



Planning Committee
4th November 2025

Application No	:	25/00953/FUL Full Application
Location	:	Tennis Courts South West Of Changing Rooms Oaklands Park Moulsham Street Chelmsford
Proposal	:	Installation of a fence-mounted LED floodlighting system at the Tennis Courts, including minor fencing works and associated electrical infrastructure.
Applicant	:	Mr Andrew Wilshaw Chelmsford Tennis Academy
Agent	:	Mr Andrew Wilshaw
Date Valid	:	30th July 2025

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1. Executive summary

- 1.1. This application is before the Committee in the interests of transparency because a neighbour objection has been received and the application site is a Council owned asset.
- 1.2. The site is within the Chelmsford Urban Area and New London Road Conservation Area, and the proposal is for the installation of floodlighting and associated infrastructure at the existing tennis courts within the south part of Oaklands Park. The tennis courts also adjoin residential properties to the southwest and northwest and Oaklands House a Grade II Listed Building is to the north of the courts.
- 1.3. The proposal would be acceptable in design terms and would not impact the New London Road Conservation Area or the setting of Oaklands House. The impact of the floodlights on the amenity of residential neighbours is also acceptable.
- 1.4. The application is recommended for approval, subject to the conditions set out at the end of this report.

2. Description of site

- 2.1. The application site is the tennis courts within the southern part of Oaklands Park, south of Oaklands House which is a Grade II Listed Building now in use as a museum. It consists of three playing courts within a walled and fenced rectangular parcel of land.
- 2.2. The site adjoins a children's play area to the southeast, a residential block of flats to the southwest, and residential detached houses to the northwest.
- 2.3. Oaklands House, Park and the courts are all situated within the New London Road Conservation Area.

3. Details of the proposal

- 3.1. The proposal is to install a fence mounted LED floodlight system to the southeast boundary and the northwest boundary of the tennis courts, including minor fencing works and associated electrical infrastructure.
- 3.2. The proposed floodlights would be a long narrow strip of LEDs positioned at a height of 2.75m from ground level on the boundary treatments. The floodlights would extend for a length of approximately 35.9m along the southeast and northwest boundaries.
- 3.3. To the southeast elevation, the proposal also includes new 3m high twin wire fencing in place of the existing palisade fencing. To the northwest elevation the proposal includes installation of twin wire fence posts.
- 3.4. The proposed floodlighting would enable the extended use of three tennis courts in the evening, particularly over the winter months. They are proposed to be in use until 10pm.

4. Other relevant applications

- 4.1. No relevant applications.

5. Summary of consultations

- Public Health & Protection Services – potential disturbance to residents, but acceptable subject to conditions.
- Essex County Council Highways – acceptable subject to conditions.
- South Essex Parking Partnership – No representation received.
- Leisure & Heritage Services – Support the application.
- Sport England Eastern Region – Standing advice.
- Local residents – Two representations received.

- 5.1. One letter of objection has been received.

- questions the need for floodlights
- their installation will encourage people to stay in the park after it's closed.
- floodlights could encourage antisocial behaviour.
- plans have insufficient detail, specifically regarding their placement and brightness and concern light would be intrusive.

- 5.2. One letter of support has been received.

6. Planning considerations

Main Issues

- 6.1. **The appearance of the proposed floodlighting and minor fencing works on the character of the Conservation Area.**
- 6.2. The application site lies within the New London Road Conservation Area. Policy DM13 of the adopted Local Plan seeks to protect designated heritage assets. The impact of any development proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset or its setting, and the level of any harm, will be considered against any public benefits arising from the proposed development.
- 6.3. Part (C) of Policy DM13 relates to development in Conservation Areas. Development will be permitted where:
- i. the siting, design and scale would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area; and
 - ii. building materials and finishes are appropriate to the local context; and
 - iii. features which contribute to the character of the area are retained; and
 - iv. important views are preserved.
- 6.4. The application site has a longstanding history of use as tennis courts. The proposed floodlighting, fencing works and associated infrastructure are minor in nature and would be in keeping with the character of the existing tennis courts. They are considered to be discrete and

would not affect the setting of the listed building (Oaklands House) or the character of the Conservation Area.

