

Item No. 20**SCHEDULE C**

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/10/00625/FULL
LOCATION	Samuel Whitbread Community College, Shefford Road, Clifton, Shefford, SG17 5QS
PROPOSAL	Full: Erection of new nursery building and office complex with associated car parking
PARISH	Clifton
WARD	Langford and Henlow
WARD COUNCILLORS	Cllr Jon Clarke & Cllr Tony Rogers
CASE OFFICER	Annabel Gammell
DATE REGISTERED	01 March 2010
EXPIRY DATE	26 April 2010
APPLICANT	Bedfordshire East Schools Trust
AGENT	The Hanson Leddington Partnership Ltd
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE	Planning objections unresolved on land owned by Central Bedfordshire Council
RECOMMENDED DECISION	Full Application - Granted

Site Location:

Samuel Whitbread Community College is located on the southern side of Shefford Road, between the centres of Shefford and Clifton, the school is in a predominantly residential area. The school site is large as it incorporates several buildings, a large parking area, hard play ground, playing fields and two site agents dwellings. The main school building is predominately two storey, it is of modern design and the frontage is set away from the road by approximately 35 metres. Currently on the eastern side of the site there are two disused site agents dwelling houses, this area is east of the main access into the school site, at times this area is used for informal parking.

The Application:

This application seeks permission for the erection of a new nursery building and office complex with associated car parking.

The building would be approximately 46 metres in length, 16.9 metres in width and have a maximum height of 6.7 metres. The majority of the building would be single storey this would be approximately 3.6 metres in height, there would be a two storey section fronting onto Shefford Road.

RELEVANT POLICIES:**National Policies (PPG + PPS)**

PPS 1 Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)

Regional Spatial Strategy

East of England Plan (May 2008)

Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (March 2005)

Bedfordshire Structure Plan 2011

Not applicable

Core Strategy and Development Management Policies, November 2009

Policy DM3 - High Quality Development

South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review Policies

Not applicable

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Design in Central Bedfordshire, a Guide for Development

Planning History

The site has a detailed planning history following initial construction of the school in 1974. Notable since initial construction are a number of applications for temporary classrooms, with a large expansion to the school granted in 2002, for the erection of a two storey detached classroom block with sports hall, the erection of a first floor extension and a two storey extension to the main school building.

Representations: (Parish & Neighbours)

Clifton Parish Council:

No objection providing:

- Adequate parking for nursery users
- Better planting proposals
- Speeding and parking problems resolved
- Better consultation with neighbours
- All windows overlooking Shefford Road should be obscure glazed
- Improved traffic cross over

Shefford Town Council:

Unable to determine due to insufficient information

Neighbours:

Three letters of objection received, Clivedale 174, 224, 222 Shefford Road:

- 14 windows facing properties opposite, these will be used as offices and overlooking will occur.
- Traffic problems around the school site.
- Nursery and play area too close to the road.
- Building should be at rear of school if it is necessary.

- The design of the proposed building is incompatible with the houses, it would be an eyesore.
- Because additional parking is included with this application a disturbance will be created, including noise pollution.
- Overshadowing of residential property.
- Effect flow of sunlight.
- The building would be forward of the adjacent dwelling, which could effect outlook.
- Unsure of usage for the site.

Consultations/Publicity responses

Site Notice Posted on 04.03.10:
Highway Department:

No comments received

Object: The location of the proposed parking is on the site of the existing nursery facility, so the building would have to be complete before the parking could be built.

Public Protection:

No objections subject to conditions

Determining Issues

The main considerations of the application are;

1. Appropriateness of development
2. The effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area
3. The impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties
4. Any other implications of the proposal

Considerations

1. Appropriateness of development

The building would be a co-located community facility, it would provide a new nursery for children up to the age of 4 years, a SCITT (School Centred Initial Teacher Training) Office, Extended Services Office, NHS Bedfordshire Office, Community Police Office and Conference room. It is unusual to have a shared site of this type, but it is considered to be an appropriate accessible setting for the shared facility. It is located in a visible location, which would be able to function outside of traditional school hours. The school would benefit from use of the Conference facility during school hours. There is currently a nursery facility operating within the school site, it is currently within a double temporary classroom unit, it is more desirable to have permanent accommodation for a use that is needed on the site. It is judged that the regeneration of the site agents dwellings, which have not been lived in for some years is appropriate and the community facility would enhance the provision within the community.

