

Committee Date	12 th October 2023	
Address	High Elms Country Park Shire Lane Farnborough Orpington	
Application Number	23/03000/FULL1	Officer - Lawrence Stannard
Ward	Darwin	
Proposal	Installation of new Changing Places Accessible WC Pre-Fabricated Unit adjacent to existing Visitor Centre.	
Applicant	Agent	
Mr Max Graham London Borough of Bromley Council	Mr Nathan Pearce	
Bromley Council, Civic Centre St Blaise Stockwell Close Bromley BR1 3UH United Kingdom	51 Trinity Street Huddersfield HD1 4DN United Kingdom	
Reason for referral to committee	Councillor call in	
Outside Delegated Powers	No	

RECOMMENDATION	Permission
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<p>KEY DESIGNATIONS</p> <p>Article 4 Direction Adjacent Listed Building Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area London City Airport Safeguarding Green Belt Local Nature Reserve Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation</p>
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Representation summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbour notification letters were sent on the 21st August 2023. • The site notice was displayed on the 23rd August 2023. • A Press Ad was published on the 30th August 2023.
Total number of responses	0
Number in support	0
Number of objections	0

1 SUMMARY OF KEY REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- The development would appear acceptable in terms of its scale and design.
- The development would not harm the character of the area.
- The development would not result in an unacceptable impact upon the amenities of neighbouring residential properties.
- The development would not result in an unacceptable impact on the Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).
- The development would not result in an unacceptable impact upon the openness and visual amenities of the Green Belt.

2 LOCATION

- 2.1 The application site is situated within High Elms Country Park, which is a Local Nature Reserve comprising of 250 acres of countryside.
- 2.2 The site itself relates to an area adjacent to the existing visitor centre building. The submitted details indicate that the building would sit in a similar footprint to a detached timber clad prefabricated unit that has been demolished.