- 6.5. Within the context of the street illumination on Princes Road and the limited hours of use, the lighting would not result in any additional heritage harm. There would be no conflict with Policy DM13 of the adopted Local Plan.
- 6.6. **The impact of the proposed floodlight on the amenity of the adjoining residential neighbours.**
- 6.7. Policy DM29 of the adopted Local Plan seeks to protect living and working environments.
 - i. safeguards the living environment of the occupiers of any nearby residential property by ensuring that the development is not overbearing and does not result in unacceptable overlooking or overshadowing. The development shall also not result in excessive noise, activity or vehicle movements; and
 - ii. is compatible with neighbouring or existing uses in the vicinity of the development by ensuring that the development avoids unacceptable levels of polluting emissions by reason of noise, light, smell, fumes, vibrations or other issues, unless appropriate mitigation measures can be put in place and permanently maintained.
- 6.8. The proposed lighting would be to the southeast boundary and northwest boundary, opposite one another to project light onto the tennis courts from a side-facing angle for tennis players.
- 6.9. There is a three-storey building of residential flat units to the southwest boundary and a two-storey residential house to the northwest boundary. No representations have been received which raise concern the light would be harmful to the well-being of occupiers.
- 6.10. Public Health & Protection Services note the introduction of lighting to the tennis courts has the potential to cause light disturbance to nearby residents, however, the light levels indicated on the isoline plan submitted demonstrate the light levels from the proposal would meet the guideline light levels outlined in the Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light. A condition ensuring the lighting is not used after 10pm would secure appropriate use of the lighting and impact on neighbouring occupiers.
- 6.11. Lighting to support evening use of tennis court facilities is appropriate within the area, and the use of lighting until 10pm is similar to existing nearby facilities such as Grove Lawn Tennis Club.
- 6.12. **The impact of the proposed floodlight on ecology**
- 6.13. Policy DM16 requires all development proposals to avoid negative impacts on biodiversity.
- 6.14. The application is accompanied by a bat survey from a qualified ecologist. The bat survey identified one bat species, common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* briefly foraging close to boundaries. As boundary vegetation is unaffected and outward light spill will be prevented, there is no reason that offences would be committed, or natural bat behaviour impacted as a consequence of floodlighting. Further survey/mitigation is not required.

Other Matters

- 6.15. Concerns have been raised regarding the use of the tennis courts in the evening hours and the use of the park in the evening.
- 6.16. The tennis courts are used in the evening during the summer months; however, tennis coaching at the courts is currently unable to continue as natural light levels diminish over winter. The proposal would support the existing use to continue. The *use* of the tennis courts themselves does not require planning permission, and the proposal does not seek permission for this, only the lighting and associated infrastructure to support their continued use.
- 6.17. The proposal would also not result in any material change of use of the park as the proposal relates only to the tennis courts. The parks opening hours begin at 8am and close as follows:

January	5pm	July	10pm
February	6pm	August	9pm
March	6pm	September	8pm
April	8pm	October	7pm
May	9pm	November	5pm
June	10pm	December	5pm

- 6.18. It is the Council's decision to set opening and closing hours of the park, and this remains unaffected by the proposal.
- 6.19. The applicant has confirmed that they would open and close the main gates to the park for clients using the tennis courts to access the car park within the grounds, and the courts. The proposal would not result in the park's public hours of operation changing.

7. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 7.1. The proposal is not CIL liable.

8. Biodiversity Net Gain

- 8.1 The development is exempt as is De Minimis as there would be no loss of habitat.

RECOMMENDATION

The Application be APPROVED subject to the following conditions:-

Condition 1

The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than 3 years from the date of this decision.

Reason:

In order to comply with Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Condition 2

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and conditions listed on this decision notice.

Reason:

In order to achieve satisfactory development of the site.

Condition 3

Prior to their use, details of the additional fencing hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason:

To ensure that the development is visually acceptable in accordance with Policy DM23 of the Chelmsford Local Plan.

