposals on the local road network, its ability to cope with traffic movements and the effect on nearby residents. Its transport consultants are currently undertaking a range of highways surveys in the area to assess current traffic levels and to help inform what improvements need to be made.

Full Transport Assessments (TAs) will be undertaken for each site and submitted as part of the outline planning application.

The Vision - for Hazelwood

- The relocated rugby club and associated new community and youth related activities will cause a small increase in movement over the whole day. However, this will not generate additional traffic demands during peak times.
- The focus for transport to the new and improved London Irish facility will be on providing and educating people on alternative travel other than by private car, including encouraging improved car sharing, walking buses, and informing people of public transport, walking and cycling opportunities.
- Croysdale Avenue will be the main access point to the site and new walking and cycling facilities will be provided with connections to the bus stops prioritised.
- The level of parking provided on site will accommodate everyday club activities, including increased parking demand on Sundays during the 'Minis' club league.

Our Legacy - at The Avenue

- The strategy for movement to, from and within the new residential development will focus on improving sustainable transport choices for new and existing residents, visitors and the wider community generally.
- The site is in close proximity to Sunbury railway station and has good access to bus stops.
- The development will deliver improved walking and cycling facilities with significant benefits to the wider community.
- Two points of access will be provided to ensure that there is minimal impact on the surrounding road network and the existing access points will be used to minimise disruption to local residents. Traffic is expected to increase marginally during peak periods and measures to improve traffic flow will be delivered.
- Parking will be provided on site to ensure that there is no spill over effects on surrounding streets.



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Landscape & Sustainability - The Hazelwood Site



How will Hazelwood and The Avenue sites be sustainable?

Environmental sustainability lies at the heart of our proposals and will play a central part in the design of both the Hazelwood and The Avenue sites.

Features for both sites include:

- Both sites have the advantage of being located within walking distance of a mainline railway station and on several bus routes.
- Green travel plans will be produced for both sites to encourage users of the rugby club and the new residential development to use sustainable means of transportation.
- Sustainable urban drainage systems incorporated into both sites.
- Both sites' habitat values will be enhanced to improve the biodiversity value of the area.

The Vision - for Hazelwood

At present, the Hazelwood Golf Centre site is an actively managed golf course, consisting mainly of closely-mown grassland with areas of taller grassland constituting 'rough'. There are several areas of immature trees and parts of the site boundary consist of dense scrub. The site also contains a large, irregularly shaped, artificial pond.

The land will continue to be for sporting activities use and high quality sports pitches will be created. All existing trees and vegetation will be retained around the boundaries, enhanced by additional planting. In the central parts of the site existing trees are poorly established and will therefore be removed to allow the construction of the pitches. New trees will be planted in appropriate locations to replace these.

The history of Hazelwood

At Hazelwood, due to the former use of the site as a landfill for construction waste following gravel extraction, the ground beneath the site contains some contaminated material. However, the levels of contamination are not high enough to result in a significant risk to health and the additional imported materials required to construct the pitches will provide a suitable barrier. The new system of land drains and balancing ponds will reduce the amount of rain water entering the landfill material and is expected to result in an overall improvement in the quality of water running off the site.

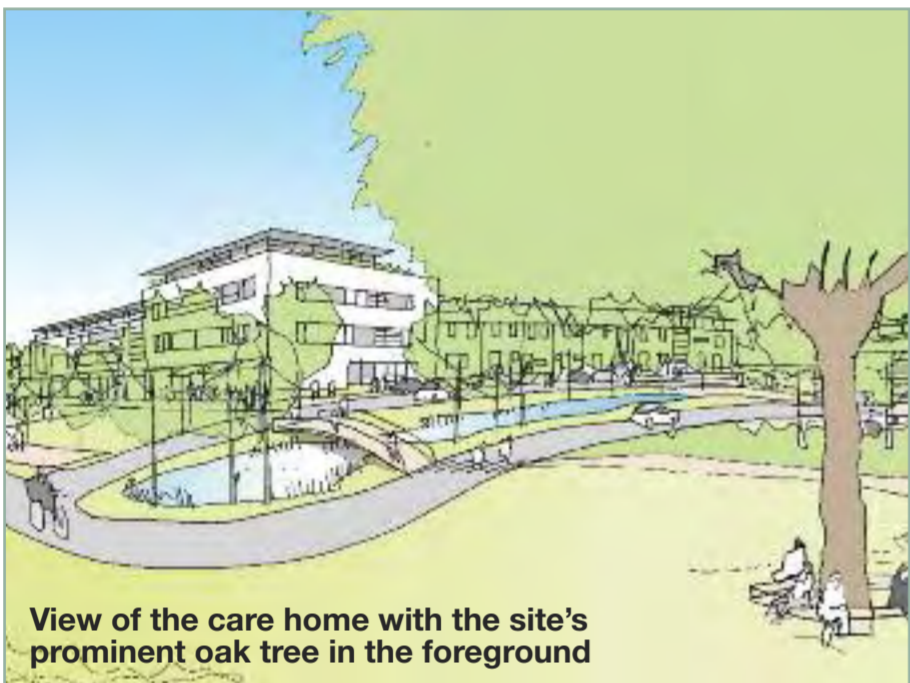
Proposed features include:

- A series of green hedges and trees separating the car spaces.
- Rows of trees planted between the proposed club house and the southern site boundary, forming a screen to the car parking.
- Tree planting to shelter pitches from the wind.
- An additional water feature provided along the boundary to the cemetery set within a grove of flowering trees, to form a visual and acoustic buffer to the cemetery.



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Landscape & Sustainability - The Avenue Residential Development



Our Legacy - at The Avenue

The landscape of the new residential development will be attractive and well designed, with generous open space provision, far exceeding policy requirements.

What is 'sustainable' development?

A sustainable development is a scheme that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is not just about how 'green' the buildings are, or the size of the 'carbon footprint', but also how a development contributes to the long term economic and social well-being of an area.

Proposed features include:

- Retaining existing trees, including all the protected and mature trees around the boundary of the site.
- New tree planting.
- Significant separation distances between existing houses and new dwellings to preserve privacy.
- Private gardens provided for all the houses and cottages.
- Shared landscaped courtyards for the apartment buildings.
- Two new areas of public open space, including a children's play area and a mini neighbourhood park.
- At least 10% of the new residential development's energy demand provided from onsite renewable energy sources.

Environmental Impact Assessment

As part of the outline planning application for Hazelwood an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be prepared to consider the environmental impacts of development and to propose any necessary mitigation measures.

The EIA will deal with all the relevant topics including ground conditions; traffic and transport; air quality; noise and vibration; ecology and nature conservation (including a tree survey); archaeology; landscape and views; lighting; water resources and utilities. The results of the EIA will then be submitted as part of the planning application in the form of an Environmental Statement.

Spelthorne Borough Council has advised London Irish that an EIA is not required to support the outline planning application for the new residential development. Nevertheless, we will submit a Planning Supporting Statement covering all relevant environmental matters.



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Community Benefits



London Irish is committed to creating two sensitive developments that sit comfortably within their local environment.

They will not only minimise the impact of their presence on the local community, but will actively enhance their settings and provide benefits to their neighbours and the wider area.

We will provide a range of benefits for the local community including:

- More rugby pitches available in the Borough, including Spelthorne's first 3G pitch (which will also be available for other sporting activities, such as Association Football).
- New publicly accessible open space and attractive landscape treatments.
- A care home for older people.
- An increase in our community outreach programme with local schools and community groups.
- Access to rugby pitches for the local community/schools.
- Better club facilities to enable the retention of London Irish in Sunbury and allow continued growth.
- Further job opportunities.

We will also be making a financial contribution to Spelthorne Borough Council for transport improvements to ensure that the proposal has a positive impact on the local area.



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What Happens Next?



The current timetable*

July 2009

First stage of consultation with local resident groups and stakeholders

September 2009

Public exhibition and analysis of all the feedback received – review of proposals

October 2009

Reporting back to the community - how the proposals have changed

November 2009

Submission of a planning application to Spelthorne Borough Council

Winter 2009

The Council undertakes its own statutory consultation process

Spring 2010

Planning decision by Spelthorne Borough Council

**The development timetable may be subject to change*

We would like to hear your views and ideas about our outline proposals for both Hazelwood and The Avenue.

To ensure all feedback is formally recorded and to provide a one-stop shop for community enquiries, London Irish has appointed specialist Community Relations Consultants, M&N Communications.

Feedback can be provided in the following ways:

- By completing a feedback form:
 - hard copy provided at the exhibition (post in the box) or
 - online www.london-irish.com or www.london-irish-amateur.co.uk
- By providing comments via emailing t.parnell@mncommunications.co.uk
- By calling M&N Communications on 01483 415 915

What happens to your feedback?

Following this consultation exercise we will look carefully at all your comments and as far as possible, we will take them into account in the design of the scheme. We will then feedback the results of our consultation to the local community and as our ideas move forward, we will continue to keep you informed and welcome any further suggestions and comments.

Who can we talk to when we have an issue or a query to discuss?

Please contact M&N Communications
Tel: 01483 415 915 or email
t.parnell@mncommunications.co.uk