

Application Number:	2025/0040	Application Type:	Full Planning Permission
Proposal:	Installation of external ductwork for an air handling unit.	Location:	Marl Pits Swimming Pool Newchurch Road Rawtenstall Rossendale Lancashire BB4 7SN
Report of:	Head of Planning and Building Control	Status:	For publication
Report to:	Development Control Committee	Date:	24 th March 2025
Applicant:	Rossendale Borough Council	Expiry Date:	2 nd April 2025

Contact Officer:	Claire Bradley	Telephone:	01706 238636
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REASON FOR REPORTING	
Outside Officer Scheme of Delegation	
Member Call-In Name of Member: Reason for Call-In:	
3 or more objections received	
Other (please state):	Yes – Council application on Council Owned Land

HUMAN RIGHTS

The relevant provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights have been taken into account in the preparation of this report, particularly the implications arising from the following rights:

Article 8

The right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence.

Article 1 of Protocol 1

The right of peaceful enjoyment of possessions and protection of property.

1. RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission is granted subject to the conditions below.

2. APPLICATION SITE

The application site relates to the Marl Pits Swimming Pool building which is located within the Marl Pits Leisure Centre and is adjacent to Rossendale Sports Club.

The closest dwellings are located on Marl Pits and Heritage Drive over 50 metres away.

The site is also located within the countryside and designated for recreation.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING APPLICATION HISTORY

1975/0423: Extension for new filtration plant. (Approved)

2010/0537: Construction of 2-storey extension to east side of existing building (inc fitness suites & changing rooms), formation of five outdoor pitches on north side & altered/extended parking facilities on south side (Outline). (Approved)

2011/0083: Construction of 2-storey extension to east side of existing building (inc fitness suites & changing rooms), formation of five outdoor pitches on north side & altered/extended parking facilities on south side. (Approved)

2011/0309: Construction of a single storey extension to the south and east side of the existing building (612 sq m), formation of 4 external football pitches, and the reconfiguration and extension of the existing car park. (Approved)

2011/0592: Discharge of conditions 1, 2, 3 and 7 of planning approval 2011/309. (Approved)

4. PROPOSAL

The existing air handling unit (AHU) is located on the right hand side to the rear when looking at the building from the front. The air handling unit supplies heated air to the swimming pool.

The proposal is for the erection of plant (replacement air handling unit) and ducting on the northern elevation to the rear of the sports centre looking onto open moorland.

Background

The Council had three options for the replacement of the air handling unit as follows:

Option 1 was to supply a replacement AHU on a like for like basis, the existing AHU operating on a full fresh air basis and the heating medium was indirectly gas fired.

Option 2 again to replace the AHU with a gas fired unit but make allowance for future connections of heat recovery ductwork and be heat pump ready

Option 3, as per option 2, but include for all ductwork to the unit.

Options 2 and 3 were offered as a means for the council to reduce the carbon footprint either immediately or in the very near future.

Option 3 was eventually chosen with the full option of the heat recovery ductwork system, which due to the very nature of the building and the close proximity of the building structure to the pool, the only viable option for installing return air ductwork necessary to facilitate a heat recovery system was to have the ductwork run external to the building structure.

Two proposals were considered:

- 1) Run circular ductwork at high level external to the building structure with the ductwork supported from metal steel stanchions set into a concrete footing with the steel stanchions set at 2.0mtr centres along the entire external length of the pool hall.
- 2) Run rectangular ductwork at low level external to the building structure, supported off low level frames from a 'walkway' type of hard standing running below the window line within 300mm of the external ground level.

The low level ducting was the option chosen

Having chosen the option for a full heat recovery system, the Council looked at the possibilities of immediately reducing the gas input to the unit. It was found that on the existing boiler plant, there were spare connections which offered the chance to dispense with a gas fired option of an air handling unit and simply use the available low pressure hot water that the boiler plant was generating to serve the pool hall.

It was calculated with the pool hall returning air back from the pool hall at +40C, with the aid of a plate heat recovery section built into the AHU we could reasonably expect to retain +25C of this recovered heat and in doing so considerably reduce the amount of heat energy required to top up the fresh air aspect of a pool hall ventilation system.

