

Item B. 1	05/00688/FUL	Permit Full Planning Permission
Case Officer	Mrs Helen Lowe	
Ward	Chisnall	
Proposal	Erection of changing facilities, spectator stands and fence to enclose existing football pitch.	
Location	Charnock Richard Football Club Land To West Of Charter Lane Charnock Richard Lancashire	
Applicant	Charnock Richard Football Club	
Background	<p>In April 1996 planning permission was granted to change the use of an agricultural field at the corner of Charter Lane/Chorley Lane, Charnock Richard to be used as a cricket pitch, two football pitches and a car park. The current application relates to the land presently used as a car parking area and one football pitch in the north west corner of the site. In March 2002 permission was granted for a cricket pavilion to the south of the current application site.</p> <p>This application proposes the erection of changing facilities (in a building measuring 15.8m by 8.6m by 2.6m to eaves height and 4.9 m to ridge height), the erection of two spectator stands (measuring 30m by 3m by 2.8m), two technical areas (measuring 1m by 5.1m by 1.9m high), a 1.1m high pitch perimeter barrier and boundary fencing consisting of a 3m high v-mesh fence.</p> <p>The proposals have been substantially amended a number of times from those plans originally submitted and additional information has been submitted.</p>	
Planning Policy	<p>The application site lies within the Green Belt, as defined in the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review. The following policies from the Local Plan are considered relevant:</p> <p>GN5 Building Design and Retaining Existing Landscape Features and Natural Habitats DC1 Development in the Green Belt EP21A Light Pollution TR4 Highway Development Control Criteria LT14 Public, Private, Educational and Institutional Playing Fields, Parks and Other Recreational Open Space</p> <p>The following central government guidance is also considered relevant:</p> <p>PPG2 Green Belts PPG17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation</p>	
Planning History	9/95/00496/COU fields and car park Approved 10/04/96	Change of use of agricultural land to playing

BCN28 Non-compliance with conditions 3 and 5 of application
9/95/95/496

Served 19/09/96

BCN38 Non-compliance with conditions 2, 5, 6, 7, 8 of application
9/95/496

Served 06/03/97

9/01/01061/FUL Erection of clubhouse/changing rooms

Approved 37/03/02

(Applicant: Charnock Richard Cricket Club)

Consultees Responses

Charnock Richard Parish Council: Object to the proposals on the following grounds:

- Highway safety;
- Impact of floodlights on residents;
- Wooden fence would be intrusive, an eyesore, detract from the rural nature and village scene and be a target for vandalism;
- Proposed screening once fully grown would obstruct the open views across the fields;
- Proposals are too big and beyond the requirements of the village.

Lancashire County Council Archaeological Service: No further archaeological response necessary.

Sport England North West: No objection (the proposed development is ancillary to the principal use of the site as a playing field or playing fields and does not affect the quantity or quality of pitches or adversely affect their use.

Lancashire County Council Highways: No objections, subject to conditions regarding provision of visibility splays and hard surfacing that were previously imposed on application 9/95/00496/COU being imposed on the current application.

Environmental Services: No objections.

Under policy LT14 the proposals should be of a size and scale which does not detract from the character of the open space.

Third Party Representations

A petition signed by 200 people in support of the application has been received.

Chorley CPRE strongly objects to the proposed floodlights. Floodlighting would represent light pollution and diminish the rural aspect and tranquillity of this part of the Green Belt and countryside.

Sixteen letters of objection (nine of which were copies of a duplicated letter submitted individually by each household) were received in response to the initial consultation. A further 17 letters of objection (seven of which were a duplicated letter, and three from one address) were received in response to the first set of amended plans and information received. They make the following comments on the application:

- The omission of flood lights from the pitch, even though this is a requirement of the North West Counties League Ground Grading, is of concern;
- Lighting from the car park will have considerable detrimental impact upon the ambience of the vicinity and be intrusive to properties overlooking the development. It will create considerable light pollution;
- The proposal will exacerbate existing traffic problems, especially if the car park is to be used as a training facility;
- The spectator facility would ruin the open aspect of the area;
- The need to have a team playing in a higher standard of football is questioned. A higher level of football will almost certainly exclude any player from the village, should this be the case the proposal will no longer be a village amenity;
- The scale of the facilities is disproportionate to a village the size of Charnock Richard;
- Increased noise pollution from increased training facilities;
- It would be out of keeping with the present nature of the area;
- It would attract vandalism;
- The North West Counties League attracts more spectators than the parking facilities would cater for.
- There is no need for these additional facilities, the existing facilities and those to be provided by the cricket pavilion are adequate.