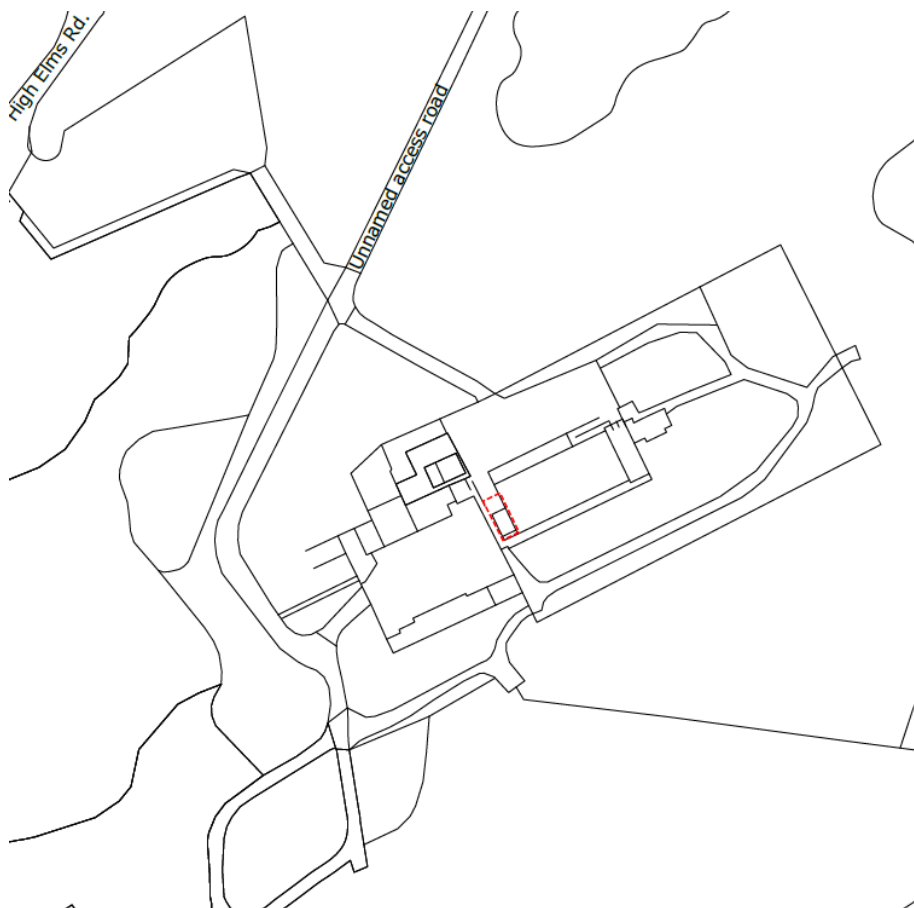


Figure 1: Site Location Plan



Figure 2: Photo of existing Visitor Centre and Proposed Site

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The application seeks permission for the installation of a new Changing Places Accessible WC Pre-Fabricated Unit adjacent to the existing Visitor Centre.
- 3.2 The proposed building would measure 4.83m by 3.5m and would feature a shallow pitched roof with a maximum height of 2.81m.
- 3.3 The facilities are intended to support the needs of profoundly disabled users which include washing and changing facilities. Level access would be provided for ease of access into the facility, which would be sited to allow easy access from the adjacent Car Park and adjacent BEECHE building.
- 3.4 In March 2022, Bromley Council was awarded £220K grant funding from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to deliver four Changing Places facilities at agreed locations across the Borough which included Crystal Place Park. Changing Places facilities support people with complex and multiple disabilities whose needs are not met by a standard accessible toilet. Changing Places facilities are larger and contain specialist equipment including an adult-sized changing bench and ceiling track hoist.

