

## Item No. 9

<b>APPLICATION NUMBER</b>	<b>CB/12/01861/FULL</b>
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>Fairfield Park Lower School, Dickens Boulevard, Stotfold, Hitchin, SG5 4FD</b>
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	<b>Extensions and alterations to the existing accommodation to cater for fluctuations and future increases in pupil intake.</b>
<b>PARISH</b>	<b>Stotfold</b>
<b>WARD</b>	<b>Stotfold &amp; Langford</b>
<b>WARD COUNCILLORS</b>	<b>Cllrs Saunders &amp; Saunders</b>
<b>CASE OFFICER</b>	<b>Amy Lack</b>
<b>DATE REGISTERED</b>	<b>30 May 2012</b>
<b>EXPIRY DATE</b>	<b>25 July 2012</b>
<b>APPLICANT</b>	<b>Central Bedfordshire Council</b>
<b>AGENT</b>	<b>QMP</b>
<b>REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE RECOMMENDED DECISION</b>	<b>Central Bedfordshire Council application with a third party representation received in objection to the proposal.</b>
	<b>Full Application - Granted</b>

### Site Location:

Fairfield Park Lower School, a single storey purpose built building, occupies a site approximately 1.21 hectares in area. The main school building is finished in a buff brick with a slate roof. To the north east is a detached single storey building occupied by a pre-school. The north of the site is a designated playing field area, currently subject to an archaeological investigative dig.

The surrounding area is predominantly residential, comprising two storey residential dwellinghouses. To the north is the re-developed Fairfield Hospital grounds; to the east is a community centre and Kipling Crescent, from which the school takes vehicular access; to the south is open green space and Dickens Boulevard; and to the west is the residential development along Nickleby Way.

The site is located within the Settlement Envelope, it is not within a Conservation Area. No mature trees will be compromised by the proposal.

### The Application:

The application seeks planning permission for extensions and associated alterations to the existing school in order to accommodate future increase in pupil numbers.

The proposed works include:

- An extension to the front (south) of the eastern element of the school of 2.3 metres in depth to extend a hall;
- A 2.3 metre wide and 5 metres deep extension to the south of the eastern elevation to provide a store;
- An extension to the existing bin store on the eastern elevation by 1.2 metres



CS14	High Quality Development
CS15	Heritage
DM3	High Quality Development
DM4	Development Within and Beyond Settlement Envelopes
DM13	Heritage in Development

## Supplementary Planning Guidance

Central Bedfordshire Council's Technical Guidance (January 2010)  
 - Design Supplement 2: Larger Footprint Buildings.

## Planning History

MB/06/00024/REG3	New 150 place Lower School, incorporating a nursery unit with associated ancillary facilities. Approve 07.02.06
MB/08/02210/FULL	Erection of single storey pre-school building. Approved 15.01.09
CB/10/03760/FULL	Modular single storey classroom. Approved 09.12.10
CB/11/01693/FULL	Erection of canopies for hard play area. Approved 15.09.11
CB/12/01391/FULL	Classroom extensions and alterations. Approved 19.07.12

## Representations: (Parish & Neighbours)

Stotfold Town Council      No objection.

Neighbours                      A third party representation has been received in objection to the proposal from the owner/occupiers of the following address:

- 35, Nickleby Way

The representation can be summarised as follows:

### Noise

- As the number of pupils have increased at this school noise levels have risen from: vehicles dropping off and collecting; children using the playfield /playground, on the surrounding streets and being dropped off/collected from school;
- the potential use of the school in the evenings and at the weekends will increase disturbance; and
- There will also be disturbance from construction vehicles if approved.

### Parking

- Car parking along Nickleby Way will be exacerbated.

### Privacy

- 35 Nickleby Way is possibly the closest dwelling to the

school's western boundary. In 2011 school children, trying to attract the attention of a cat threw stones at a window of the property. There was no damage and an apology was received but the increase in students will have a significant impact upon privacy.

The full copy of the representation response that was received can be viewed on the application file.

## **Consultations/Publicity responses**

**Arboriculture and landscape** The existing buildings and landscaping are relatively new. The additional works are quite substantial but will not affect the more mature trees around the site boundary.

Details of additional new landscaping should be supplied to include species, sizes, densities and soil preparation.

**Sustainable Transport** The School's travel plan should be updated to reflect the new development on the site. An appropriate amount of cycle/scooter parking should also be installed for the development as per the CBC Cycle Parking Standards.

**Archaeological** The proposed development site lies within a known prehistoric and Roman archaeological landscape and partially within an area of Late Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman settlement and funerary activity (HER 16801). Under the terms of the NPPF these are all heritage assets with archaeological interest.

A number of archaeological investigations have taken place at Fairfield Park and initiated as part of the re-development of Fairfield Hospital. The investigations demonstrated that Fairfield Park formed part of an extensive prehistoric settlement landscape, predominantly early Iron Age, but with an occupation sequence that dates from the Late Bronze Age through to the medieval/post medieval periods.