The existing installation (indirectly gas fired) brought in full fresh air from an external source which in the winter time could be as low as -5C, and heat was required in the form of gas fired heating to raise the temperature up to 40C (temp differential 45C). This required using approximately 600Kw of gas to reach this temperature.

The installation of the proposed ducted heat recovery allows the system to reclaim air at 25C even during periods of low external ambient temperature and raise up to 40C (temp differential 15C). This required using approximately 200Kw of the available low pressure hot water already being generated by having the boilers on feeding the pool plant heating supplying warm water to the pool itself, thereby offering a considerable saving of heat energy feeding the AHU plant.

5. POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 2	Achieving sustainable development
Section 4	Decision-making
Section 8	Promoting healthy and safe communities
Section 12	Achieving well-designed places

Development Plan

Local Plan Policies

SD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

SD2: Urban Boundary and Green Belt

ENV1: High Quality Development in the Borough

ENV3: Landscape Character and Quality

ENV5: Green Infrastructure networks

ENV6: Environmental Protection

LT1: Protection of Playing Pitches, Existing Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities

Other material considerations

National Planning Practice Guidance

National Design Guide

RBC Climate Change SPD

6. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Consultee	Summary of response
LCC Highways	No objection
RBC Environmental Health	No comments

7. REPRESENTATIONS

To accord with the General Development Procedure Order a site notice was posted on 25.02.2025 and neighbouring properties were notified by letter sent out on 17.02.2025.

At the time of writing the report, no comments have been received, however the consultation period does not expire until 18.03.2025.

Any comments received before the meeting will be reported on the update report

8. ASSESSMENT

The main considerations in this case are as follows:

- 1) Principle;
- 2) Visual Amenity;
- 3) Residential Amenity;
- 4) Access, Parking and Highway Safety
- 5) Climate Change

Principle

The proposed development is located within in the countryside in an area designated for recreation and is protected by Strategic Policy LT1 – Protection of playing pitches, existing open space, sport and recreation facilities.

The Framework states as follows:

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and formal play spaces, should not be built on unless:

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.*

The proposal is for the improvement of the existing facilities to provide warm air at a lesser cost.

It is considered the principle of the development is acceptable and in accordance with Policy LT1 of the Rossendale Local Plan and the NPPF.

Visual Amenity

Section 12 of the Framework refers to the importance which Government attaches to the design of the built environment:

- *“The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.” (Para 131)*
- *“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments...will function well and add to the overall quality of the area...are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.” (Para 135).*

Policy ENV1 of the Rossendale Local Plan seek to ensure that the built environment is safeguarded and enhanced and proposals take into account design, lighting and materials.

The proposed ductwork is to be located on the north side of the building facing the countryside beyond the Leisure Centre. It is located at a low level and is rectangular and coloured grey to blend in with the existing building as much as possible

Whilst it would be visible from surrounding areas, it is located against the building and the proposed materials and colours of the development are appropriate for their use on the site. It is considered that the visual amenity of the proposed development is acceptable in the context of the existing leisure facility, and having regard to the wider area.

As such, the scheme is in accordance with Section 12 of the Framework and Policy ENV1 of the Rossendale Local Plan.

Residential Amenity

The Framework advises that Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

“Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience”

Policy ENV1 of the Local Plan states that all proposals should take account of the following:

- “c) *Being sympathetic to surrounding land uses and occupiers and avoiding demonstrable harm to the amenities of the area*
- “d) *The scheme will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on neighbouring development by virtue of it being overbearing or oppressive, overlooking or resulting in an unacceptable loss of light:- nor should it be adversely affected by neighbouring uses and vice versa.”*

The leisure centre building is located between the ducting and any residential properties on Marl Pits or Heritage Drive.

It is not consider that the proposed development will impact on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers and is in accordance with Policy ENV1 and the Framework.

Access, Parking and Highway Safety

In terms of impact on Access, Parking and Highway safety, LCC Highways have no objections to the proposed development:

As such, it is considered that the proposed development, with the recommended conditions, is in accordance with the Rossendale Local Plan and the Framework.