Condition 4

The lighting installation hereby permitted shall not be used after the hours of 2200 and not before 0800 on any given day.

Reason:

In the interests of protecting the living environment of occupiers of neighbouring dwellings in accordance with Policy DM29 of the Chelmsford Local Plan.

Positive and Proactive Statement

The Local Planning Authority has assessed the proposal against all material considerations including planning policies and any comments that may have been received. The planning application has been approved in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework to promote the delivery of sustainable development and to approach decision taking in a positive way.

Plans to be listed on any Decision Notice:

ETC/25/009/01
ETC/25/009/02
Site Location Plan
O L01 Lighting

Appendix 2 – Consultations

Public Health & Protection Services

Comments
18.09.2025 - The introduction of lighting to these tennis courts has the potential to cause light disturbance to nearby residents. However, the submitted isoline plan indicates that light levels will meet guideline light levels outlined in Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light. I would suggest the proposed operating hours are imposed as a condition to ensure the lighting is not used after 10pm.

Essex County Council Highways

Comments
19.08.2025 - From a highway and transportation perspective the impact of the proposal is acceptable to the Highway Authority subject to the following conditions: 1. Prior to the first use of any external lighting / floodlighting within the development site, the light source shall be so positioned and shielded, in perpetuity, to ensure that users of the highway are not affected by dazzle and/or glare. Reason: To ensure that users of the highway are not subjected to glare and dazzle from lighting within the development in the interest of highway safety. The above conditions are to ensure that the proposal conforms to the relevant policies contained within the County Highway Authority's Development Management Policies, adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance and NPPF 2024.

Informative:

i. All work within or affecting the highway is to be laid out and constructed by prior arrangement with, and to the requirements and satisfaction of, the Highway Authority, details to be agreed before the commencement of works. The applicants should be advised to contact the Development Management Team by email at development.management@essexhighways.org

South Essex Parking Partnership

Comments

No response received

Leisure & Heritage Services

Comments

28.08.2025 -

Leisure & Heritage Services support the principle of the application as the new facility will help to improve the range and quality of sports facility provision in the City. In particular, tennis coaching and tennis development.

The proposal meets the ambitions of Chelmsford City Council's Our Chelmsford:Our Plan and particularly the priorities to:-

G: Improve opportunities for adults and children to live well, reducing health inequalities and social isolation, so that they can enjoy a healthy, safe and fulfilling life.

H: Help create a network of amenities and community facilities providing opportunities and access for people of all backgrounds to engage in healthy, active and socially connected lifestyles.

And the aim to promoting physical and mental wellbeing and reducing social isolation and provide access to sport, leisure and recreational activities that encourage healthy, active lifestyles.

We note that the proposed 10pm curfew is commonplace for such facilities in Chelmsford.

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Sport England Eastern Region

Comments
03.09.2025 - Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above application. Non-statutory planning advice The proposed development does not fall within our statutory remit (Statutory Instrument 2015/595) and, therefore, Sport England has not provided a detailed response in this case, but would wish to give the following advice to aid the assessment of the application. General planning guidance and advice can be found on our website https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport#planning_applications Loss of sports facilities If the proposal involves the loss of any sports facility, then full consideration should be given to whether the proposal meets Paragraph 104 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), is in accordance with local plan policies to protect sport and recreation facilities, and whether it meets any approved Playing Pitch Strategy or Built Sports Facility Strategy that the local authority has in place. New sports facilities If the proposal involves the provision of a new sports facility, then consideration should be given to the recommendations and priorities set out in any approved Playing Pitch Strategy or Built Sports Facility Strategy that the local authority may have in place. In addition, to ensure they are fit for purpose, such facilities should be designed in accordance with design guidance notes produced by Sport England, or the relevant sport National Governing Body. Design Guidance notes http://sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/ Meeting the needs of new housing If the proposal involves the provision of additional housing, then it will generate additional demand for sport. If existing sports facilities do not have the capacity to absorb the additional demand, then new and/or improved sports facilities should be secured and delivered in accordance with any approved local policy for social infrastructure, and priorities set out in any Playing Pitch Strategy or Built Sports Facility Strategy that the local authority has in place. Our Sports Facility Calculator is a tool that can be used to estimate the additional demand for key community sports facilities from a new population and convert that demand into sport facility requirements with indicative costs. Guidance on how to use the tool is available on the link below.

