

Item No. 16**SCHEDULE C**

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/09/05282/FULL
LOCATION	Bumblebees Playgroup, Appenine Way, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 3AJ
PROPOSAL	Erection of single storey rear extension to playgroup building.
PARISH	Leighton-Linslade
WARD	Leighton Linslade Central
WARD COUNCILLORS	Cllrs Bowater, Johnstone, Sharer & Spurr
CASE OFFICER	Gill Claxton
DATE REGISTERED	06 August 2009
EXPIRY DATE	01 October 2009
APPLICANT	Mrs A Puttock
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE	The land is owned by Central Bedfordshire Council
RECOMMENDED DECISION	Grant Planning Permission

Site Location:

The application site lies on the eastern side of Appenine Way, in the south western corner of the Beaudesert Lower School site. It comprises a single storey modular building fronting the highway which houses Bumblebees Playgroup and outdoor play area plus land currently used as school allotments. There is a dense hedge and palisade fencing along the Appenine Way frontage and a hedge and wall along the footpath which offers limited views into the school site. The boundary with the school service yard to the north is enclosed by a fence.

To the east are the school allotments and Terrapin classroom buildings. To the south is a pedestrian footpath that links Appenine Way to Mercury Way. To the south of this are the dwellings at Nos 1 and 3 Jupiter Drive. There are further residential properties to the north of the lower school in Hydrus Drive and to the west in Gemini Close, on the opposite side of Appenine Way.

The Application:

Planning permission is sought for an extension to the rear of the existing single storey modular playgroup building, on part of the school allotment land. The extension would measure 7.7 metres wide by 7.4 metres deep, giving a gross floor area of just under 57 square metres. It would be used to provide 16 additional playgroup places for children aged 2.5 to 5 years old plus an office and store room. In support of the application it is stated that:

- The existing building provides for 24 playgroup places per session. There are two sessions per day Monday to Friday: 9am - 11.30am and 12.15pm - 2.45pm. The extension would take this up to 40 places per session.
- The total playgroup roll is 66 children. Of these 15 (23%) have siblings in the Beaudesert Lower School.

- There is Central Government funding for free places for 3 to 4 year olds but the younger children pay a fixed fee per session. The playgroup delivers the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and follow the 'Every Child Matters' agenda.
- There are 6 adults in the teaching room with the children and there is an administrator who works in a separate office. The ratio of adults to children is 1:4 which is higher than the national standard of 1:6.
- All staff park within the lower school site. There is no provision for parents/carers to park within the school or playgroup grounds for drop off/collection.
- The extension will enable the playgroup to take on 16 further children giving a total of 40 per session in order to meet local demand. There is an intention to recruit additional staff but not necessarily 4 more to maintain the 1:4 ratio. The parking for the additional staff could be accommodated within the lower school site.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

National Policies (PPG & PPS)

PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development

PPG13 - Transport

Regional Spatial Strategy

East of England Plan (May 2008)

ENV7 - Quality in the Built Environment

T2 - Changing Travel Behaviour

T8 - Local Roads

T9 - Walking, Cycling and other Non-Motorised Transport

Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy

South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review

BE8 - Design Considerations

Planning History

SB/TP/04/0008 Permission for portable building for use by Playgroup and Beaudesert School.

Representations:

(Parish & Neighbours)

Leighton Linlade Town Council No objections.

Occupiers of 2, 4 and 8 Gemini Close and 55 Hydrus Drive

Object for some or all of the following reasons:

- the extra vehicle movements and demand for parking that would be generated if the application were approved would add to an already dangerous situation at school starting and finishing time.
- the vehicle parking creates visibility problems and endangers children.

- the Council's Highways section has a working party looking into this issue.
- there are no off-road dropping off and collection points which means Gemini Close and the access to individual properties are often blocked. Drivers are rude and abusive when asked to move.
- there is noise disturbance from car stereos.
- playgroup should move to the Vandyke School site where access is better and traffic problems would be less.

Consultation/Publicity responses

Environmental Health Officer	No objections.
Highways Officer	No objection in principle subject to a condition requiring the submission of a Travel Plan prior to the commencement of development and any additional conditions required by the Sustainable Transport Team to follow.
Bucks and River Ouzel Internal Drainage Board	Notes that the method of surface water disposal has not been specified. Requests that this matter is dealt with by a suitably worded condition.

Determining Issues

The main considerations in the determination of the application are:

1. Impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
2. Impact on residential amenity;
3. Traffic, parking and highway considerations; and
4. Other matters.

Considerations

1. Impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area

In design terms, the proposal would be well screened by the existing building and established boundary treatments and would match the appearance of the existing playgroup building. From any public vantage points it would not be readily visible, although there would be limited views from the footpath linking Appenine Way to Mercury Way. Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in terms of its visual impact on the surrounding area.