Following a further set of amended plans, which removed floodlights, proposed hardsurfacing of the car park, alterations to the proposed boundary treatments and a reduction in the size of the changing facilities, a further 8 letters of objection were received. In addition to reiterating the comments above regarding impact on neighbour amenity, highway safety, impact on the countryside they make the following additional comments:

- The application is still fundamentally the same, and all the problems highlighted previously still exist;
- Improved facilities will encourage additional members and spectators, causing increased noise and traffic;
- There are no problems with vandalism in the area therefore the proposed fencing is unnecessary;
- Many of the facilities proposed are not a requirement of the North West

Counties, therefore there is no justification for the and will lead to further applications for floodlighting and so on;

- The requirement to upgrade the existing car park from them previous application has not been met.

A local councillor has commented that the proposed floodlighting and noise is of major concern for objectors, and that if floodlights are permitted this would set a precedent for the future if the club wanted to floodlight the playing pitch.

Lindsay Hoyle MP has written indicating that he has been contacted by a local resident and asks that all comments be taken into consideration.

Applicant's Case

The applicant has put forward the following in support of the application:

- The adjacent changing facilities for the cricket pavilion cannot be utilized for the football field as there is an overlap in the seasons;
- The proposed changing facilities will incorporate only those features necessary to meet the criteria of the West Lancashire League;
- The site of the pitch is totally open to the elements and as we normally get in excess of 100 spectators at our matches we consider it essential that cover is provided so that they may watch in some comfort;
- A boundary fence is considered essential because we believe that to allow open access to the site would result in our facilities being vandalised very quickly. Additional planting is proposed;
- It is not anticipated any increase in the numbers of people attending matches as a result of the proposals.

A letter from the West Lancashire Football League is also enclosed listing the problems that exist with the current facilities that need to be addressed at the earliest opportunity. These include concerns regarding the uneven size of the pitch, small size of changing facilities, small size of officials changing facilities and the need for separate changing facilities for male and female officials.

Assessment

The main issues to consider in assessing the application are: 1. accordance with policy, 2. landscape impact, 3. neighbour amenity, 4. highway safety

Policy

Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 'Green Belts' provides detailed guidance on development in the Green Belt. The provision of opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas is one of the objectives that the use of land in the Green Belt should aim to fulfil.

The construction of new buildings to provide essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land

in it are appropriate. Possible examples are given as small changing rooms or unobtrusive spectator accommodation for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation.

PPG17 states that, in the Green Belt, development for the provision of sport and recreation should be the minimum necessary and non-essential facilities should be treated as inappropriate development.

Permission was granted in 2003 (reference 9/03/01191/FUL) to extend the existing clubhouse/changing facilities, which lies to the east of the application site on the opposite side of Charter Lane, within the settlement boundary of Charnock Richard. This extension provided an additional dance floor and stage area to the existing club room. This extension has now been built. It was considered that the cricket pavilion (approved under 9/01/01061/FUL) did meet the test of being an essential facility for outdoor sport.

It is considered that the applicants have provided sufficient evidence to show that the existing changing facilities are inadequate to provide for the current level of sporting activity, and as such can be considered to be essential to the continued operation of the football club at its present level. The possibility of extending the existing facilities to the east of Charter Lane is constrained due to the size of the site and adjacent pitch and it is not possible to use the adjacent cricket pavilion currently under construction due to an overlap in the football and cricket seasons. I am satisfied that the proposed scheme now represents the minimum facilities necessary and does not constitute inappropriate development.

Policy LT14 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure that ancillary development to areas of open space will enhance the value of that space and does not detract from the character of the area. The proposals would enhance the level of facilities available at the club. The impact of the proposed facilities on the character of the area is discussed further below.

Landscape Impact

The addition of further built development on land to the west of Charter Lane, which is largely open and rural in character is of concern. One of the purposes of including land within the Green Belt is to check the unrestricted sprawl of urban areas.

The applicant has attempted to mitigate the impact of the proposed building and boundary treatments by locating the building adjacent to the northern boundary, the use of mesh fencing and enhancement of boundary hedges. The use of a 3m fence is undesirable, however a fence of 2m in height would not require planning consent. The site is well screened to the east by an existing boundary hedge, although this may need to be moved slightly at the entrance in order to provide adequate visibility splays.

A footpath runs alongside the western boundary of the site, the boundary hedge is gappy in places, however the applicant proposes a planting screen along this boundary and this could be secured by condition.

It is considered that the proposed spectator stands and technical areas are relatively small and unobtrusive in their scale and location (being sited adjacent to the field boundary). The changing facilities would be a minimum of 34 m from the boundary with Charter Lane, and approximately 40m from the nearest residential property (no. 39 Charter Lane).

The facilities being provided are those which one would typically expect to see at a local football club and it is acknowledged that activities of this type require areas of land which may be difficult to find within the settlement boundary. The landscape impact of the proposals is considered to have been adequately mitigated.

Neighbour Amenity

It is considered that the proposal would impact on the amenities of nearby residents in two main ways: increased levels of noise and disturbance arising from possible intensification in the use of the pitch, including the associated traffic and loss of visual amenity.

