



LITIGATION SUCCESS FOR SAVE WIMBLEDON PARK PLANNING CHALLENGE GOES TO THE COURT OF APPEAL

November 19, 2025.

Save Wimbledon Park (SWP) has been granted permission to take its judicial review case to the Court of Appeal. The Appeal Court has decided that the High Court's decision in July 2025 to uphold the GLA's decision to grant the All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC) planning permission requires legal scrutiny.

The planning permission granted by London's Deputy Mayor which is under challenge gave the go-ahead for the AELTC to build on the former public Wimbledon Park golf course, a significant part of the Wimbledon Park Estate Heritage Parkland, controversially sold by Merton Council in 1993.

The Rt. Hon. Lord Justice Holgate's reasons for giving permission included these words:

"The grounds of appeal are arguable with a real prospect of success. The case law on scheme benefits, deliverability, relevance, material considerations and irrationality merits review by the Court of Appeal."

A spokesman for SWP said:

"We are delighted with the grant of permission. There are a number of important flaws in the planning decisions which need to be resolved and we hope to be able to press ahead quickly with the appeal".

In parallel the AELTC is bringing its own proceedings against SWP in an effort to overcome the statutory public benefit trust which has protected the Park since it was purchased by Wimbledon Corporation during the First World War. That case is due to be heard by the High Court in January. The AELTC concedes that if the trust covers the land this proposed development cannot go ahead.

Earlier this month an attempt was made on behalf of the AELTC in the House of Lords to amend the Planning and Infrastructure Bill currently going through Parliament. The effect of the amendment would have been retrospectively to change the law to remove the trust over the land and make the High Court hearing irrelevant. The amendment was proposed without any consultation with stakeholders, no notice to SWP or any consideration of the "collateral damage" that might be caused to the

protection of other important sites coveted by developers. When Peers of all political persuasions spoke against it, the amendment was eventually abandoned.

SWP is highly critical of AELTC's tactics but is encouraged by the clear implication that AELTC itself believes it will lose the statutory trust case in January.

An SWP spokesman said:

"This is a David and Goliath struggle. The AELTC is a rich and well-connected corporate developer which has worked for decades to take over a substantial part of this highly protected public Park for its own purposes. It has been tireless in its attempts to brush aside the legal protections and to date has ignored the fact that it formally covenanted in 1993, when acquiring the underlying title from the London Borough of Merton at a knock down price, that it would never build on the land."

Christopher Coombe of SWP said.

"SWP has never been anti-tennis. We believe that it is high time for the AELTC to recognise the raft of legal and principled problems with its proposals and sit down and talk constructively with SWP and the local community. Flexibility and imagination will produce a better scheme both in the public interest and which provides the AELTC with the financial and commercial benefits it seeks than the one they keep trying to force through regardless of the legal barriers. The Community and SWP have shown that they can't be "steam-rolled".

ENDS

Notes:

There are three legal obstacles ("triple jeopardy") to the AELTC development plans:

1. The Judicial Review of the planning permission issued by the GLA, now heading for the Court of Appeal later next year.
2. The Statutory Trust which protects the land for public access and recreation, to be heard by the High Court also next year.
3. The Restrictive Covenants in which the AELTC promised never to develop the land, still to be enforced by the Courts.

For further information please contact

Christopher Coombe 07881 914962

Jonathan Morrish 07802 239416

Simon Wright 07957 144073

www.savewimbledonpark.org