

Application Number	07/2023/00708/FUL
Address	Withy Grove Park Brindle Road Bamber Bridge
Applicant	Mr Nathan McCracken South Ribble Borough Council Civic Centre Leyland PR25 1DH
Development	Installation of 8.9m 'Kompan Giant XL' tower slide unit
Officer Recommendation	Approval with conditions
Date application valid	01.09.2023
Target Determination Date	27.10.23
Extension of Time	None



1. Introduction

1.1 The application is proposed by the Council's Estates Team.

2. Report Summary

2.1. This application seeks permission to replace a fire damaged play tower unit with one of a similar design as described at Paragraph 5 below. The tower is located in the middle of the existing play area.

2.2. There are no statutory objections, and in response to publicity representation has not been received.

2.3. In policy and spatial separation terms the proposal is considered compliant, and having regard to the following commentary, it is recommended that the application should be approved subject to the imposition of conditions.

3. Application Site and Surrounding Area

3.1. The application site is a large play park located to the centre of Withy Grove Park. The park serves as a vital recreational space, providing opportunities for physical activity, social interaction, and play for children of various ages.

3.2. South-east of the play area is Bamber Bridge Leisure Centre, and south are recently developed sports pitches beyond which is the M6 motorway. In the west is Withy Grove House, and north across a deep tract of grassland are residential properties addressed onto Withy Trees Avenue and Hazel Close

3.3. The site is designated by Policies G7 (Green Infrastructure) and G12 (Green Corridors/Wedges) of the South Ribble Local Plan.

4. Site Context / Planning History

None related directly to this proposal site but of relevance are:

☐ 07/2020/00881/FUL - Proposed 2no. full sized sports playing pitches, remodelled skate park, extended car park, road alterations, detached storage containers, detached pavilion, and ancillary works. Approved Jan 2021

5. Proposal

5.1. The applicant seeks permission to replace a badly vandalised play tower unit, with a new and improved play structure. The existing tower is unsafe and unfit for use.

5.2. The proposed unit is a Kompan Giant XL Tower Slide Unit which comprises covered and open slides, active climbing and play sections, platforms and access steps. Its overall footprint would measure 9.2m x 1.5m, and it would have an irregular but maximum height of 8.9m.

5.3. The play structure has been designed with an emphasis on safety, durability, and inclusivity, catering to children of different abilities and age ranges within a secure, enclosed setting. Replacement of the existing tower will also enhance the visual appearance of the wider park environment.

6. Representations

6.1. Summary of Publicity

6.1.1. A site notice has been posted and four neighbouring properties consulted. Councillors Stevens and Hunter have also been notified.

6.2. No letters of representation received.

7. Summary of Responses

7.1. **Lancashire County Council Highways** have no objection.

7.2. **Highways England** have not responded but only do so when there are comments to make. The project is 130m away from the closest part of the motorway, screened by new playing pitches and at a significantly lower land level. Impact as a result of the proposal which is unlit is unlikely, but any late representation would be reported verbally at committee.

7.3. **Environmental Health** have no objection but expressed concerns about the proposed 'megaphone'. As a council owned scheme it is in the council's gift to take action should this equipment become a problem, but as there is no intention to amplify the megaphone – it is simply a decorative play piece a significant distance from neighbouring properties – a condition to curtail future use is considered sufficient.

8. Material Considerations

8.1. Site Allocation Policy

8.1.1. The site is designated under policies G7 (Green Infrastructure) and G12 (Green Corridors) of the South Ribble Local Plan. Core Strategy Policy 18 (Green Infrastructure) is also particularly relevant.

8.1.2. Policy G7 seeks to protect and enhance existing Green Infrastructure. Development will not be permitted in areas allocated by this policy unless alternative provision of similar or better community facilities can be provided within the locality; or it can be demonstrated that the site is not required to satisfy a local recreational need. Developers should also demonstrate that the scheme's public benefits would outweigh any loss of amenity or nature conservation value of the site. Core Strategy Policy 18 concurs with these sentiments but adds that the Green Infrastructure approach should '*protect and enhance the natural environment where it already provides economic, social and environmental benefits*'

8.1.3. Policy G12 is similar in its approach in that it seeks to protect the existing green corridor network in order to provide a buffer between urban areas. Development which would prejudice the open character and visual amenity of such areas will be restricted unless there are public benefits which outweigh the harm caused.

8.1.4. This proposal seeks to upgrade existing facilities which have been lost to vandalism, but for many years satisfied local recreational need. It would be surrounded by other play equipment and as such its impact on openness would not change; there would be enhancement rather than loss of amenity space. As existing hardstanding there would be no environmental loss, and from a site allocation perspective this proposal is policy compliant.

