

Item No. 10**SCHEDULE B**

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/11/02050/FULL
LOCATION	The Mary Bassett Lower School, Bassett Road, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 1AR
PROPOSAL	First floor extension over existing building to form cloakroom/toilets
PARISH	Leighton-Linslade
WARD	Leighton Buzzard North
WARD COUNCILLORS	Cllrs Johnstone, Shadbolt & Spurr
CASE OFFICER	Vicki Davies
DATE REGISTERED	22 June 2011
EXPIRY DATE	17 August 2011
APPLICANT	Mary Bassett Lower School
AGENT	BHD Ltd
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE	Called in by Ward Councillor Shadbolt having regard to public interest.
RECOMMENDED DECISION	Full Application - Granted

Site Location:

Mary Bassett Lower School is located to the north of Leighton Buzzard town centre and has frontages to Leston Road, Bassett Road and Doggett Street. Vehicular access to the school site is gained via Doggett Street only. The school buildings are concentrated centrally on the site with a site agents bungalow and car parking to the north of the buildings. The school playing fields are located to the east of the buildings. There are residential properties on all sides of the school site at varying distances from the boundary.

The school site is within an area of archaeological interest but is outside of the Conservation Area and town centre boundary.

The Application:

The application seeks consent for a first floor extension to one of the school buildings to provide cloakrooms and toilets. The proposed first floor extension would be constructed over an existing ground floor extension on the northern elevation of one of the original school buildings.

The extension would match the width and depth of the existing ground floor extension which measures approximately 10 metres wide by 4.8 metres deep. The extension would have a pitched, hipped roof to match the roof of the existing building. The extension would measure around 9 metres to the ridgeline.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

National Policies (PPM & PPS)

PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS5 - Planning for the Historic Environment

Regional Spatial Strategy East of England Plan (May 2008)

ENV7 - Quality in the Built Environment

Bedford shire Structure Plan 2011

No relevant policies

South Bedford shire Local Plan Review Policies

BE8 - Design Considerations

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Design in Central Bedford shire: A Guide for Development

Planning History

Recent planning applications include:

SB/08/00748/TP	Installation of flat roof mounted solar electric panels on the main roof. Approved 4/9/08
SB/94/0007/TP	Erection of replacement toilet block and new access ramp. Approved 12/8/94

Representations: (Parish & Neighbours)

Leighton Linlade Town Council
No objection.

Neighbours

One letter of objection has been received from a neighbouring resident, setting out objections to a number of developments and changes at the school over a number of years as well as to this application. The objection received is lengthy, the objections are therefore summarised below:

- the application should not be determined until the outstanding issues on the site with regard to unlawful development have been resolved;
- the application is invalid as it does not include an acceptable site plan/location plan and the design and access statement contains errors;
- there was no pre-application advice;

- there has been no check against the Heritage Environment Record;
- no notices have been posted in the local press or notices erected on the site;
- the full planning history of the site was not supplied until two weeks after the application was validated;
- incremental additions to the school have resulted in the doubling of the number of children attending the site in the past year;
- the school has no authorised vehicular access due to changes to the access arrangements over the years including the closure of accesses off Bassett Road and West Street, the only vehicular access is by default the unadopted access to the unauthorised staff car park which fails to meet Design Supplement 7;
- the management of the school car park and unlawful parking by parents;
- the unsuitable access in terms of visibility, turning area and servicing, pedestrian provision and safety;
- traffic generation due to the increasing number of pupils attending the school and the local and wider impact on the road network;
- nuisance due to unlawful parking, by delivery vehicles, noise from children and activities on the outside of school hours;
- impact on heritage assets in relation to this application and previous developments on the site.

Further consultation has been carried out on the amended plans received and any comments from this consultation will be reported on the Late Sheet.

Consultations/Publicity responses

Conservation and
Design Officer
Archaeology

Any comments will be recorded on the Late Sheet.