2. Effect on the character and appearance of the area

The school site is large, the majority of the site is playing field land, this is to the south of the site, the northern part is covered by hard paved parking and school

buildings. The school is of functional design, it is a large collection of buildings that comprise the Upper School and Community College. Currently on the application site is a pair of link detached residential dwelling houses, these are approximately 6.7 metres in height, they are in a relatively dilapidated condition.

The appearance of the building has been designed to be a modern, functional school and community facility. The building would be 6.7 metres in height, it has been designed with a curved roof which would provide a smooth aesthetically pleasing addition to the roofline of Shefford Road. The building would be a key landmark on Shefford Road that would denote the entrance to the school site. The corner of the building is glazed to break up the elevation and provide visual interest, it would also create an pleasant working environment, these windows would provide natural light and enhance street scene surveillance, which could lead to increased informal supervision of children, while around the school access.

Sensitivity has been made to the existing roof height, this building would be no higher than the existing dwellings, this would ensure it is integrated into the building line. The building would have the northern side elevation facing Shefford Road, it would be visible within the streetscene, the proposed materials are cedar cladding with a white faced aluminium clad ground floor. Though these materials are not typical of the Shefford Road streetscene, they are appropriate for a school site. The cedar boarding was chosen because it is sustainable, it also has a natural weathering quality which will ensure that the building remains in a good state of repair, the ground floor materials were chosen because of it can be easily cleaned and maintained, as it is near Shefford Road, this was considered important because of possible dirt from vehicular movements. This building has been designed to be at the front of the school because it is a shared community facility and therefore it would avoid none school related activity having to pass through the main school site. It is judged that the building would be appropriate within its setting and is therefore acceptable in design terms.

It is considered that the design is in accordance with Policy DM 3 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies because it is of appropriate proportions and materials for a school site and is in further conformity with the technical guidance Design in Central Bedfordshire, a Guide for Development, this is because the design has regard to the existing dwelling heights and would be constructed in sustainable materials.

3. Impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties

The school site is within a predominantly residential area, there are residential properties to the north and the west of the school site. The building has been designed to be sensitive to the neighbouring residential properties. The building is only two storey to a depth similar to that of the neighbouring residential property, the single storey aspect has been design to be shallow roofed in order to reduce impact upon light. Windows have been sensitively placed to ensure an unreasonable level of overlooking does not occur to the nearest adjacent property at Clivedale, Shefford Road. The play area would be at the front of the building, in order for the building to screen noise generated. It is considered that the residential amenity of all surrounding properties would be maintained.

Loss of light:

The building would be enclosed within the school site, there is currently a two dwelling houses on this site, though the building would be larger than the houses it is judged that the new building would not significantly impact upon the light into any residential dwelling. The closest residential dwelling house at Clivedale, Shefford Road would be approximately 5.8 metres from the building, this would be between side facing elevations, there are no side facing windows in the residential elevation. The new building would be in accordance with the 45 degree principle found within the technical guidance Design in Central Bedfordshire, a Guide for Development. The building would be two storey at the front, the rear of this two storey part would be in line with the residential dwelling adjacent Clivedale, it has been designed to reduce to a 3.6 metre high single storey rear nursery. As the building would be set off the boundary by some 4.4 metres, it is considered that a building with a height of 3.6 this distance from the boundary would not have a significant impact upon light into the garden of Clivedale.

Overbearing impact:

It is judged that the development is in proportion with the scale of the buildings on the school site. It would not cause an overbearing impact or result in the overdevelopment of the site, as there would still be a substantial proportion of the site undeveloped. As the building would be set away from Clivedale by approximately 4.4 metres, it is judged that this is far enough to ensure that it would not cause an overbearing impact upon this or any other residential property.

