# Wimbledon expansion faces new legal challenge after High Court dismissal



A campaign group opposing the expansion of the Wimbledon tennis site has announced plans to appeal to the Court of Appeal following the dismissal of its legal challenge by the High Court. Save Wimbledon Park (SWP) had contested the Greater London Authority’s (GLA) 2024 decision granting planning permission for the All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC) to almost triple the size of its grounds. The rejected proposals include the construction of 38 new tennis courts and an 8,000-seat stadium on the former Wimbledon Park Golf Club, which would enable Wimbledon qualifiers to be staged on-site for the first time.

The High Court ruling by Mr Justice Saini found that approving the expansion was a rational planning judgment made with regard to relevant factors. However, SWP contends that the judge did not sufficiently consider statutory trusts and restrictive covenants protecting the park, which they argue should significantly influence the planning decision. Jeremy Hudson, a SWP director, emphasised that the case concerns the public interest, highlighting the importance of safeguarding public open spaces like Wimbledon Park against unwanted development—a concern echoed by other green space campaigns across London.

The legal challenge centred on the status of Wimbledon Park as a Grade II\*-listed heritage site, partially designed by the renowned landscape architect Lancelot “Capability” Brown. SWP’s barristers argued that trusts and covenants governing the land’s use were effectively ignored in the planning process. The GLA and AELTC countered that these restrictions were not material to the decision. Mr Justice Saini’s ruling sided with the defendants, confirming the decision as balanced and lawful.

Community figures, including comedian Andy Hamilton and actress Thelma Ruby, have voiced opposition to the expansion. Hamilton described the plans as coming at a “devastating cost to the local environment and community,” while Ruby warned that the proposals would “desecrate a precious heritage landscape.” Despite this, the All England Club has maintained that the development will bring significant benefits. Debbie Jevans, chairwoman of the AELTC, claimed the project would provide 27 acres of newly accessible parkland to the public alongside improved community facilities.

The planning approval followed a complex process: Merton Council approved the expansion, Wandsworth Council rejected it, and the Mayor of London’s office, under Deputy Mayor Jules Pipe, ultimately took responsibility. Mayor Sir Sadiq Khan recused himself due to prior public support for the plans. Pipe emphasised that the benefits outweighed potential harms, highlighting the project’s contribution to London’s sporting reputation and infrastructure. Sir Sadiq later stated the development would cement Wimbledon’s status as the world’s greatest tennis competition and London’s position as a leading sporting capital.

The scheme involves not only new courts and a stadium but also the construction of maintenance buildings, access points, and reconfiguration of parkland, including work on Wimbledon Lake. Critics remain concerned about the impact on Metropolitan Open Land protections and public access rights enshrined in law and covenants. Historic England recognises Wimbledon Park’s national significance as a Grade II\*-listed park and garden, underscoring the need to carefully balance heritage preservation with development.

Following the High Court’s dismissal of the judicial review, Save Wimbledon Park has filed an application for permission to appeal. It argues that legal errors influenced the outcome and that essential protections for the public open space were improperly applied. The decision on whether to grant the appeal is expected later this year. Meanwhile, construction is poised to move forward, pending any successful legal intervention.