The Fairfield Lower School playing fields overlie one of the archaeological areas. Conditions 13 and 14 of the planning permission for the erection of the school (MBDC 06/00024/CC) deal specifically with the need to protect the archaeological remains in perpetuity.

The *Heritage Asset Assessment* submitted with this application outlines proposals to investigate and record the surviving archaeological resource. Archaeological investigation works are ongoing, so to ensure the archaeological remains are investigated,

recorded and the significance of the heritage assets is not lost a condition should be attached.

Building control

The Design and Access Statement makes reference to the Equalities Act but the submitted plans so not show disabled WC provisions to the classrooms.

## **Determining Issues**

The main considerations of the application are;

1. Principle of development
2. Character, context and design of external spaces
3. Nearby residential amenity
4. Highway safety, car and cycle parking
5. Archaeology
6. Third Party Representations

## **Considerations**

### **1. Principle of development**

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

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

The use of this site by a non-residential school is established and as such extensions to the school building are acceptable in principle. This is subject to the proposal conforming to the relevant policies of the development plan which are considered below within the main body of the report.

### **2. Character, context and design of external spaces**

The extensions to the principle building are of an appearance, scale and mass that is sympathetic to the building they extend, their design responds well to the constraints of the school site.

The canopy structure, additional on site car parking provision and other minor alterations are all forms of development that are expected and in keeping with the character of a school use.

As such, the proposed extensions are considered acceptable with respect to

their visual amenity, subject to a standard condition to ensure that the materials used in the external finish of the extensions match the existing host building (condition 2). The proposal complies with policy DM3 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2009) and Central Government Guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).

### **3. Nearby Residential Amenity**

The third party representation received from the owner/occupiers on Nickleby Way, the road running immediately adjacent to the west boundary of the school site, expresses concern at the potential increase in noise and disturbance from an increased number of pupils on and around the site, and increased vehicular movement and issues of privacy.

#### Noise and disturbance

It has not been confirmed how many additional pupils the extended accommodation will make provision for in order to assess the potential impact from noise and disturbance. Notwithstanding this, it is anticipated that up to an additional four full time employees and two part time employees will be required to cater for the increase in the number of pupils that the extended school will be able to accommodate. Given the size of the school site this increase of staff and pupils is considered to fit within the constraints of the site. It is envisaged that given the location of the school, surrounded by a residential estate, that a significant majority of pupils and staff will walk to school and not travel by car, mitigating the potential increase of noise and disturbance from vehicular noise and implications for on street car parking.

The nature of a school use expects increased volumes of movement and noise prior to the start of the school day, at the end of the day and during break times. It is not anticipated that the additional users of the school, by virtue of the increased accommodation at the site, will result in a level of noise and disturbance that is significantly different to that which is currently generated by the school and experienced by neighbouring occupiers.

#### Enclosure and light

It is likely that the extension to the rear, north west of the school, will result in some sense of enclosure and overshadowing at the beginning of the day to No.35 Nickleby Way, the residential dwelling closest to the proposed development. At its closest point the extension will retain a separation distance of approximately 9 metres from this neighbouring building. However, this relationship is considered acceptable. The single storey height of the building, although a tall single storey, will not have an unreasonable overbearing impact upon this adjacent property to the extent that would warrant refusal of the application. It should be noted that a semi-permanent canopy structure extends from the rear of the school in a similar position as the proposed extension and despite a reduced height and footprint comparable to the proposal it does obscure views from No.35 across the school site and introduces a built form in this location.

#### Privacy

With respect to privacy this extension to the north west of the school proposes two windows to the north of the west elevation and two doorways to the southern end. The presence of these openings in close proximity to No.35 will undoubtedly have an impact upon the perception of privacy afforded to this property. It is recommended that a condition be imposed which ensures the glazing of both the windows and the doors on the west elevation of this extension are obscured to a height of at least 1.7 metres above finished floor level (condition 7). This will help mitigate against the impact of these windows, which will be at a distance of approximately 9 metres from the windows on the east elevation of No.35. This dwelling benefits from two windows on its east elevation at ground floor level, both serving living spaces. However, these are only considered secondary windows and serve rooms which are dual aspect, benefiting from larger windows on the south and north elevations of the building. It is considered that suitable landscaping, ensured by condition (condition 5) will also go some way to reducing the impact by acting as a buffer and partial screen to obscure views between the existing dwelling and the openings of the proposed extension.

With respect to the impact of the proposal upon neighbouring residential amenity, on balance, subject to conditions as suggested above, the proposal complies with policy DM3 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2009) and Central Government Guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).

