

Item No. 16

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/12/00938/FULL
LOCATION	Shefford Lower School, Bloomfield Drive, Shefford, SG17 5BU
PROPOSAL	Extensions and alterations to the rear and to the side, creation of two new play areas, extending car parking area together with internal modifications along with additional windows and doors to the existing building.
PARISH	Shefford
WARD	Shefford
WARD COUNCILLORS	Cllrs Birt & Brown
CASE OFFICER	Richard Murdock
DATE REGISTERED	20 March 2012
EXPIRY DATE	15 May 2012
APPLICANT	Central Bedfordshire Council
AGENT	QMP
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE	Central Bedfordshire is the applicant and objections have been received to the application.
RECOMMENDED DECISION	Full Application - Granted

Site Location:

Shefford Lower School is situated on the western side of Shefford in a residential area, access taken from School Lane. The school buildings are single storey with various additions having taken place over the years. To the front of the building is existing car parking with a hard surfaced playground to the side and play/sports facilities to the rear.

The Application:

Planning permission is sought for a single storey extension to the side of the building to provide additional facilities including classrooms, open courtyards and an undercover play area. The new building also includes a new community entrance to the front of the building and internal modifications. To the side of the proposed extension it is proposed to provide a new hard play area and hard play zone, and a bin store.

The overall increase in footprint will be 562 sq. metres. Car parking provision will be maintained at a total of 63 spaces. It is anticipated that the total pupil numbers will increase from 400 to 450, staffing levels increasing from 70 (17 F/T and 53 P/T) to 86 (21 F/T and 65 P/T).

RELEVANT POLICIES:

National Policies

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy and Development Management Policies

CS15, DM13 Heritage
CS14, DM3 High Quality Development

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Design in Central Bedfordshire 2009

Planning History

CB/11/03350/FULL Full: 115 m2 Extension to create reception classroom and associated WC's, cloakroom, and SEN/meeting room.
Approved 16/11/2011

Representations: (Parish & Neighbours)

Shefford Town Council No objection

Neighbours Three letters of objection on the following grounds:

- increase in vehicular traffic;
- impact upon highway safety;
- drop off zones and parking zones required to minimise risks;
- proximity of play area to school access;
- School Lane issues need to be resolved;
- Problem parking in front of school gates;
- School needs an alternative access or an alternative school site needs to be found.

Site notices posted at 05/04/12
site entrance and
entrance to School
Lane

Consultations/Publicity responses

CBC Highways Recommend conditions regarding a TRO along School Lane and putting control on access to the school.
Request a travel plan

Sport England No objection as the works meet exception E3 of Port England's policy 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England (1997)'.

CBC Archaeology No objection subject to a condition for a scheme of investigation

CBC Public Protection No comments to make

CBC Play & Open Space No comments received

CBC Building Control No comments to make

CBC Waste No comments received

Community Safety Officer No comments received

Architectural Liaison Officer No comments received

Determining Issues

The main considerations of the application are;

1. The effect on the character and appearance of the area
2. The impact on neighbouring amenity
3. Any other considerations

Considerations

1. The effect on the character and appearance of the area

The proposed extension would be sited to the west and south elevations of the building and will therefore be visible to the wider area. Whilst the site is not widely visible from School Lane there are wider views from the south and west from the A507.

The scale of the proposed extension is in keeping with the existing building, being subservient in floor area and comparable in height. The existing building is red brick and cream render and it is proposed to render the extension in colour to match existing. The roof will be flat to match the existing building. It is considered that the building is acceptable in its scale and design.

The proposed works to the parking area and two new play areas are of a character and appearance expected with such works. The play zone is proposed to be surrounded by a 4m high fence.

The proposal will result in the removal of a landscaped bund along the western boundary. This is not ideal but the resultant visual appearance of the site is not considered to be materially affected.

Overall, the works as proposed will not adversely affect the character and appearance of the area.

2. The impact on neighbouring amenity

The school is within a residential area. The proposed buildings will be no closer to existing residential properties to the north of the site and therefore those properties will be unaffected. The parking arrangements next to those properties will also largely remain as existing with some rearrangement to relocate spaces lost as a result of the extension. Any noise or disturbance associated with parking will also remain as per the current situation.

The proposed play areas are located sufficient distance away from residential properties as not to result in any undue noise and disturbance.

3. Highway Safety Issues

Access to the school is from School Lane, which currently causes problems at peak school travel times due to parking along the road and volume of traffic. The objections received from adjoining occupiers have centred around this issue and the concerns with regard to highway safety of both vehicles and pedestrians.

