

Item No. 12

SCHEDULE C

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/11/01693/FULL
LOCATION	Fairfield Park Lower School, Dickens Boulevard, Stotfold, Hitchin, SG5 4FD
PROPOSAL	Erection of two canopies to provide covered hard play area to two classrooms on the west elevation of the main school building
PARISH	Stotfold
WARD	Stotfold & Langford
WARD COUNCILLORS	CIlrs Clarke, Saunders & Saunders
CASE OFFICER	Judy Self
DATE REGISTERED	20 June 2011
EXPIRY DATE	15 August 2011
APPLICANT	Fairfield Park Lower School
AGENT	PCMS Ltd
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE	The application is on Council owned land and a number of objections have been received.
RECOMMENDED DECISION	Full Application - Granted

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 to the west by Nickleby Way 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.

Planning permission is sought for the erection of two canopies to provide covered hard play area to two classrooms on the west elevation of the main school building.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

National Policies

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
Policy CS3	Healthy and Sustainable Communities
Policy CS14	High Quality Development

South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review Policies

Not applicable

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Design in Central Bedfordshire. A Guide for Development (2010)

Planning History

06/00024	CC: New 150 place Lower School, incorporating a nursery unit with associated ancillary facilities - Approved 27/2/06
07/00578	CC: Erection of canopy to create covered area - Approved 11/6/07
08/00938	Full: Erection of timber storage shed and a teaching and learning timber play lodge (part retrospective) - Approved 09/07/08
08/02210	Full: Erection of single storey pre-school building - Approved 15/1/09
09/00347	Full: Installation of play equipment (retrospective) - Approved 14/5/09
10/03760	Full: a new modular single classroom building within the grounds – approved
11/01414	Full: Variation of condition: Removal of Condition 5 relating to CCTV on planning permission MB/05/01923/Full dated 19 July 2007

Representations: (Parish & Neighbours)

Stotfold TC
Adj. Occs

No objection

2 letters received, summarised as follows:

- The proposed development would be a direct contravention of the restrictive covenants attached to the adjacent residential dwellings;
- The area is inappropriate for use as a hard play area as it is designed as an access walk-way only a few metres wide and close to the private residential properties sited immediately opposite;
- Loss of privacy;
- Noise and disturbance;

- Visual impact of development;
- Loss of visual amenity and outlook;
- Impact on the children from traffic pollutants;
- Unacceptable impact on the 'human right' to a quiet and peaceful existence.

Consultations/Publicity responses

Tree & Landscapes	No objection
Community Safety Officer	No comments received
Education Officer	No comments received

Determining Issues

The main considerations of the application are;

1. Visual impact upon the character and appearance of the area.
2. Impact upon the neighbouring residential amenity.
3. Any other implications of the proposal.

Considerations

1. ***Character and Appearance of the Area***

Planning permission is being sought for two external canopies in order to improve outdoor facilities for two classrooms. The area proposed to be covered by the canopies is an area of hard play which would provide all weather access to an outdoor teaching environment for pupils.

The classrooms have existing external doors to the hard play areas and the canopies would be sited over the two classroom doors in the western elevation of the building. The proposal would be visible within the streetscene.

The two canopies each measure 5.8m in width and 3m in depth and are of a simple lean-to design 3.4m in height. The frame, decorative details and supporting posts are powder coated steel and are black in colour. It is considered that the canopies would blend in with the Victorian style architecture of the existing school building and would not adversely affect the character and appearance of the area.

2. ***Residential Amenity of Neighbouring Properties***

The application site is to the east of the estate road which serves Nickleby Way and no direct harm to the nearest neighbouring residential properties (nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 34 & 35 Nickleby Way) by way of overbearing impact, overlooking or loss of light is considered to arise given the degree of separation.

A number of concerns have been raised by the residents at Nos. 2 and 4 Nickleby Way. These properties are located on the opposite side of the estate road. No. 4 occupies a corner site with the garden area adjacent to the highway and is positioned approximately 8 metres away from the canopies. No. 2 fronts onto the highway and is positioned approximately 15 metres away from the nearest canopy.

The hard play areas are currently used for periods of outdoor play within the schools normal teaching hours. The proposed canopies would provide two classrooms with a purpose built external area to achieve access to an outdoor all-weather teaching environment. The existing hard play is used by the class pupils and therefore the canopy would not increase the use of the area but it will improve the pupil's environment against weather conditions. These outdoor play areas are currently enclosed by railings and the children would only have access to the canopy within their play area.

Whilst the comments received have been duly noted given the nature of the school site; the degree of usage and the degree of separation between the canopies and the householders opposite, no significant harm to the residential amenity of nos. 2 and 4 Nickleby Way is considered to arise.

4. *Any other implications of the proposal*

Any restrictive covenants are a matter for the seller and purchaser of the properties concerned and were not imposed as a condition attached to the grant of planning permission.

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 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 200-001A; 200-002A; 200-003A.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

Reasons for Granting

The proposed extension would not detrimentally impact upon the character and appearance of the streetscene nor would there be any significant adverse impact on

the amenities of neighbouring residents. As such the proposal is in conformity with Planning Policy Statement 1 (2005) and Policy DM3, CS3 and CS14 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies, November 2009.

DECISION

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