

**Item No. 10****SCHEDULE C**

<b>APPLICATION NUMBER</b>	<b>CB/10/03760/FULL</b>
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>Fairfield Park Lower School, Dickens Boulevard, Stotfold, Hitchin, SG5 4FD</b>
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	<b>Full: A new modular single classroom building within the grounds</b>
<b>PARISH</b>	<b>Stotfold</b>
<b>WARD</b>	<b>Stotfold &amp; Arlesey</b>
<b>WARD COUNCILLORS</b>	<b>Cllrs Dalgarno, Saunders, Street, Turner</b>
<b>CASE OFFICER</b>	<b>Vicki Davies</b>
<b>DATE REGISTERED</b>	<b>12 October 2010</b>
<b>EXPIRY DATE</b>	<b>07 December 2010</b>
<b>APPLICANT</b>	<b>Fairfield Park Lower School</b>
<b>AGENT</b>	<b>Porter Consulting and Management Services Limited</b>
<b>REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE RECOMMENDED DECISION</b>	<b>The application site is owned by CBC and Stotfold Town Council have raised objections which cannot be overcome through the use of conditions</b> <b>Full Application - Granted</b>

**Site Location:**

The application site comprises the premises of an existing lower school located off Dickens Boulevard, Stotfold. Fairfield Lower School is located within the recent development at Stotfold known as Fairfield Park.

The school premises are bordered to the east by the community centre, designated public open space and a number of residential properties, to the south by Dickens Boulevard and some residential properties and to the west by residential properties and the covered reservoir. The north of the site adjoins the existing redeveloped Fairfield Hospital Grounds.

The existing school comprises a single storey purpose built building, constructed of buff brick under a slate roof.

**The Application:**

The application seeks consent for a modular single classroom building measuring 9m by 9.4m and 2.7 metres in height. The building would have solid walls on the east and west elevations. The southern elevation would have two windows and a door with the northern elevation consisting of 5.5 metres of glazed curtain walling with black steel supports with the remaining wall being solid. The walls would be finished in coarse render painted cream in colour. The modular building would be screened by a brick wall on whole of the eastern elevation and 2.5 metres of the northern elevation. The brick wall would be 2.8 metres in height and would include recessed panel details reflecting those on the nearby brick wall surrounding the bin store.

The proposed building would be located to the north west of the school building on land currently used as grassed amenity area and landscaping. The building would

be accessed through the main school building and out of the rear exit to the modified footpath leading to the unit. The building could also be accessed through the school's internal courtyard as well as the side entrance from the car park via a new security gate.

## **RELEVANT POLICIES:**

### **National Policies (PPM & PPS)**

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development

### **Bedfordshire Structure Plan 2011**

No relevant policies

### **Central Bedfordshire (North) Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009**

CS3 - Healthy and Sustainable Communities

CS14 - High Quality Development

DM3 - High Quality Development

DM4 - Development Within and Beyond Settlement Envelopes

### **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

Design in Central Bedfordshire: A Guide to Development

Fairfield Planning and Development Brief (2000)

Fairfield Park Urban Design Strategy (2003)

### **Planning History**

MB/06/00024/CC	CC: New 150 place Lower School, incorporating a nursery unit with associated ancillary facilities - Approved 27/2/06
MB/07/00578/CC	CC: Erection of canopy to create covered area - Approved 11/6/07
MB/08/00938/FULL	Full: Erection of timber storage shed and a teaching and learning timber play lodge (part retrospective) - Approved 09/07/08
MB/08/02210/FULL	Erection of single storey pre-school building - Approved 15/1/09
MB/09/00347/FULL	Installation of play equipment (retrospective) - Approved 14/5/09

### **Representations: (Parish & Neighbours)**

Stotfold Town Council	Object - the proposal would be out of keeping with the overall site design statement and that of adjoining buildings. Modular design indicates a short building life and this needs to be a permanent additional classroom. The building should be subject to proper design and building control conditions.
Neighbours	No responses received

## Consultations/Publicity responses

Conservation and Design Team	No objection. The proposed building would not be sited in an overly prominent location and significant efforts have been made to screen the building and raise its design quality.
Disability Discrimination Officer	No comments
Fairfield Park Residents Association	It is noted that this development may be replaced in due course with more permanent development when further assessment has taken place of a possible increase in the size of the school to a form and a half entry. Given the present demand for places at the school the Associated wishes to support the proposed development which appears to have been designed in such a way as to minimise its visual impact on the surroundings and its effect on the existing building and grounds.
Public Protection Team	No response received
Community Safety Team	No response received
Architectural Liaison Officer	No response received

## Determining Issues

The main considerations of the application are;

1. Principle of Development
2. Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area
3. Impact upon Neighbouring Amenity
4. Other Issues

## Considerations

### 1. Principle of Development

The principal of residential use for the whole site to include a School Site was agreed under the provisions of the outline planning consent granted in 2002. The development of the Lower School Site was granted planning permission for a new 150 place Lower School in 2006.