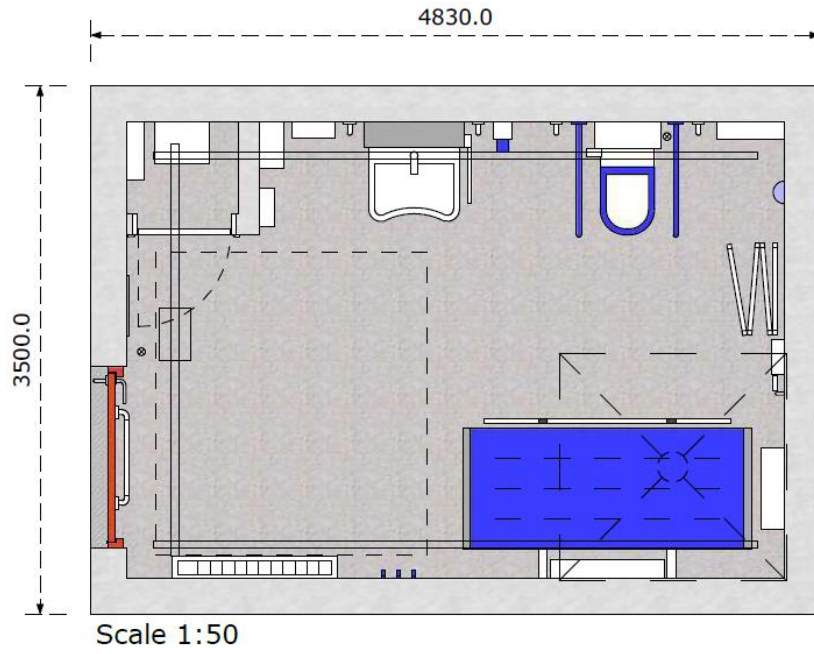


Figure 3: Proposed Floor Plan

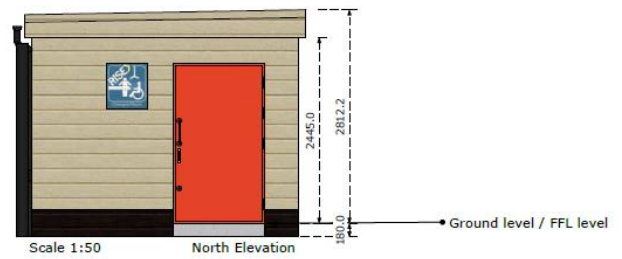


Figure 4: Proposed Elevations

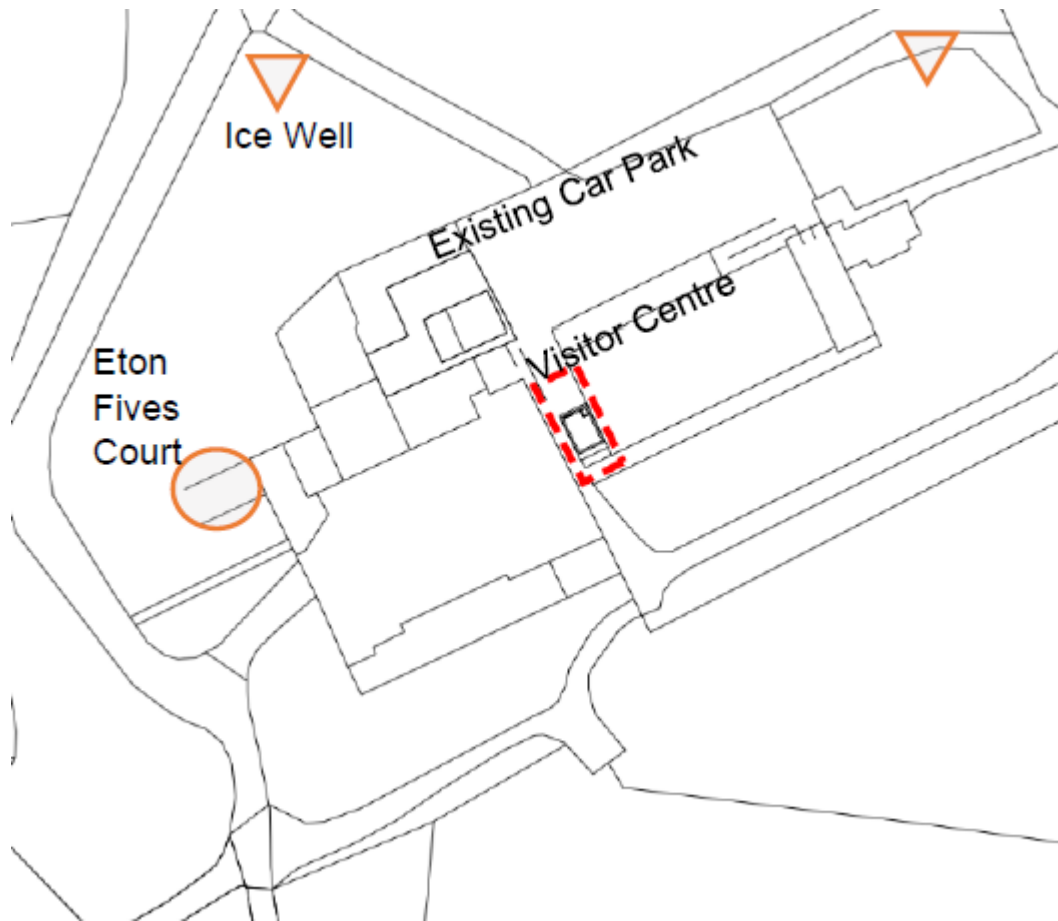


Figure 5: Proposed Block Plan

4 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 The relevant planning history relating to the application site is summarised as follows;

- 06/00979/DEEM3 - Demolition of existing building (nature centre) and erection of new sustainable single storey building for outdoor education with café and exhibition space and public amenities plus erection of new prefabricated unit for sustainable wood chip burner for heating building. - Permitted
- 06/04514/DEEM3 - Elevational alterations and reduced size of detached building permitted under ref. 06/00979 for erection of new sustainable single storey building for outdoor education with café and exhibition space and public amenities plus erection of prefabricated unit for sustainable wood chip burner for heating the building - Permitted

5 CONSULTATION SUMMARY

A) Statutory

Drainage Officer:

- No Comment.

Conservation Officer:

- No heritage objection.
- This facility will be visually discreet and built using traditional materials in my view.

B) Local Groups

No Comments were received from local groups.

C) Adjoining Occupiers

No comments were received from local residents.

6 POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

6.1 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) sets out that in considering and determining applications for planning permission the local planning authority must have regard to:-

- (a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application,
- (b) any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and
- (c) any other material considerations.

6.2 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) makes it clear that any determination under the planning acts must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.3 The development plan for Bromley comprises the London Plan (March 2021) and the Bromley Local Plan (2019). The NPPF does not change the legal status of the development plan.

6.4 The application falls to be determined in accordance with the following policies:-

6.5 National Policy Framework 2023

6.6 The London Plan (2021)

D1 London's Form and Characteristics
D3 Optimising Site Potential Through the Design Led Approach
D4 Delivering Good Design
D5 Inclusive Design
G2 Green Belt

6.7 Bromley Local Plan 2019

30 Parking
37 General Design of Development
38 Statutory Listed Buildings
46 Ancient Monuments and Archaeology – Ice Well, High Elms
49 Green Belt
57 Outdoor Recreation and Leisure
69 Development and Nature Conservation Sites
72 Protected Species
79 Biodiversity and Access to Nature
123 Sustainable Design and Construction

6.8 Bromley Supplementary Guidance

Urban Design Supplementary Planning Document (July 2023)

7 ASSESSMENT

7.1 Design, Layout, Scale (including Heritage Impacts) – Acceptable

- 7.1.1 Design is a key consideration in the planning process. Good design is an important aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. London Plan and Bromley Local Plan (BLP) policies further reinforce the principles of the NPPF setting out a clear rationale for high quality design.
- 7.1.2 Policy 37 of the Bromley Local Plan (BLP) and the Council's Supplementary design guidance seek to ensure that new development, including residential extensions are of a high quality design that respect the scale and form of the host dwelling and are compatible with surrounding development.
- 7.1.3 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on a local planning authority, in considering development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting, or any features of architectural or historic interest it possesses.
- 7.1.4 The proposed building would measure 4.83m by 3.5m and would feature a shallow pitched roof with a maximum height of 2.81m.
- 7.1.5 The site had previously hosted a 7.4m by 2.55m building adjacent to the Visitor Centre which had been used for a wood chip burner house, though it is noted that this has already been demolished. The proposed building would provide a reduction in footprint of 16.9sqm compared to the 18.87sqm of the previous building on the site, though it would be wider.
- 7.1.6 The proposed outbuilding is not considered excessive in its overall scale, height or bulk. Furthermore, its siting adjacent to the existing visitor centre would minimise its visual impact given that it would not appear highly visible from within the wider country park.
- 7.1.7 The external materials would consist of a timber cladding with a grey EPDM roof. It is considered that the external materials would be appropriate for its setting.
- 7.1.8 It is noted that there are three Grade II Listed structures in the vicinity of the proposal within High Elms Country Park, comprising of Eton fives courts, the Ice Well and the Lubbock Memorial. However, the Council's Conservation Officer considers that the proposed outbuilding would be visually discreet and built using traditional materials, and that therefore no heritage objection would be raised with regards to the impact of the development on the setting of the nearby listed buildings which would not be harmed as a result of the development.