Climate Change

The Climate Change SPD is relevant to this application and states as follows:

Rossendale Borough Council declared a Climate Change Emergency in September 2019 and published a Climate Change Strategy in 2020¹. The Council is committed to:

- Reaching a carbon-zero position for the Council's activities by 2030;
- Reducing the Council's overall energy consumption by 50 percent by 2030;
- Obtaining our energy needs from renewable sources;
- Increasing the number of businesses and households who source their utilities from renewable sources

The Local Plan was adopted in December 2021 and recognises the need to address the climate change emergency.

In terms of this proposal, the new air handling unit (AHU) with a heat recovery system will recover and redistribute heat from the extracted air. The process reduces dependence on the gas boiler, significantly lowering overall gas consumption. In the

case of Marl Pits, the system also benefits from renewable electricity generated by the rooftop solar panels, which helps offset the additional electricity required, making the system even more carbon efficient.

Additionally, the AHU with heat recovery will also provide fresh filtered air while minimising heat loss, improving air quality in the pool area with minimal environmental impact. In swimming pools and humid environments, this will help maintain optimal conditions without excessive energy use, reducing unnecessary carbon emissions.

It is considered that the proposed development is in accordance with the Climate Change Strategy and will significantly reduce the Council's overall energy consumption.

9. CONCLUSION

It is considered that the proposed development is acceptable and in accordance with the Rossendale Local Plan and the Framework.

10. CONDITIONS

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To accord with Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following:

Application form received 05.02.2025

Drawing No: PS 385432-GRL-XX- 0- M- X-001 C2 A – Elevations and layout received 05.02.2025