This dispute highlights tensions between urban development and conservation in London, where pressures for major projects often clash with longstanding heritage and green space protections. The Wimbledon expansion project is positioned at the heart of these debates, reflecting broader questions about public land use, sporting infrastructure, and community benefit versus environmental and historical preservation.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/campaign-group-seeks-to-appeal-against-wimbledon-expansion-ruling-4WX7WGBTMZOL3EGPQZZPY6C7GA/), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/sport/tennis/articles/cy89n5k8j1no), [[3]](https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-07-21/wimbledon-expansion-set-to-proceed-after-campaign-group-loses-legal-challenge), [[4]](https://www.theplanner.co.uk/2025/07/23/legal-challenge-wimbledon-expansion-dismissed)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/campaign-group-seeks-to-appeal-against-wimbledon-expansion-ruling-4WX7WGBTMZOL3EGPQZZPY6C7GA/), [[3]](https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-07-21/wimbledon-expansion-set-to-proceed-after-campaign-group-loses-legal-challenge), [[4]](https://www.theplanner.co.uk/2025/07/23/legal-challenge-wimbledon-expansion-dismissed)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/campaign-group-seeks-to-appeal-against-wimbledon-expansion-ruling-4WX7WGBTMZOL3EGPQZZPY6C7GA/), [[3]](https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-07-21/wimbledon-expansion-set-to-proceed-after-campaign-group-loses-legal-challenge), [[6]](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000852/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/campaign-group-seeks-to-appeal-against-wimbledon-expansion-ruling-4WX7WGBTMZOL3EGPQZZPY6C7GA/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/campaign-group-seeks-to-appeal-against-wimbledon-expansion-ruling-4WX7WGBTMZOL3EGPQZZPY6C7GA/), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2024/jan/22/mayor-of-london-office-wimbledon-expansion), [[7]](https://www.the-independent.com/bulletin/news/wimbledon-tennis-expansion-court-b2793014.html)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/campaign-group-seeks-to-appeal-against-wimbledon-expansion-ruling-4WX7WGBTMZOL3EGPQZZPY6C7GA/), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/sport/tennis/articles/cy89n5k8j1no), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2024/jan/22/mayor-of-london-office-wimbledon-expansion), [[6]](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000852/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/campaign-group-seeks-to-appeal-against-wimbledon-expansion-ruling-4WX7WGBTMZOL3EGPQZZPY6C7GA/), [[3]](https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-07-21/wimbledon-expansion-set-to-proceed-after-campaign-group-loses-legal-challenge), [[4]](https://www.theplanner.co.uk/2025/07/23/legal-challenge-wimbledon-expansion-dismissed), [[7]](https://www.the-independent.com/bulletin/news/wimbledon-tennis-expansion-court-b2793014.html)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/campaign-group-seeks-to-appeal-against-wimbledon-expansion-ruling-4WX7WGBTMZOL3EGPQZZPY6C7GA/), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/sport/tennis/articles/cy89n5k8j1no), [[3]](https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-07-21/wimbledon-expansion-set-to-proceed-after-campaign-group-loses-legal-challenge), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2024/jan/22/mayor-of-london-office-wimbledon-expansion), [[6]](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000852/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/campaign-group-seeks-to-appeal-against-wimbledon-expansion-ruling-4WX7WGBTMZOL3EGPQZZPY6C7GA/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/sport/tennis/articles/cy89n5k8j1no> - BBC Sport reports that the All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC) seeks to almost triple Wimbledon’s grounds by adding 39 new courts and an 8,000‑seat show court on the former Wimbledon Park Golf Club. The plan received approval from the Greater London Authority after earlier refusals, with Deputy Mayor Jules Pipe directing the decision. Proposals include expanding parkland and reconfiguring access while allowing Wimbledon qualifiers to be staged on site. Save Wimbledon Park (SWP) has voiced strong opposition, arguing the build would erode green space and heritage protections. The article notes the economic and community arguments advanced by supporters worldwide.
3. <https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-07-21/wimbledon-expansion-set-to-proceed-after-campaign-group-loses-legal-challenge> - ITV News London confirms that the High Court has rejected Save Wimbledon Park’s judicial challenge to the AELTC’s expansion, clearing the way for construction of 39 courts and an 8,000‑seat arena on Wimbledon Park. The report notes the scheme was approved by the Greater London Authority after earlier refusals, with debate focused on Metropolitan Open Land safeguards and public access. SWP alleges the decision breaches covenants and trusts protecting the site, while the AELTC emphasises community benefits, a new park, and on‑site qualification matches. Legal options, including potential appeals, are highlighted as the campaign pursues further action longer-term consequences remain.
4. <https://www.theplanner.co.uk/2025/07/23/legal-challenge-wimbledon-expansion-dismissed> - The Planner reports that London's High Court has dismissed Save Wimbledon Park’s judicial review, allowing the AELTC redevelopment to proceed. The scheme comprises 39 new courts and an 8,000‑seat showcourt on Wimbledon Park, with Metropolitan Open Land considerations central to the case. The article notes that Merton Council had approved the plans, while Wandsworth Council had refused them, and that the Mayor’s Office of Jules Pipe represented City Hall. SWP states it will pursue an appeal to the Court of Appeal, arguing that legal errors affected the outcome and that public open space protections were misread according to the report.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2024/jan/22/mayor-of-london-office-wimbledon-expansion> - The Guardian reports that the Mayor of London's office assumed responsibility for the Wimbledon expansion decision, directing it to be determined under London planning procedures due to its city-wide significance. It notes the project involves creating an 8,000-seat show court and 38 grass courts on Wimbledon Park, a Grade II\*-listed site. Merton approved the scheme, while Wandsworth refused it, triggering City Hall involvement. Deputy Mayor Jules Pipe is reported as directing the process, with supporters arguing the scheme will deliver public parkland and community benefits, while opponents warn of environmental and heritage risks. The article outlines competing views across central government briefing.
6. <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000852/> - Historic England confirms Wimbledon Park as a Grade II\*-listed park and garden, reflecting its national historic importance. The listing recognises Capability Brown landscape elements and the park’s long-standing public function, owned by Merton Council with the golf course land owned by the All England Club. The page emphasises protection for the landscape and the need to balance heritage with development plans. It provides list-entry details, including the date of listing and the context of Metropolitan Open Land status, underscoring the legal framework used to safeguard the site’s historic character amidst proposals for expansion. Heritage guardians emphasise careful planning and consultation.
7. <https://www.the-independent.com/bulletin/news/wimbledon-tennis-expansion-court-b2793014.html> - The Independent reports that Wimbledon’s £200m expansion to add 38 new courts and an 8,000-seat show court has cleared a High Court hurdle, enabling work to begin subject to further legal questions. It describes Save Wimbledon Park’s challenge over Metropolitan Open Land status and covenants protecting public access. The article notes that the Greater London Authority gave approval, that Merton backed the plans, and that Wimbledon Council refused, prompting City Hall intervention. It highlights the potential for on-site Wimbledon qualifiers and the broader debate about heritage, green space, and community benefits versus environmental and landscape concerns.