The loss of visual amenity and landscape impact of the proposals has been discussed above. The applicants have indicated that they do not anticipate that the proposals will lead to any increase in the number of people attending matches. Although sited adjacent to the settlement boundary, this area of Charnock Richard has a predominantly open and rural feel and any increase in activity would undoubtedly be noticeable to nearby residents.

However, this must be balanced against the fact that the site is already used for outdoor sports, that the clubhouse is also nearby (which is also used at night), the nearest residential property is approximately 40m away, the facilities are to be used to maintain an existing activity and the fact that the applicant does not expect the proposals to give rise to any increase in the numbers of people attending matches. It is not considered that a reason for refusal on these grounds could be sustained.

Highway Safety

The residents concerns regarding the existing parking problems on matchdays are noted. However, no objections have been received from LCC Highways and no increase in activity is proposed, therefore it is considered that, subject to the imposition of the conditions recommended by LCC Highways, that a reason for refusal could not be sustained on these grounds.

Other Matters

Officers are aware of the possible breach of condition that may have occurred with regard to the earlier application and the matter is being investigated. Any future applications for floodlighting or additional facilities would need to be the subject of a further application and considered at such a time.

Conclusion

This is a very finely balanced case and there are many considerations, especially relating to the location of the proposed site within the Green Belt. Facilities for outdoor sport and recreation may be acceptable in the Green Belt, but only where there is no conflict with the purposes of including the land within the Green Belt. It is often difficult to find sites to accommodate such uses within settlement boundaries. However, such facilities must be considered essential to be acceptable and on balance I

am satisfied that it has been proven that these facilities are essential and that no undue harm to the Green Belt would arise.

Recommendation: Permit Full Planning Permission Conditions

1. The proposed development must be begun not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The approved plans are:

Plan Ref.	Received On:	Title:
	1 July 2005	Technical area and pitch perimeter fence
	1 July 2005	Spectator shelter
	1 July 2005	Spectator shelter plans and elevations
	1 July 2005	Spectator shelter detail
	1 July 2005	Existing football ground plan
	1 July 2005	Location plan
	2 March 2006	Proposed football ground plan
	13 March 2006	Dressing room facilities detail (elevations)
	2 March 2006	Dressing room facilities detail (floor plan)

Reason: To define the permission and in the interests of the proper development of the site.

3. Before the development hereby permitted is first commenced, full details of the position, height and appearance of the proposed boundary fence, gates and turnstiles (notwithstanding any such detail shown on previously submitted plan(s)) shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No building shall be occupied or land used pursuant to this permission before all walls and fences have been erected in accordance with the approved details. Fences and walls shall thereafter be retained in accordance with the approved details at all times.

Reason: To ensure a visually satisfactory form of development, to protect the amenities of occupiers of nearby property and in accordance with Policy Nos. GN5 and DC1 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.

4. No development shall take place until a scheme of landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, notwithstanding any such detail which may have previously been submitted. The scheme shall indicate all existing trees and hedgerows on the land; detail any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development; indicate the types and numbers of trees and shrubs to be planted, their distribution on site, those areas to be seeded, paved or hard landscaped; and detail any changes of ground level or landform.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the area and in accordance with Policy No. GN5 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.

5. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of any buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interest of the appearance of the locality and in accordance with Policy No GN5 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.

6. The development hereby permitted shall not commence until full details of the colour, form and texture of all external facing materials to the proposed building(s) (notwithstanding any details shown on the previously submitted plan(s) and specification) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only be carried out using the approved external facing materials.

Reason: To ensure that the materials used are visually appropriate to the locality and in accordance with Policy No. GN5 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.

7. That part of the access extending from the kerb line/edge of carriageway for a minimum distance of 10 metres into the site shall be paved in permanent construction, in accordance with details to be first approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted.

Reason: To prevent loose surface material from being carried into the public highway thus causing a potential source of danger to other road users and in accordance with Policy No. TR4 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.

8. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1985, or any Order revoking or re-enacting the Order, there shall not at any time in connection with the development hereby permitted, be erected or planted, or allowed to remain, upon the land hereinafter defined, any building, wall, fence, hedge, tree, shrub or another device which will obstruct the view above a plane 1 metre above the crown level of the adjoining highway. The land affected by this condition shall be: that part of the site in front of a line drawn from a point 2.4metres measured along the centre line of the approved car park access from the carriageway of Charter Lane to points measures 90metres in each direction along the nearer edge of the carriageway of Charter Lane from the intersection of the centre line of the approved car park access.

Reason: To ensure adequate visibility, in the interests of highway safety and in accordance with Policy No. TR4 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.

9. No system of external illumination shall be installed at the premises hereby approved.

Reason: To define the permission and the interests of the visual amenities and character of the area and to safeguard the amenities of local residents in accordance with Policy Nos. DC1 and EP21A of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.