7.2 SINC / Biodiversity Impact - Acceptable

- 7.2.1 The application site forms a Local Nature Reserve and is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).
- 7.2.2 Policy 69 of the Bromley Local Plan outlines that a development that may significantly affect the SINC would only be permitted if it can be shown that the reasons for the

development or benefits to the local community from the development would outweigh the interest or value of the site.

7.2.3 The submitted information outlines that the applicants consider the development would not significantly affect the nature conservation interest or the value of the SINC given that it would be small scale, built adjacent to an existing building, and on the footprint of a pre-existing building. It also outlines that the applicants consider the benefits it would provide by way of better accessibility to the park and centre and encouragement for more people to access nature and environmental education would outweigh any negative effects.

7.2.4 The proposed area for the siting of the building already consist of some hardstanding and lies adjacent to the existing visitor centre. Therefore, it is considered the siting would not result in any significant loss of habitat or any significant impact on the wider SINC.

7.2.5 It is therefore considered that the impact upon the SINC would be minor, and that the benefit of the provision of accessible changing facilities would outweigh any impact upon the SINC.

7.3 Green Belt - Acceptable

7.3.1 Policy 49 outlines that permission in the Green Belt will not be given for inappropriate development unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated that clearly outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness or any other harm.

7.3.2 The construction of new buildings on land within the Green Belt is considered inappropriate, unless it falls within one of the exceptions set out within Policy 49. This includes appropriate facilities for outdoor recreation which preserve the openness of the Green Belt, or an extension or alteration of a building that does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

7.3.3 Policy 57 outlines that development related to outdoor recreational uses on land designated as Green Belt will be permitted provided that the development constitutes appropriate development or use of the land, maximises opportunities to provide better access to the countryside and are small scale and do not adversely affected the character of function of the designated areas.

7.3.4 The proposed building would replace an existing building that was previously situated on a similar siting, though it has been demolished. The proposed building would provide a reduction in footprint of 16.9sqm compared to the 18.87sqm of the previous building on the site, though it would be wider. In any case, it is not considered that the development would appear excessive in its overall scale and bulk.

7.3.5 The development would also provide facilities to support the needs of disabled users. It is considered that this use would be considered to provide appropriate facilities for the purposes of outdoor recreation within the High Elms Country Park that would provide better access.

7.3.6 Having regard to the above, it is considered that the development would meet the exceptions of Policy 49, in that it would not appear excessive in its scale and that it would provide appropriate facilities for outdoor recreation whilst preserving the openness of the Green Belt. The development is therefore considered to form

appropriate development within the Green Belt, and would also therefore comply with Policy 57 given that it would form appropriate development that would provide better access to the countryside and would not adversely impact the character or openness of the Green Belt.

7.4 Residential Amenity – Acceptable

7.4.1 The proposed development would be sited adjacent to the existing Visitor Centre and would be a significant distance away from any nearby residential properties. Given the siting and modest scale of development it is not considered that it would result in any detrimental impact upon nearby residential amenity.

7.5 Other matters

7.5.1 Consideration has been given to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This includes the need to advance equality of opportunity for people who share a protected characteristic. The development would provide an accessible toilet and changing facility to meet the needs of visitors with complex and multiple disabilities whose needs are not met by a standard accessible toilet. This consideration would also weigh in favour of the development.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 Having had regard to the above it is considered that the development in the manner proposed is acceptable as it would not harm the amenities of neighbouring properties, the character of the area or the setting of the adjacent Listed Buildings. Furthermore, the development is considered appropriate development within the Green Belt and SINC location given that the benefit would outweigh any detrimental impact.

8.2 Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on the files set out in the Planning History section above, excluding exempt information.

Recommendation: Permission

Conditions

- 1. Time Period**
- 2. Compliance with approved plans**
- 3. In accordance with submitted materials**

Any other planning condition(s) considered necessary by the Assistant Director of Planning.