Sports Facility Calculator <https://www.activeplacespower.com/>

Other relevant guidance, tools and contacts

Active Design

In line with the Governments NPPF (including Section 8) and PPG (Health and wellbeing section), consideration should also be given to how new development, especially new housing, will provide opportunities for people to lead healthy lifestyles and create healthy communities. Sport Englands Active Design guidance can be used to help with this when developing or assessing a proposal. Active Design provides ten principles to help ensure the design and layout of development encourages and promotes participation in sport and physical activity.

NPPF Section 8 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/8-promoting-healthy-communities>

PPG Health and wellbeing section: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-and-wellbeing>

Sport Englands Active Design Guidance <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design>

Planning conditions

We maintain a list of model planning conditions covering issues such as - creation of new playing field, compliance with design guidance notes, sports lighting and community use.

Community Use Agreements (CUA)

Central Government wishes to see the availability of sports facilities to the wider community when they're not being utilised by the main user, as they see schools being at the heart of local communities. To help with this ambition we have developed a template community use agreement.

Planning Conditions and Community Use Agreements: <https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/planning-sport/planning-applications>

National Governing Bodies of Sport

Although Sport England is not in a position to provide a detailed response on this occasion, where relevant you may wish to consider advice provided by recognised sport National Governing Bodies (NGBs), a list of which is available on our website using the link below:

NGBs: https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/national-governing-bodies?section=expertise_advice_and_tools-section

Please note: this response relates to Sport Englands planning function only. It is not associated with our funding role or any grant application/award that may relate to the site.