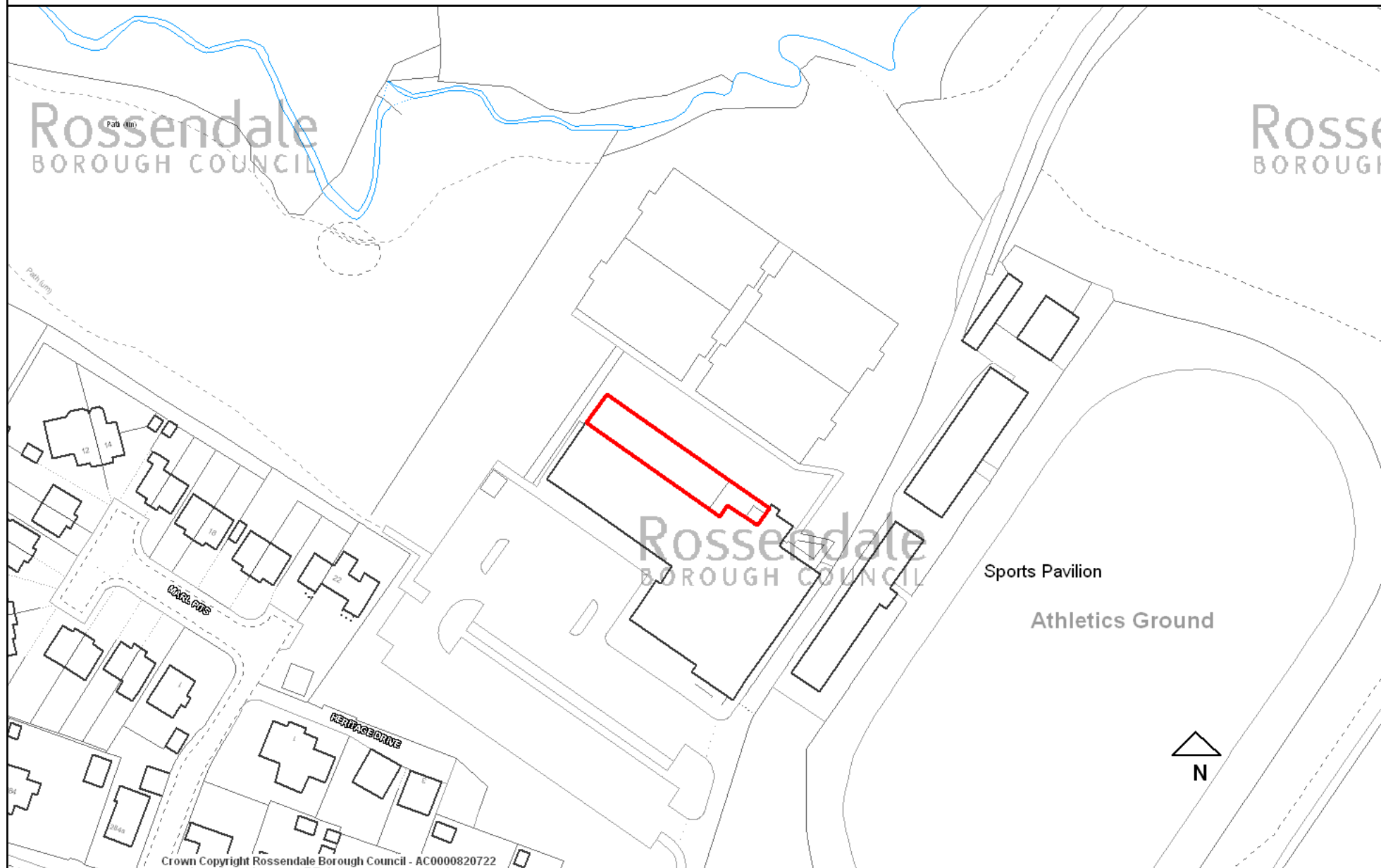
Site Location Plan received 05.02.2025

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

11. INFORMATIVES

1. The proposal complies with the development plan and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. It therefore comprises sustainable development and the Local Planning Authority worked proactively and positively to issue the decision without delay. The Local Planning Authority has therefore implemented the requirement in Paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Site Location Plan (1:1250)



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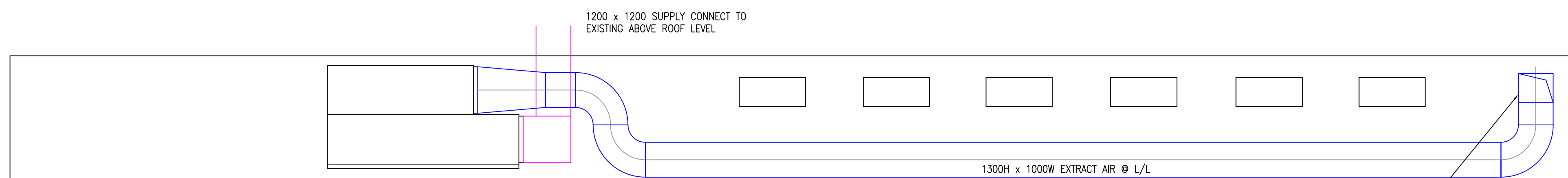
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Scale 1/1250

Centre = 382022 E 423105 N

Date 17/2/2025



REMOVE EXISTING H/L EXTRACT FAN & RE-US
PENETRATION FOR NEW 1300 x 1000 EXTRACT
DUCT. WEATHERPROOF OPENING & MAKE GOOD

<p>KEY PLAN</p>				
		<p>GEOFFREY ROBINSON SINCE 1971</p>		
<p>Macklin Industrial Estate Cowpen Industrial Estate Billingham Teeside TS23 4ET</p> <p>Tel: 01642 370500 Email: enquiry@geoffreyrobinson.co.uk Web: geoffreyrobinson.co.uk</p>				
<p>CLIENT</p> <p>RICHTONDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL</p>				
<p>PROJECT</p> <p>MARL PITS LEISURE CENTRE</p>				
<p>TITLE</p> <p>PROPOSED HEAT RECOVERY VENTILATION</p>				
<p>DRAWN: JGC</p>		<p>DATE: JAN25</p>		<p>SCALE: 1:100</p>
<p>A1</p>	<p>DRAWING NUMBER PS 385432-GRL-XX- 0- M- X-001</p>			<p>STATUS C2</p>
				<p>ISSUE A</p>