Core Strategy policy CS3 states that the Council will in principle support the upgrading of education facilities. Core Strategy policy DM4 states that within settlement envelopes the Council will support schemes for education uses. The school site is within the settlement envelope for Fairfield Park and is therefore acceptable in principle.

Some concern has been raised regarding the temporary nature of the proposed building. The school is currently single form entry, with one class in each school year, however the take-up of places since opening has exceeded expectations. The September 2010 intake in Reception Year exceeds 30 children. Based on the rate of increase, the number of children in each class and the fact that the

housing development is not yet completed it is possible that the school will need to take a form and a half entry, i.e. 45 pupils. Based on the current and projected pupil numbers for 2011/12 the school has identified a need for two additional classrooms. The Education Authority has not yet determined whether the currently identified need for 2 classrooms will continue. The application proposes one classroom whilst the Education Authority continue to collect data in order to make an informed judgement on whether the demand for school places will continue. It is considered that a permanent extension to the school building would be a preferable solution however until whether the need for school places in future will continue has been determined the Education Authority does not want to waste money constructing a permanent extension.

## **2. Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area**

Core Strategy policy DM3 states that new development should be appropriate in scale and design to its setting, contribute positively to creating a sense of place and respect local distinctiveness through design and use of materials and respect and compliment the context and setting of all historically sensitive sites.

The proposed modular building has been designed and located to be within the built form of the existing school building and adjacent Community Centre within the existing school site. The proposed development has been designed to reflect the vernacular architecture, by taking into consideration its relationship with the both the new Lower School Building, the Fairfield Hospital and the overall keeping of the development.

Whilst it is recognised that the modular building is not of such high architectural quality as the existing school building it is considered that significant efforts have been made to visually integrate the unit.

It is considered that the proposed building is appropriate in terms of scale to its setting. The building would be set at ground level, rather than elevated as modular buildings usually are, with the floorspace of the building meeting minimum DfES standards. The design of the building is of high quality for a modular building and attempts have been made to screen the unit. The proposed screen wall would be constructed from buff bricks to match those of the existing school building it would be seen against. The detail of the wall would match that of the wall around the bin store with recessed panels and contrasting red brick bands. The use of glazing on the northern elevation minimises the visual impact of the building when viewed from the footpath which runs outside of the school site along its eastern boundary. Overall it is considered that the design of the building is acceptable.

The design and materials proposed would mean that the development would contribute to the strong sense of place within Fairfield Park and the local distinctiveness of the area would be respected.

The listed former hospital building to the north of the school would not be adversely effected by the proposed development and it is therefore considered that the historic setting and context would be respected.

There is limited detail contained in the Urban Design Strategy regarding the school building and future development within the school site. It is not however considered that the proposal conflicts with the principles set out in the strategy.

Overall it is considered that the proposed development accords with Core Strategy policy DM3 and the Fairfield Park Urban Design Strategy.

### **3. Impact upon Neighbouring Amenity**

Core Strategy policy DM3 requires that new development respect the amenities of nearby residents.

The closest residents to the proposed building would be over 50 metres away on the other side of Kipling Crescent.

The location of the proposed modular building would be visible through the existing school boundary treatment of railings but due to the location of the neighbouring properties it is not considered that it would not have any impact in terms of loss of light or privacy. Therefore it is not felt that the proposal would result in an overbearing impact.

As such it is felt that the proposal would have no detrimental impact in terms of neighbouring amenity and would accord with policy DM3.

### **4. Other Issues**

The proposed building has a 25 year lifespan however it is considered that such a unit should only be permitted for a limited amount of time. It is considered that if consent is granted that it should be for a temporary period of 5 years. This would provide sufficient time for the Education Authority to determine what the future needs of the school will be and put the relevant measures in place.

## **Reasons for Granting**

The proposal is in conformity with Policies CS3, CS14, DM3 and DM4 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies, Central Bedfordshire (North), November 2009 as the design, scale, siting and use of materials are appropriate for the setting, the development is not considered to have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area and does not interfere with the amenities of adjoining residents. It is also in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance: PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development, Design in Central Bedfordshire: A Guide for Development and Fairfield Park Urban Design Strategy.

## **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 The screen wall hereby permitted shall be carried out in materials to match as closely as possible in colour, type and texture, those of the existing building.

Reason: To safeguard the appearance of the completed development by ensuring that the development hereby permitted is finished externally with materials to match the existing building and the visual amenities of the locality.

- 3 The exterior appearance of the modular building hereby permitted shall be in accordance with the details shown on plan no. 177-011A.

Reason: To safeguard the appearance of the completed development by ensuring that the development hereby permitted is finished externally with materials to match the existing building and the visual amenities of the locality.

- 4 The building hereby permitted shall not be occupied unless and until the associated brick wall is constructed.

Reason: To protect visual amenities.

- 5 This permission is limited to a period expiring on 31/12/2015 when the building hereby permitted shall be removed and the land re-instated to its previous use unless before that date the Local Planning Authority has granted permission for its retention.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to review the need for the building when the permission expires.

**DECISION**

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