The proposed development is in an area that has the potential to contain archaeological deposits relating to the origins and development of Leighton Buzzard in the Saxon and medieval periods. However, the nature of the development means that there will be no impact on archaeological deposits or on the significance of the heritage asset. Consequently the officer has no objection to this application on archaeological grounds.

Determining Issues

The main considerations of the application are:

1. Impact on the character and appearance of the streetscene
2. Impact on the amenities of the neighbouring residents
3. Archaeology
4. Other Issues

Considerations

1. **Impact on the character and appearance of the streetscene**

South Bedfordshire Local Plan policy BE8 states that new development, including extensions, should be appropriate in terms of size, scale, density, massing, orientation, materials and overall appearance and complement and harmonise with the local surroundings.

The original school buildings are important in terms of local history and interest and are attractive buildings in their own right. The buildings were grade III listed until 1975 when the grading arrangements were changed. They are therefore no longer constrained by any designation as Listed Buildings.

The original school buildings are located at a lower level than the more recent 1960's school buildings. The original school buildings are at a similar level to properties on Bassett Road, whereas the 1960's buildings are at a similar level to properties on Doggett Street.

The site boundary with Bassett Road is demarcated by an approximately 1.5 metre high brick wall. The wall would limit views of the proposed extension from Bassett Road at street level. The extension would not be visible from West Street or Leston Road as the existing school buildings would obstruct views. The existing school buildings would limit views of the first floor extension from the footpath from Doggett Street to Bassett Road. Overall the extension would not have any adverse impact on the character of the streetscene due to the limited views of it from outside of the site.

The original plans showed the first floor extension with a flat roof to match that of the existing ground floor extension and small extension on the neighbouring school building. It was considered that the proposed flat roof building would not have been appropriate in design terms and amended plans have therefore been submitted showing the extension with a pitched roof to match that of the existing building.

The proposed extension as amended would be fairly large and would represent, with the existing ground floor extension, approximately a one-third increase on the size of the existing building. Subject to the detailed consideration of the Conservation Officer, the extension is considered appropriate in scale and size in relation to the building and the wider site.

The materials proposed to be used for the extension would match those of the existing ground floor extension. The roof tiles would match those of the existing building. A condition is proposed to be added to any planning permission granted requiring the materials to match existing ones.

Overall, subject to the Conservation Officer considerations it is considered that the proposed extension would be appropriate in terms of size, scale, size, density, massing, orientation, materials and overall appearance and accords with SBLP policy BE8.

2. Impact on the amenities of the neighbouring residents

South Bedfordshire Local Plan policy BE8 states that new development should not have any unacceptable adverse impact on residential amenity or privacy.

The proposed extension would be over 40 metres from the closest residential dwelling which would be at West Court on Leston Road. The occupants of this property would not be able to see the extension as the existing school building would prevent views. The proposed extension would therefore have no adverse impact on the amenities of these residents.

The properties on Bassett Road would be around 50 metres from the proposed first floor extension. Some residents would have views from their first floor front windows of the extension however seen in the context of the existing two storey school buildings it is not considered that this would have any adverse impact on their amenity. There would be one window in the side elevation facing the properties on Bassett Road however due to the distance between the school building and dwellings it is not considered that this would result in any unacceptable adverse impact on privacy.

The properties to the north of the school site would be over 55 metres from the extension and due to the change in levels and other buildings would not have any clear views of the proposed extension from their properties.

The proposed extension would accommodate toilets and cloakrooms. There are currently no toilet facilities within this or the school building immediately adjacent. Toilet facilities are only available in the main school building. The extension would not increase the number of pupils or staff at the school only improve the facilities available in the older buildings.

Overall it is not considered that the proposed extension would have any unacceptable adverse impact on the amenities or privacy of the neighbouring residents and therefore accords with the relevant part of SBLP policy BE8.

3. Archaeology

The proposed development is within the historic core of the settlement of Leighton Buzzard. It is an archaeologically sensitive area and a locally identified heritage asset as defined by PPS 5 Planning for the Historic Environment.