The Highways Officer and Sustainable Transport Officer have both raised

concerns regarding the existing situation and the fact that the proposed development will only serve to exacerbate the problem. It has been recommended that access to the school car park be controlled so that only members of staff or persons with specific permission be allowed entry to the school during peak hours of 8am to 9am and 3pm to 4pm. Also, a TRO (Traffic Regulation Order) has been requested to control parking and stopping along School Lane. It is considered appropriate to attach conditions to any consent and therefore seek to address the issues along School Lane.

The parking provision as proposed is considered acceptable, The standards require the provision of parking based on 1 space per full time teaching staff, 1 space per 4 other staff and 1 space per class (maximum of 10 spaces). Based on the staffing numbers proposed this would equate to a requirement for 64 spaces. This is one space more than provided but this is considered to be acceptable.

A travel plan has been requested. However, this application relates to an extension to the school and it would not be reasonable to require a travel plan for the entire school as part of this application. This is a matter that could be taken up with the school separately.

4. Any other considerations

The proposed development is in the area of a high status Roman settlement (HER 379). It is a locally identified heritage asset with an archaeological interest as defined by the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*.

Shefford Lower School is within an extensive high status Roman settlement. Finds were initially made in the area in the first half of the 19th century during gravel digging; further finds were made during the 1940's. Subsequent investigations over the last twenty years have produced further evidence of Roman occupation. The settlement had its origins in the late Iron Age period when a ditched enclosure was established containing round houses and other evidence of domestic occupation. The enclosure was maintained during the Roman period and a new sequence of buildings constructed including a large aisled building unique in Bedfordshire. The site continued to be occupied into the 4th century AD. Archaeological investigation at the Lower School site has shown that it lies within the settlement, on the edge of the main enclosure ditch and an area of quarrying. The proposed development site will contain archaeological remains of the high status late Iron Age and Roman settlement known to exist in the area.

Under Policy 128 of the *NPPF* local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected. The application includes an *Archaeological/Heritage Asset Assessment* which describes the significance of the heritage asset with an archaeological interest. Therefore, the application conforms to the requirements of Policy 128 of the *NPPF*.

Archaeological/Heritage Asset Assessment identifies and describes the late Iron Age and Roman settlement in the area of the Lower School. It also recognises that the archaeological remains and the heritage asset with an archaeological interest are of regional significance on the basis of the published Regional Archaeological Research Frameworks. The *Assessment* also identifies those parts of the development which will have an impact on archaeological remains. These include the enabling works, building construction, creation of a temporary vehicular route and construction of the hard play areas. This is a reasonable assessment of the impact of the proposed development on archaeological remains.

The proposed development will have a negative and irreversible impact on archaeological remains belonging to a high status late Iron Age and Roman settlement which represent a regionally significant heritage asset with an archaeological interest. The negative impact on the archaeological deposits will result in a loss of significance of the heritage asset. This does not represent an over-riding constraint on the proposed development provided that developer takes appropriate measures to record and advance understanding of the significance of the heritage asset with an archaeological interest. This will comprise the investigation and recording of any archaeological remains that are affected by the development. This is in line with Policy 141 of the *NPPF*.

In order to secure this a condition could be attached to secure investigations on the site.

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 **Prior to the commencement of development, 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 Prior to the commencement of development, a scheme to control access to the school car park shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The measures approved shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the extension hereby approved.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

- 4 Prior to the occupation of the extension hereby approved, the applicant shall

secure the implementation of a Traffic Regulation Order to restrict parking along School Lane on Mondays to Fridays (inclusive) between the hours of 08:00 and 09:00 and 15:00 and 16:00. The details of which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

- 5 **No development shall take place until the applicant or developer has secured the implementation of a Written Scheme of Archaeological Investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The said development shall only be implemented in accordance with the scheme thereby approved.**

Reason: To record and advance understanding of the significance of the heritage asset in accordance with Policy 141 of the *National Planning Policy Framework*.

- 6 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers M5314/A/A201.A, M5314/A/A202.A, M5314/A/A205.0, M5314/A/A206.A, M5314/A/A210.A, M5314/A/A220.0, M5314/A/A221.0, M5314/A/A225.A.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

Reasons for Granting

The proposed extension would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area or an adverse impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties and is acceptable in terms of highway safety and archaeology therefore by reason of its site, design and location, is in conformity with Policies CS14, DM3, CS15 and DM13 of the Core Strategy and Management Policies, November 2009; National Planning Policy Framework 2012

DECISION

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