8.2. Additional Policy Background

Additional policy of marked relevance to this proposal is as follows:

8.2.1. *National Planning Policy Framework*

☐ The NPPF (2021) at Para 11: provides a presumption in favour of sustainable development which for decision making means approving development which accords with the development plan unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the framework as a whole. Other chapters of the NPPF of interest are:

☐ Chapter 8 (Promoting Healthy, Safe Communities) – planning should promote social interaction including opportunities for people to meet who might not otherwise come into contact with each other. Communities should be safe and accessible, enjoy high quality public space, and enable and support healthy lifestyles by encouraging active and continual use of public areas

☐ Chapter 12 (Achieving Well Designed Places) attaches great importance to the design of the built environment which contributes positively to making better places for people.

8.2.2. *Central Lancashire Core Strategy*

In addition to Policy 18 (above

☐ Policy 17 (Design of New Buildings) requires new development to take account of the character and appearance of the local area.

☐ Policy 24 (Sport & Recreation) ensures that everyone has the opportunity to access good sport, physical activity and recreation facilities (including children's play) by protecting existing sport and recreation facilities, unless they are proven to be surplus to requirements unless improved alternative provision is to be made.

☐ Policy 25 (Community Facilities) ensures that local communities have sufficient community facility provision by encouraging and co-ordinating new provision at locations accessible by all modes of transport.

☐ Policy 26 (Crime & Community Safety) seeks to reduce crime levels and improve community safety by providing adequate leisure and community facilities or activities, particularly in high crime areas, and especially for young people.

8.2.3. *South Ribble Local Plan*

In addition to site allocation policies G7 and G12 (above), the following are also pertinent:

☐ Policy F1 (Parking Standards) requires all development proposals to provide car parking and servicing space in accordance with parking standards adopted by the Council.

☐ Policy G17 (Design Criteria for New Development) considers design in general terms, and impact of the development upon highways safety, the extended locale and the natural environment.

☐ Policy H1 (Protection of Health, Education and Other Community Services and Facilities) - development proposing the change of, and/or loss of any premises or land currently or last in community use will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that these no longer serve the needs of the community in which it is located, or is no longer financially viable and have been demonstrated through a process agreed with the Council.

8.3. Other Material Considerations

8.3.1. Character and Appearance, and Impact Upon Neighbouring Properties

8.3.1.1. Dwellings beyond the site in the west, north and north-east are a minimum of 100m, 130m and 145m distance respectively.

8.3.1.2. The M6 lies 130m east at a higher land level beyond recently constructed playing pitches, and the leisure centre is 80m north. The site is otherwise surrounded by parkland and the existing play park.

8.3.1.3. Attendance to site is not expected to materially increase, but footpath access and levels of off-road parking are already appropriate.

8.3.1.4. The proposal is a modern, well designed but functional unit to the site's centre, and surrounded by other play structures. Materials are appropriate for such a use and suggest longevity and easy maintenance.

8.3.1.5. Overall, the proposal is not considered detrimental to the character and appearance of the area, or the amenity of neighbouring residents.

8.3.2. Natural Environment, Ecology, Noise and Air Quality

8.3.2..1. Natural Environment – no alteration to, removal of, or negative impact to trees, ecology or the wider natural environment

8.3.2..2. Noise – no increase in terms of noise anticipated from the site which is already in the same use. No objection subject to conditions on noise grounds from Environmental Health.

9. Conclusion

9.1. In policy and spatial separation terms the proposal is considered compliant, and having regard to the comments of statutory bodies and the above commentary, it is recommended that the application should be **approved subject to the imposition of conditions.**

RECOMMENDATION:

Approval with Conditions.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:

1. The development hereby permitted must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.
REASON: Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and suite of documents:
 - o Design Booklet (Kompani)
 - o Location Plan 29.8.23
 - o Planning Statement 29.8.23
 - o Proposed elevations PCT11062 (31.7.23 Kompani)REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policy 17 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy and Local Plan 2012-2026 Policy G17

3. Any construction works associated with the development shall not take place except between the hours of: 0800 hrs to 1800 hrs Monday to Friday and 0800 hrs to 1300 hrs Saturday
 No construction works shall take place on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority
 REASON: To safeguard the living conditions of nearby residents particularly with regard to the effects of noise in accordance with Policy 17 in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy

4. The 'megaphone' identified on Page 5 of the Design Booklet shall not in any way be artificially (mechanically or electronically) amplified unless agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.
 REASON: In the interest of the amenity and to safeguard the living conditions of the nearby residents in accordance with Policy 17 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy and G17 of the South Ribble Local Plan

RELEVANT POLICY

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework

Central Lancashire Core Strategy

- 3 Travel
- 17 Design of New Buildings
- 18 Green Infrastructure
- 24 Sport and Recreation
- 25 Community Facilities
- 26 Crime and Community Safety

South Ribble Local Plan

- F1 Car Parking
- G7 Green Infrastructure Existing Provision
- G12 Green Corridors/Green Wedges
- G13 Trees, Woodlands and Development
- G16 Biodiversity and Nature Conservation
- G17 Design Criteria for New Development
- H1 Protection of Health, Education and Other Community Services and Facilities