Loss of privacy:

The houses opposite the development are set back from the road, there would be approximately 40 metres between the windows, which is judged to be sufficient to ensure residential privacy is maintained. Due to the orientation of the first floor rear facing windows, it is judged that the privacy of the garden adjacent would be maintained, the windows would be angled south south east which would be towards the school, the windows have been sensitively placed away from the western boundary to further reduce the possibility of overlooking.

Outlook:

The building would be of a higher design standard than the existing dilapidated dwelling houses, it is judged to be acceptable in terms out outlook. Though it is visible from the streetscene and many residential dwellings on Shefford Road it is judged to be in keeping with the style of the school buildings, and would create a new and welcoming entrance to the school site, as currently the buildings are away from the road, the school appears detached from the streetscene, this would help integrate the two visually, maintaining the height of the dwellings with the architecture of the school building.

Three letters of objection were received in relation to this application, the concerns were:

- 14 windows facing properties opposite, these will be used as offices and

overlooking will occur.

Technical guidance states that front/back facing windows should be located 21 metres from each other to ensure that residential privacy is maintained, these windows would be over 40 metres from each other, this distance is considered adequate.

- Traffic problems around the school site.

As part of this development 69 parking spaces are proposed, this is judged to be acceptable and in accordance with provision that Central Bedfordshire's Highways Department specified was needed for a development of this type.

- Nursery and play area too close to the road.

The public protection department have not objected to the nursery's location, there is already a nursery on the site, even though it would be closer to the road the site would be enclosed and any outside play would be supervised.

- Building should be at rear of school if it is necessary.

Though locations on other parts of the school site were looked at informally, as these options would have led to loss of playing field they were not appropriate options. This part of the site is not being utilised currently, and as it is at the front of the site it would make separating activities in the building from the school easier.

- The design of the proposed building is incompatible with the houses, it would be an eyesore.

The design is modern, it has been designed as a modern learning environment, it is a practical shape for the school and has been designed around site limitations. The roofline is a similar height to the adjacent houses, though the frontage would be wider than a traditional house, there are windows and design features that provide visual relief for the street scene, these come in the form of horizontal cladding and cedar boarding, and glazed corners.

- Because additional parking is included with this application a disturbance will be created, including noise pollution.

The additional parking is an essential part of the scheme, the parking situation at Samuel Whitbread is currently poor, the parking has been designed that even if the conference centre is used for non school purposes during the day there would be ample parking to ensure that the current situation would not deteriorate. It is considered that the form additional parking will improve the current parking situation at the school, this is based on the nursery facility already being an established use of the school site, and this development providing dedicated parking for the nursery.

- Overshadowing of residential property.

The building would be approximately 2.5 metres in front of Clivedale, the closest

adjacent property, there would be approximately 5.8 metres between the buildings, the design is in accordance with the 45 degree principle, it is considered it would not cause overshadowing to the front of the residential property.

- Effect flow of sunlight.

The building has been designed to be low to the rear, this is order to not cause an effect upon light into the rear garden of Clivedale, the building would be some 4.4 metres from the boundary, and as it is only 3.6 meters in height is judged to be acceptable in terms of light provision. The two storey part of the building does not project significantly beyond the rear elevation of Clivedale, there are no side facing windows in this elevation, that the building could obstruct, it is therefore considered that the impact upon flow of sunlight would not be detrimentally altered.

- The building would be forward of the adjacent dwelling, which could effect outlook.

The building is only 2.5 metres in front of the adjacent dwelling, it is common for a building line to be slightly staggered to provide variation within the street scene.

- Unsure of usage for the site.

The offices would be used as a base for community facilities such as the NHS and the Police. A need has been identified to have these community facilities of this nature in this area, it is considered appropriate for the facilities to be located within a school site.

4. Any other implications

Highway Implications:

Though an objection was raised from the Highways Department, their concerns were because of the timing of the parking provision. This issue has been discussed with the applicant and it seems appropriate if the building is completed but not formally opened, the nursery can move into the building, and the temporary classroom can be removed and the parking provision built. This is only considered appropriate because the nursery staff and visitors already use the site. A condition will be attached to ensure the conference centre and offices are not occupied until the completion of the parking. The access which serves the school site is considered acceptable in principle, and the increase in traffic movements would not have a detrimental impact upon highway safety. A condition would be attached which would require a Travel Plan to be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority to ensure that the new use to the site would be managed safely.