Local Residents

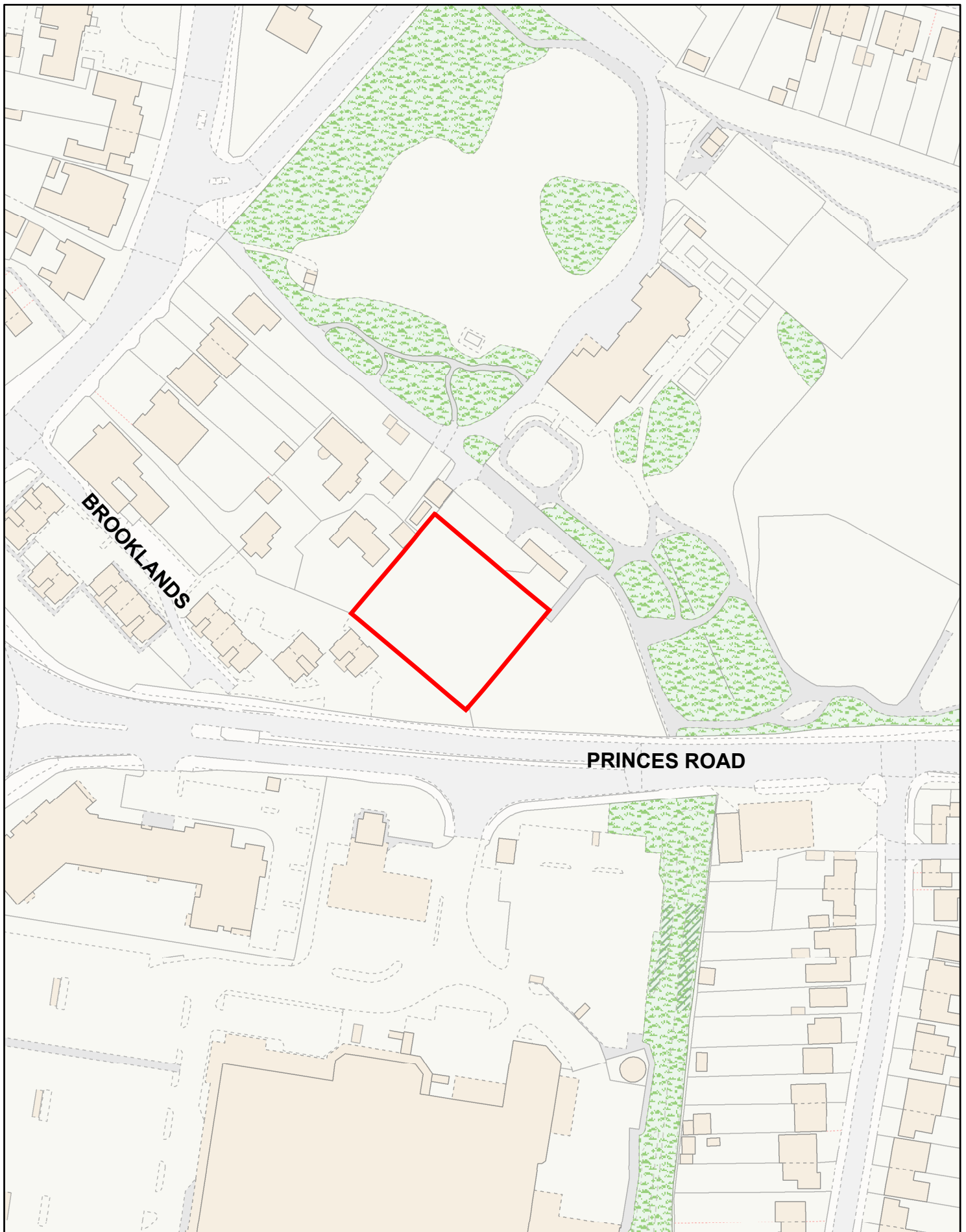
Comments

Support

My husband and I fully support the application - it's lovely to see the tennis courts back in use and being enjoyed by so many - flood lights will extend the period they can be used during the winter, and even though they may light up our house and garden, we are not at all concerned (it's why we have curtains) Good luck with the application.

Objects

As the park shuts at dusk, we don't see the need for floodlights on the court at all. Putting them in will encourage people to break the rules and stay in the park after it's closed. We feel floodlights could also encourage trouble in the park, especially as the tennis courts are frequently used by youths to play football. Those points aside, the plans don't include anywhere near enough detail for us to approve them with any level of confidence. For example, there aren't any details about the placement of the lights or how bright they may be - we feel they could be very intrusive. There aren't any details about the height or style of the proposed fences either.



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**Planning Committee
25/00953/FUL**