#### **4. Highway safety, car and cycle parking**

Nine extra on site car parking spaces are proposed. This will result in an increase from the current provision of 16 spaces to 25 spaces. This is inclusive of an additional allocated disabled compliant space, resulting in the current provision of two disabled spaces increasing to three.

To mitigate the potential increase in trips to and from the school the Sustainable Transport Officer has recommended that the school review and update their existing travel plan. It is considered reasonable that such a condition be imposed due to the incremental impact of additional accommodation on the site and this application which will allow for an increase in pupils at the school. This is considered necessary in the interests of highway safety, to reduce congestion and to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel. It will seek to encourage sustainable transport choices and reduce car use. It is suggested the imposition of a condition requires this prior to the first use of the proposed extension (condition 4).

Further to this, it is also considered necessary to impose a standard condition requiring on site cycle parking to be agreed prior to the commencement of development in order to ensure that provision of sufficient cycle parking is made (condition 6).

Access into the site is to remain as per the current situation, taking access off Kipling Crescent. It is not anticipated that there will be any significant adverse impact upon highway safety as a result of the increased use of this access. However, comments are awaited from the Highway Authority. Once received these will be reported to Committee Members on the late sheet or verbally at the meeting.

## 5. Archaeology

The school site lies within a known prehistoric and Roman archaeological landscape. A number of archaeological investigations have taken place at Fairfield Park, initiated as part of the re-development of the listed Fairfield Hospital building and its grounds. The playing fields to the north of the proposed extension to the school building are currently subject to investigation as required by conditions 13 and 14 of planning application reference MB/06/00024. It is therefore considered reasonable and necessary to request that a condition be imposed to ensure that these works continue and the significance of the heritage asset with archaeological interest is not lost (condition 3). Subject to this condition the proposal is considered acceptable and to accord with East of England Plan (2008) policy ENV6, the Core Strategy policy DM13 and Central Government Advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).

## 6. Third party representations

The concerns raised in the third party representation received in objection to the proposal have been addressed in the main body of the report above. Concerns with respect to noise and disturbance and privacy under the heading 'Nearby Residential Amenity', and with respect to vehicle access and parking under the heading 'Highway safety, car and cycle parking'.

## Recommendation

That Planning Permission be APPROVED subject to the following:

- 1 The development shall begin not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 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 **No development shall commence until such time as the scheme of archaeological investigation, as outlined in the 'Written Scheme of Investigation and Heritage Asset Assessment' (Albion Archaeology, project FPS1938, document 2012/74, version 1.1) submitted to the Local Planning Authority with planning application reference CB/12/01861/FULL has been fully implemented on site to the**



**satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.**

**Reason: To record and advance understanding of the significance of the heritage assets with archaeological interest before they are lost and to conserve, enhance, protect and enhance the enjoyment of the historic environment.**

- 4 Before the building is first brought into use, the Fairfield Lower School Travel Plan shall be reviewed and updated and then submitted, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall contain details of:
- measures to encourage sustainable travel choices for journeys to the school;
  - pupil travel patterns and barriers to sustainable travel;
  - measures to reduce car use; and
  - an action plan detailing targets and a timetable for implementing appropriate measures and plans for annual monitoring and review for 5 years.

All measures agreed therein shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved plan. There shall be an annual review of the Travel Plan (for a period of 5 years from the date of approval of the Plan) to monitor progress in meeting the targets for reducing car journeys generated by the proposal and this shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, to reduce congestion and to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel

- 5 **No development shall commence until such time as a landscaping scheme to include any hard surfaces and earth mounding has been 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.**

- 6 **Notwithstanding the plans hereby approved, prior to the commencement of development a scheme for the parking of cycles on the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be fully implemented before the development is first occupied or brought into use and thereafter retained for this purpose.**

**Reason: To ensure the provision of adequate cycle parking to meet the**

**needs of occupiers of the proposed development in the interests of encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport.**

- 7 Prior to the first occupation or use of the extension hereby permitted to the north west of the existing school, windows of the extension facing the common boundary with the footpath adjacent to No.35 Nickleby Way shall be glazed with obscure glass to a height of at least 1.7 above finished floor level, the details of which shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to development commencing. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.**

**Reason: To ensure the protection of privacy for neighbouring occupiers in the interests of residential amenity.**

- 8 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers [M5313/A/201.0; M5313/A/203.0; M5313/A/204.0; M5313/A/205.0; M5313/A/206.0; M5313/A/207.0; M5313/A/208.0; M5313/A/210.0].

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

**Reasons for Granting**

The proposed development at Fairfield Lower School is appropriate in its design, scale, siting and use of materials, in keeping with the existing school building and site and the character of the surrounding area, and will not have a significant adverse impact upon the amenities currently enjoyed by of adjoining residents. The proposal therefore accords with policies CS3, CS14, CS15, DM3, DM4 and DM13 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2009) and Central Government Guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).

**DECISION**

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