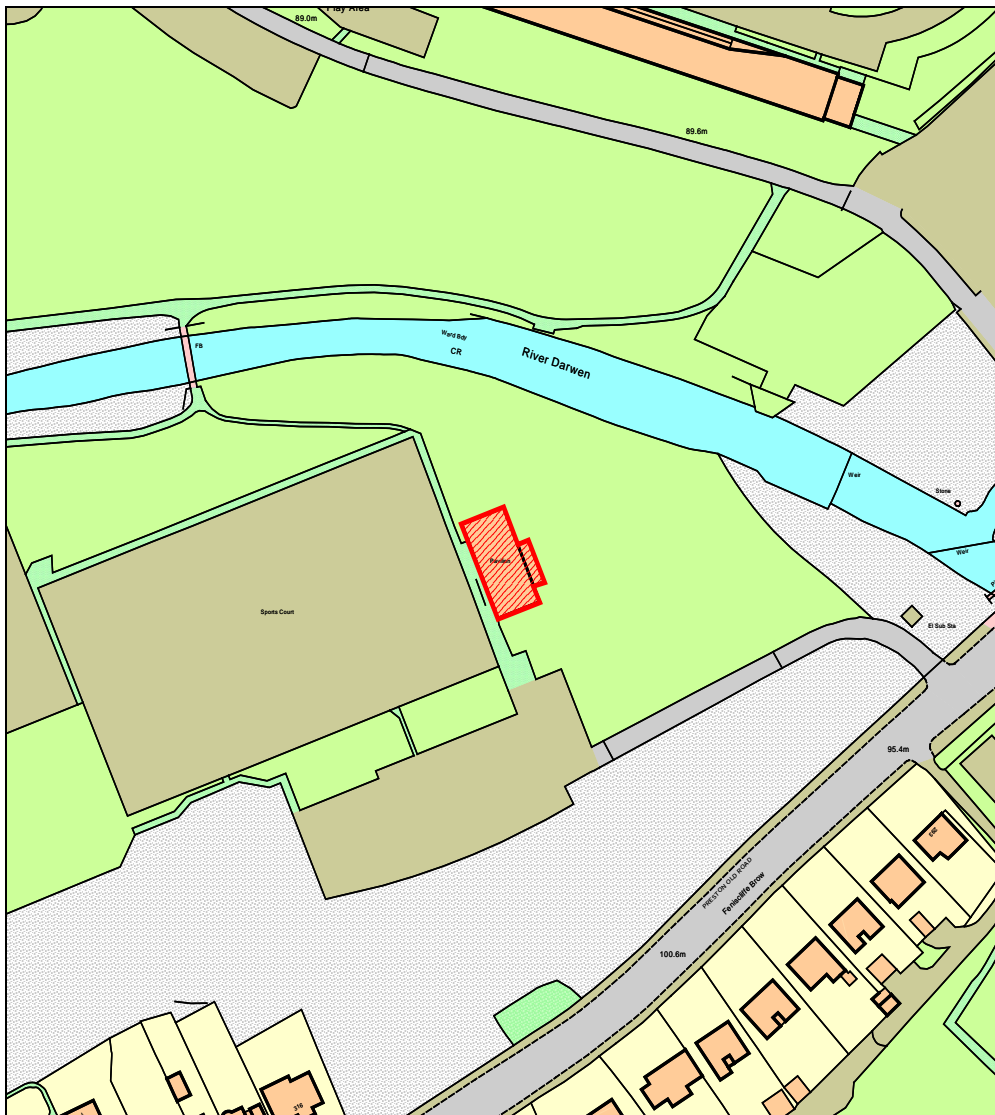


Proposed development: Full Planning Application (Regulation 3) for Façade upgrade to changing facilities with vinyl wrapping and graphics

**Site address:
Witton Country Park
The Wits Play Area
Preston Old Road
Blackburn
BB2 2TP**

Applicant: Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

**Ward: Livesey With Pleasington
Councillor Derek Hardman
Councillor John Pearson
Councillor Paul Marrow**



1.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The proposed development is recommended to be **granted** planning permission for the reasons as stated in Paragraph 4.1.

2.0 KEY ISSUES/SUMMARY OF PLANNING BALANCE

- 2.1 This application is presented to the Committee through the Chair Referral process in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, the applicant being Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. The proposed development has been publicised through two site notices.

- 2.2 The key issues to be addressed are as follows:
- Design and Green Belt amenity

3.0 RATIONALE

3.1 Site and Surroundings

- 3.1.1 The site of the proposed development is located in Witton Country Park, the site being bounded to the south by Preston Old Road and to the north by the River Darwen. The pavilion and its environs are sited within the Green Belt.
- 3.1.2 The setting is characterised by development previously considered to be commensurate with acceptable use of Green Belt land as currently set out in the National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 145b. The setting is thus comprised of artificial grass pitch surfaces, floodlights, ball stop fencing, hard standing areas that include provision for car parking and pavilion.
- 3.1.3 The changing facilities are housed in the pavilion, immediately to the east of the sports pitches. This is a low, single storey clad building, its roof being approx. 3.8 metres in height, with the slightest of pitches. The footprint measures 27 metres in length and, at its widest, 15.3 metres.