**Planning & Development Management
Directorate for Sustainable Communities**

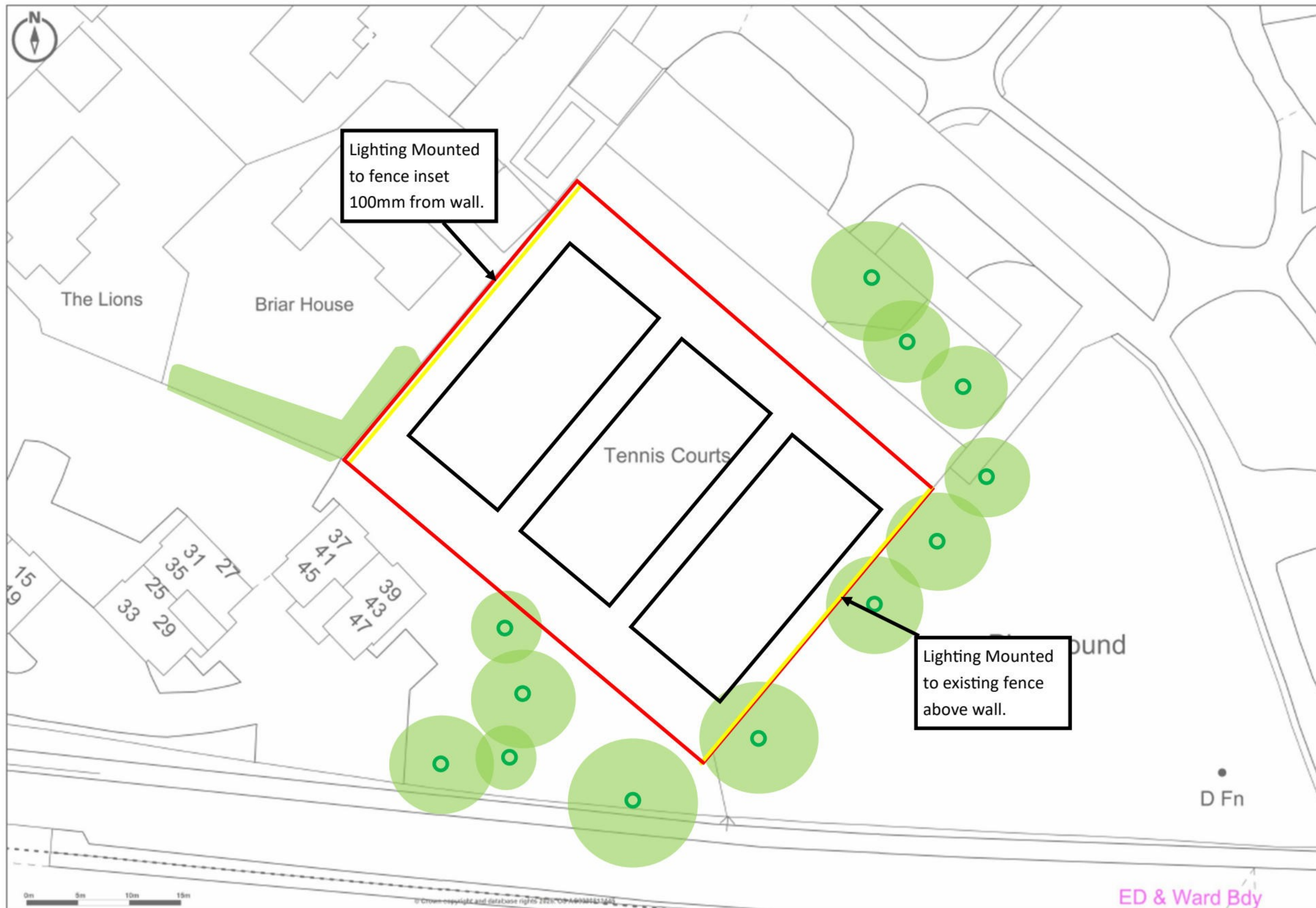
PO Box 7544 Civic Centre
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Project:

PROPOSED TENNIS
COURT LIGHTING
CHELMSFORD TENNIS ACADEMY

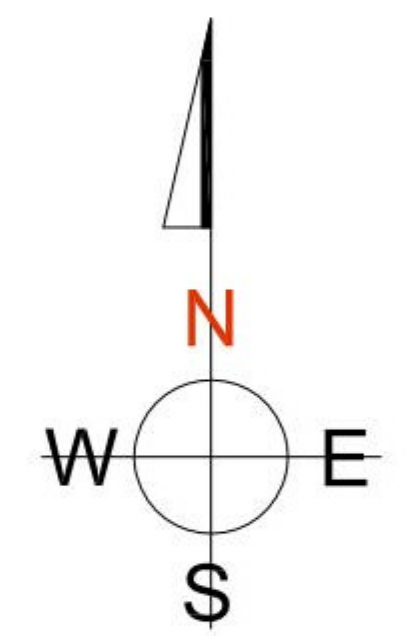
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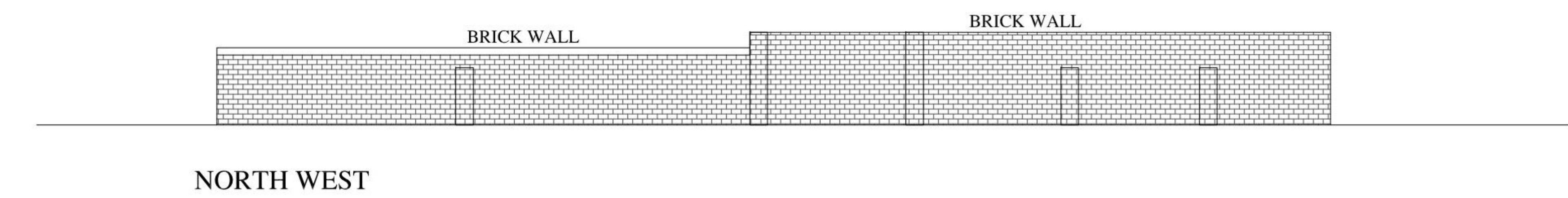
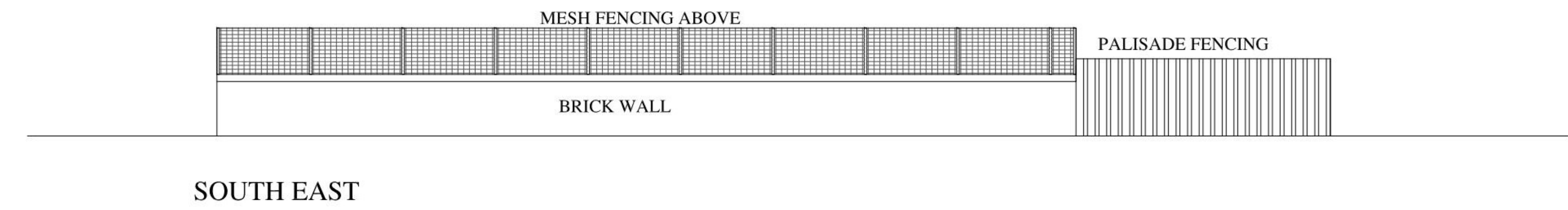
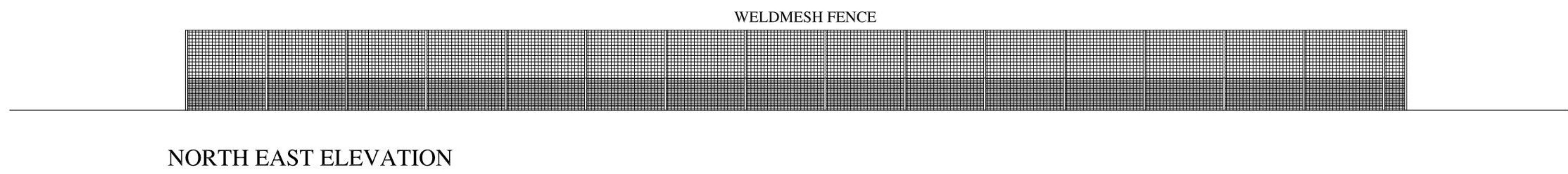
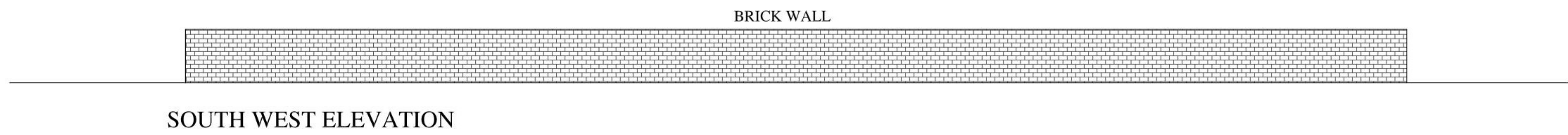