Energy:

The building has been designed with a purpose built energy centre within it, it would provide heating and associated services to the new building using sustainable fuels, it is the intention for the building to become an exemplar scheme in the field of low carbon design. It is the aim to limit demand for energy

through rational use of energy, use renewable energy to fulfil remaining demand, if fossil fuels are needed they would be used in the most efficient and clean way possible.

Public Protection:

It was recommended that a condition would be attached which would limit the hours of use of the outdoor play area to between 8:00-18:00 Monday to Friday, this is based on noise impact upon residential amenity. It is considered that this would be an unreasonable restriction upon the nursery, it would be unusual for this facility to be used outside these hours, but if the noise from play area use would be reasonable within these hours then there is no reason for the noise to rise to an unreasonable level outside of them. There is no flood lighting specified within the plans, the area would not be suitable for organised sports, and the building would be between the play area and any residential property. It is judged that as the rest of the site is not restricted to time limitations that it is unreasonable to impose this condition. The other conditions are recommended, which would restrict the opening of windows closest to a residential property and to provide a noise management plan.

Consultation:

The consultation period expires on the 2nd May 2010, as such the Committee are asked to grant Delegated Powers to the Director of Sustainable Communities to approve the application subject to no new issues being raised.

Reasons for Granting

The proposed building would not have a negative impact upon the general character of the area or an adverse impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties and is acceptable in terms of highway safety therefore by reason of its site, design and location, is in conformity with Policy DM3 of the Core Strategy and Management Policies, November 2009; Planning Policy Statement 1 (2005), Regional policies in the East of England Plan (May 2008) and the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (March 2005). It is in further conformity with technical guidance, Design in Central Bedfordshire, a Guide for Development.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission be granted subject to the following:

- 1 The development hereby approved shall be commenced within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which is designed to ensure that a planning permission does not continue in existence indefinitely if the development to which it relates is not carried out.

- 2 **A scheme shall be submitted for written approval by the Local Planning Authority setting out the details of the materials to be used for the external walls and roof. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.**

Reason: To protect the visual amenities of the building and of the area generally.

- 3 **Before development begins, a landscaping scheme to include any hard surfaces and earth mounding shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented by the end of the full planting season immediately following the completion and/or first use of any separate part of the development (a full planting season means the period from October to March). The trees, shrubs and grass shall subsequently be maintained for a period of five years from the date of planting and any which die or are destroyed during this period shall be replaced during the next planting season and maintained until satisfactorily established.**

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of landscaping.

- 4 **Prior to the development hereby approved commencing on site details of the final ground and slab levels of the building hereby approved shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall include sections through both the site and the adjoining properties, the location of which shall first be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the site shall be developed in full accordance with the approved details.**

Reason: To ensure that a satisfactory relationship results between the new development and adjacent buildings and public areas.

- 5 **The ground floor windows in the western elevation of the development hereby permitted shall be of fixed type at all times. No further windows or other openings shall be formed in the elevation. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of occupiers of adjoining properties

- 6 **With the exception of the nursery facility within the building, no occupation of the offices or conference centre shall be implemented until the car parking specified within plan number HLP/281/104 is complete and available for use.**

Reason: In the interest of highway safety.

- 7 Prior to the occupation of the building a Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, this Travel Plan shall be in relation to the new building, and visitors to it. This shall include details of:
- Survey data
 - Barriers to travelling sustainably to school and the community facility.
 - Measures to provide information about walking, cycling and bus routes for all members of the school community and visitors
 - Plans to provide all pupils and visitors with education about transport choices in the local environment as part of the curriculum
 - Plans for annual monitoring, review and submission of the plan to the Local Planning Authority
 - Measures to promote and support sustainable modes and reduce car use

Reason: In the interest of highway safety.

- 8 The building shall not open until a scheme for protecting the adjacent residential dwellings from noise from the building hereby approved. The noise management scheme shall include details of energy centres and the community facility this is to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Any works with form part of the approved scheme shall be completed prior to the opening of the community facility unless an alternative period is approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the amenities of adjacent residential properties are maintained.

DECISION

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