The origins of settlement at Leighton Buzzard are in the Saxon period. By the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086 the settlement had acquired the right to hold a market and started to function as a town. In the 12th century the town was replanned to increase the size of the market place and redirect transport routes through it to increase trade.

The proposed development is in an area that has the potential to contain archaeological deposits relating to the origins and development of Leighton Buzzard in the Saxon and medieval periods. However, the nature of the development means that there will be no impact on archaeological deposits or on the significance of the heritage asset. Consequently the officer has no objection to this application on archaeological grounds.

4. Other Issues

A number of other issues were raised by the objector which are dealt with below.

The objector states that the application should not be determined until the outstanding issues on the site with regard to unlawful development have been resolved. It is not within the Local Authorities power to decline to determine a planning application for this reason.

The objector also comments that the application is invalid as it does not include an acceptable site plan/location plan and the design and access statement contains errors. The site location plan does not contain two street names as required by the validation checklist, nevertheless it is possible to easily identify the application site. The design and access statement may contain errors however this would not be a reason to make the application invalid.

The fact that there was no pre-application advice is not a reason to make the application invalid or to decline to determine it. Whilst pre application advice is recommended it is not possible to force applicants to follow this route.

The objector states there has been no check against the Heritage Environment Record. When the application was validated the constraints on the site were checked. The site is not within a Conservation Area nor is it a Listed Building. The Historic Environment Record has been referred to by officers in determining the application.

The objector comments that no notices have been posted in the local press or notices erected on the site. The application due to its type, location and lack of planning constraints is not required to be advertised in the local press. A site notice was erected on the site on 28th June 2011 and a further site notice advertising the amended plans erected on 26th July 2011.

The objector comments the full planning history of the site was not supplied until two weeks after the application was validated and no one can make a proper judgement on the application without this information. The full planning history of an application site is not normally provided to consultees or neighbouring residents. The application should be determined on its own merits and not on the basis of the previous planning history of the site.

The objector raises concern that incremental additions to the school have resulted in the doubling of the number of children attending the site in the past year. This may be true however it is not an issue to be addressed by this application which seeks consent for an extension to provide toilet facilities for the existing pupils.

The objection letter sets out that the school has no authorised vehicular access due to changes to the access arrangements over the years including the closure of accesses off Bassett Road and West Street, the only vehicular access is by default the unadopted access to the unauthorised staff car park which fails to meet Design Supplement 7. The letter also raises concerns over the unsuitable access in terms of visibility, turning area and servicing, pedestrian provision and safety and traffic generation due to the increasing number of pupils attending the school and the local and wider impact on the road network. These issues are

not included in this planning application and the application should be determined on its own merits.

The objector raises the management of the school car park and unlawful parking by parents and nuisance due to unlawful parking, by delivery vehicles, noise from children and activities on the outside of school hours. These are issues for the school to address as they are outside of the control of the Local Planning Authority.

Objections are made due to the impact on heritage assets in relation to this application and previous developments on the site. The consideration of this application has included considering the impact of the proposal on the historic school buildings, however the impact of any previous developments cannot be considered as part of this application.

Recommendation

That subject to consideration of the comments of the Conservation Officer 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 All external works 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/complement the existing building(s) and the visual amenities of the locality.

- 3 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers PL-001A, PL-002 & SU-001.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

Reasons for Granting

The proposal would not detrimentally impact upon the character and appearance of the streetscene nor would there be any adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring residents. The proposal would not have any impact on archaeological remains. The scheme therefore, by reason of its size, design and location, is in conformity with Planning Policy Statement 1 and Planning Policy Statement 5 and South Bedfordshire Local Plan First Review policy BE8. It is further in conformity with the Central Bedfordshire Supplementary Technical Guidance "Design in Central Bedfordshire, A Guide for Development".

Notes to Applicant

1. In accordance with Article 31 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010, 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

Bedford shire Structure Plan 2011
No relevant policies

South Bedford shire Local Plan Review Policies
BE8 - Design Considerations

2. In accordance with Article 31 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010, 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.

DECISION

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