2. Impact on residential amenity

The nearest residential properties to the extension are Nos 1 and 3 Jupiter Drive. Their rear garden boundaries are sited some 10 metres from the closest point of the extension. Given the distances involved, the single storey nature of the development and the presence of existing boundary treatment there would be no loss of amenity to occupiers of these properties in terms of loss of sunlight, daylight, privacy, overlooking or overbearing effect.

It is not considered that an additional 16 children at any one playgroup session would have an adverse material impact on the amenities of local residential

properties in terms of noise and disturbance. The playgroup day ends by 2.45pm and the building is set against the backdrop of the adjacent lower school buildings and playing fields.

It is noted that some of the third parties who have objected to the application have made representations about noise from car stereos. It is not considered that this results in such a diminution of residential amenity to warrant a refusal of planning permission.

3. Traffic, parking and highway considerations

It is acknowledged that there is traffic congestion at school drop-off and collection times in the morning and afternoon. However, many of those attending the playgroup will be going to the site or being collected along with siblings at the Lower School, so not all playgroup pupils will be generating additional trips at the morning and afternoon peak. The Highways Officer has raised no objection in principle to the proposals. Congestion at school drop off and collection is an inevitable feature of the area surrounding schools, is of a relatively short duration and not of itself a reason to withhold planning permission.

However, in order to look at opportunities for minimising congestion, it is recommended that a condition be imposed requiring the submission of a Travel Plan as a consequence of this application. Among other things, the Travel Plan could encourage staff to cycle or car share, for example. With a further requirement to annually monitor, review and update it, this should over time lead to a reduction in car-borne traffic attending the playgroup.

4. Other matters

The proposal does not involve the loss of any school playing field space.

The comments of the Buckingham and River Ouzel Internal Drainage Board can be addressed by condition.

Reasons for Granting

The proposed development complies with national guidance and Policy BE8 of the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review in respect of the visual impact of the siting, design and external appearance of the development on the character and appearance of the locality, the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and highway/parking considerations.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to the following:

- 1 The development shall begin not later than three years from the date of this permission.
REASON: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 2 The external finish of the walls and roofing materials to be used for the extension to the playgroup building shall match that of the existing building as closely as possible.

REASON: To ensure that the development is in keeping with the existing building.
(Policy BE8, S.B.L.P.R).

- 3 **Before the commencement of development a Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Travel Plan shall be implemented in full within 6 months of the building being occupied. Thereafter, the Travel Plan shall be monitored and reviewed annually, with a written report to be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority which updates the plan and monitors the progress in meeting the agreed targets for reducing car journeys.**

REASON: In the interests of highway safety, to reduce congestion and to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport.

- 4 **Before development begins, details of the proposed method of surface water drainage for the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage works as approved shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details before the development is first occupied or brought into use.**

REASON: To ensure satisfactory drainage of the site.

- 5 This permission relates only to the details shown on Drawing No. BPG/01 received 14/07/09 or to any subsequent appropriately endorsed revised plan.
REASON: To identify the approved drawing and to avoid doubt.

Notes to Applicant

1. In accordance with Article 22 of the Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as Amended), the Council hereby certify that the proposal as hereby approved conforms with the relevant policies of the Development Plan comprising of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England (the East of England Plan and the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy), Bedfordshire Structure Plan 2011 and the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review and material considerations do not indicate otherwise. The policies which refer are as follows:

Regional Spatial Strategy - East of England Plan (May 2008)

ENV7 - Quality in the Built Environment

T2 - Changing Travel Behaviour

T8 - Local Roads

T9 - Walking, Cycling and other Non-Motorised Transport

Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy

South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review

BE8 - Design Considerations

2. In accordance with Article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as Amended), the reason for any condition above relates to the Policies as referred to in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), Bedfordshire Structure Plan 2011 (BSP) and the South

Bedfordshire Local Plan Review (SBLPR).

- 3. This permission relates only to that required under the Town & Country Planning Acts and does not include any consent or approval under any other enactment or under the Building Regulations. Any other consent or approval which is necessary must be obtained from the appropriate authority.

- 4. In connection with Condition 3 above, The Travel Plan shall contain details of some or all of the following:
 - plans for the establishment of a working group involving the playgroup, parents and representatives of the local community;
 - pupil travel patterns and barriers to sustainable travel;
 - measures to reduce car use; and
 - an action plan detailing targets and a timetable for implementing appropriate measures and plans for annual monitoring and review.

For further advice and guidance on the preparation of the Travel Plan, please contact the Sustainable Transport Team, Planning & Development Strategy, Sustainable Communities, Central Bedfordshire Council, Borough Hall, Bedford, MK42 9AP - Tel: 01234 276329.

DECISION

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