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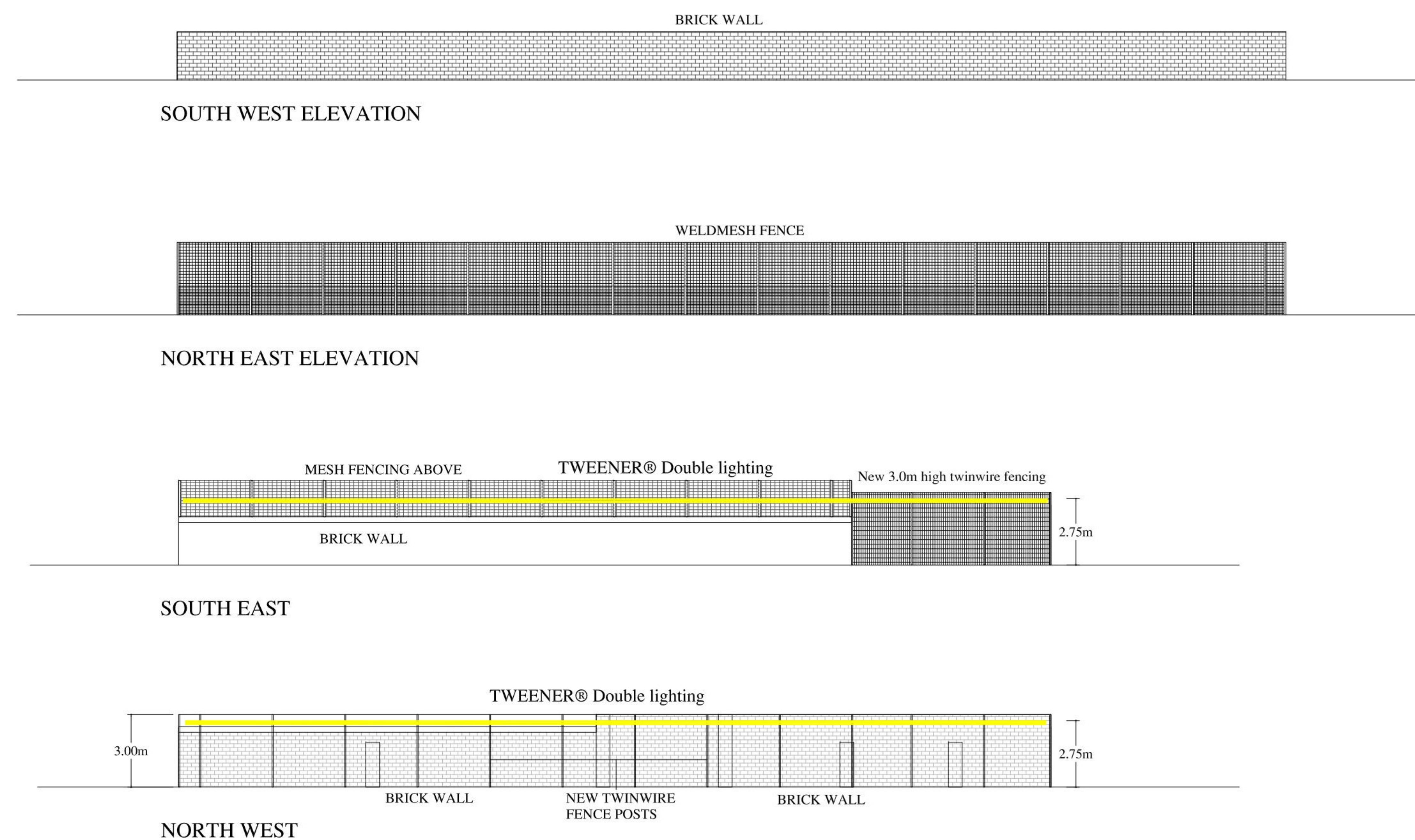
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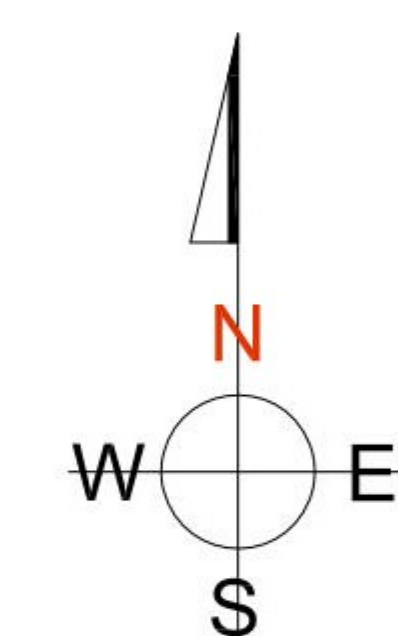


PROPOSED TENNIS
COURT LIGHTING
CHELMSFORD TENNIS ACADEMY

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