

Shelf Life Limited

Tottenham Hotspur Football Club is hoping to spend the summer building 36 executive boxes on the popular 'Shelf terrace at White Hart Lane. Fans are aghast at the plans which will result in the loss of 11,700 standing places in order to attract high-spending businesses and their clients to the club.

The fans have now formed themselves into a protest group called LOTS (Left On The Shelf?) and are trying to force the club to back down. They point out that the Shelf offers one of the best terrace views in the country, and that thousands of regular fans who stand there every week will be dangerously packed in the remaining lower terrace, built to take just 8,000.

The proposed redevelopment will, according to club secretary Peter Barnes, cost £4.5m but, he says, only 30% of this is being spent on boxes, the rest on safety improvements (the need for which has, apparently, been discovered only in the last few weeks). Even if these figures are correct, LOTS argues that the club, floated on the stockmarket a few years ago, can afford it without boxes.

Tottenham made a £4.3m profit last year and already has 72 executive boxes. The club also has its own lucrative leisure-wear business, travel agency, publishing division, and has bought two clothing factories, as well as three adjoining shops in Wood Green.

The responsible planning authority, Haringey Council, has asked the club to put the boxes on the lower terrace, leaving the Shelf intact, and to submit plans for building more terracing behind one of the goals. It seems however, that there are no real planning grounds for turning down the application.

Some supporters are now suggesting that whereas some clubs have their name picked out in different coloured seats in new stands, the word depicted in Tottenham's proposed new stand will be Loadsamoney. •

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