3.2 Proposed Development

- 3.2.1 The proposal is for the upgrading of the external façade of the existing changing facilities which have recently been refurbished internally. The proposed work is to be undertaken using vinyl wrapping with graphics to be developed by an artist. Owing to limited funds being available for the works, the upgrade is being restricted to the front (south-west) elevation and the main side (south-east) elevation (excluding the smaller rear extension wall), as demonstrated on the submitted drawing no. 6224/DA03-013. These are the elevations facing the pitches and the car park.

- 3.2.2 The works will involve losing the front elevation window openings to the west of the entrance, whilst the six windows in the east will be replaced with 1.99 metre high glazing in two single windows and one double window, and a double horizontal-emphasis window with a depth of almost 850 mm, the same depth as the existing end two windows.

3.3 Development Plan

- 3.3.1 Blackburn with Darwen Borough Local Plan Part 1 – The Core Strategy (January 2011)

Policy CS18: The Borough's Landscapes

- 3.3.2 Blackburn with Darwen Borough Local Plan Part 2 – Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (December 2015)

Policy 8: Development and People

Policy 11: Design

Policy 3: The Green Belt

3.4 Other Material Planning Considerations

- 3.4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2019):

Section 13: Protecting Green Belt Land

3.5 Assessment

- 3.5.1 Design and Green Belt Amenity. The fundamental aim of Green Belt Policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open – the essential characteristics of Green Belts being their openness and permanence (NPPF Paragraph 133).
- 3.5.2 The Government's Planning Practice Guidance states that openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be as relevant as the volume.
- 3.5.3 The provision of outdoor facilities for outdoor sport and recreation is listed in the NPPF as one of the exceptions to the prohibition of new buildings in the Green Belt (Paragraph 145b). The Council's Core Strategy is in accordance with this exception in that it promotes the active use of the Borough's landscapes through leisure and tourism where this is compatible with objectives relating to their protection
- 3.5.4 Since there is no proposal to increase either the footprint or the scale of the existing building, the sole consideration in respect of the Green Belt is the visual impact of the proposed vinyl wrapping and fenestration detail.

- 3.5.5 Policy 11 of the Local Plan Part 2 requires design to make a positive contribution to the local area, with materials reflecting local distinctiveness and character.
- 3.5.6 The pavilion as it is now is not considered to contribute much in the way of design or appearance to the setting, being purely functional as a changing area. The principle of an external change to its colour is therefore considered, in principle, to be acceptable.
- 3.5.7 The location of the facility within the Green Belt enables the sports area to enhance the leisure/tourism aspect of Witton Country Park; and the proposal for artwork to be used on the vinyl wrapping is considered to add to the distinctiveness of the setting without harming the visual amenity of the wider landscape. The relatively low height of the building ensures that the visual amenity of the artwork will be appreciated within its immediate context whilst the wider visual amenity provided by the river and Billinge Hill will continue as the backdrop that draws the eye beyond.
- 3.5.8 It is noted that the turquoise colour used in the submitted plans is not intended to be taken as the colour of the vinyl to be used. The architect and the annotation note on the plan itself both state that the final colour and graphics will be submitted as a discharge of condition, should this application be approved by Committee.
- 3.5.9 The proposed change to the fenestration is also considered to enhance the appearance of the building. The wood-panelled window openings to the left of the door are being removed, to allow for an area of colour. The increase in glazing to the right of the door is considered to provide a balance to the vinyl wall with a modern appearance that provides for a greater connectivity between the inside of the building and the external setting.
- 3.5.10 The proposed development is more than 85 metres from Preston Old Road and more than 120 metres from the closest dwellinghouse. The windows and vinyl covering are therefore not considered to unduly impact on either residential or highway amenity, in accordance with Policies 8 and 10 of the Local Plan 2.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Planning and Highways Committee approve the application subject to conditions which relate to the following matters:
- Development to commence within 3 years.
 - Materials relating to the window formations are to match the original.
 - Details of the vinyl covering and graphics and the colours to be used to be submitted prior to the commencement of development.

5.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 5.1 10/18/0963 - Refurbishment of two existing AGPs (Artificial Grass Pitches) with replacement artificial grass pitch surfaces, floodlights, ball stop fencing and hard standing areas. Approved by Committee 16th November 2018.
- 5.2 10/99/0459 - Provision of 6 mini soccer pitches, relocation of mobile changing rooms, extension of car park. Approved by Committee 29th September 1999.
- 5.3 10/94/1015 - Alterations and extensions to car parking to Sporturf and installation of low perimeter fence. Approved by Committee 26th September 1994.
- 5.4 10/84/1892 - Changing accommodation for general recreational purposes linked with the synthetic pitch. Approved by Committee 15th January 1985.
- 5.5 10/82/2141 - Synthetic grass floodlit play area (105m x 75m) with 3m high fencing and changing accommodation. Approved by Committee 24th November 1982.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 No neighbouring properties were consulted.
- 6.2 No statutory bodies were consulted.
- 6.3 Two site notices were erected. No comments have been received by the Council.

**7.0 CONTACT OFFICER: John Wilson, Planner, Development Management
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8.0 DATE PREPARED: 19th December 2019