

## **Item No. 11**

<b>APPLICATION NUMBER</b>	<b>CB/12/02812/FULL</b>
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>Village Hall, Hillside Road, Lower Stondon, Henlow, SG16 6LQ</b>
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	<b>Single storey side extension to village hall, new parking area &amp; change of use of open space to school playing field.</b>
<b>PARISH</b>	<b>Stondon</b>
<b>WARD</b>	<b>Arlesey</b>
<b>WARD COUNCILLORS</b>	
<b>CASE OFFICER</b>	<b>Nikolas Smith</b>
<b>DATE REGISTERED</b>	<b>06 August 2012</b>
<b>EXPIRY DATE</b>	<b>01 October 2012</b>
<b>APPLICANT</b>	<b>Waterway Estates Limited</b>
<b>AGENT</b>	<b>JLM ARCHITECTURE LIMITED</b>
<b>REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE</b>	<b>This application was called to Committee by Cllr Dalgarno because of local interest.</b>
<b>RECOMMENDED DECISION</b>	<b>Full Application - Granted</b>

### **Planning Context:**

If planning permission is granted for this development, it is proposed that it would be delivered through a s106 agreement attached to an application for housing in Lower Stondon (12/2929). That application has not yet been determined. Notwithstanding the potential relationship between the two developments, this application should be determined on its individual merits.

### **Site Location:**

Stondon Village Hall is a single-storey building on the north east side of Hillside Road. To the southeast is Stondon Lower School and to the north west and north east (side and rear) of the village hall is open space in the ownership of the school. The village hall is currently served by six car parking spaces on a forecourt in front of the building.

### **The Application:**

There would be a single storey side extension to the hall together with an outside amenity area to the north west of the building. The extension would be designed in such a way as to house the nursery school who currently use the existing hall during the day.

10 car parking spaces would be provided on land currently used by the school and access to those spaces would result in the removal of a large tree at the front of the site. By way of compensation for the school land that forms part of the development site, an area of around 0.1ha at the rear of the site is shown as being made available for school use.

Any land transfer that took place would do so outside of the remit of this planning application.

### **Relevant Policies:**

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2009)

DM3 High Quality Development

DM4 Development Within and Outside of Settlement Envelopes

### **Representations:**

Parish Council No objection

Neighbours 55 letters of objection were received, commenting as follows:

Site and press notices were displayed in addition to letters being sent.

- The extension would be for the playgroup rather than the village
- The additional parking would be inadequate
- The village hall would be less usable for other groups in the village
- The existing lease has 19 years left to run
- Open space should not be replaced by car parking
- There would be increased congestion on Hillside Road
- More people should use the car park that joins Hillside Road
- The proposed entrance is not wide enough to allow cars to pass one another
- It is not clear whether the existing hedge fronting Hillside Road would remain
- The car park could attract anti-social behaviour
- The bright colours proposed would not be in keeping with the character of the area
- The village hall is difficult to get to for many people in Stondon
- The development would require a 'land swap'

- that is not within the applicant's power
- The development would result in the loss of important open space

It should be noted that a large number of the comments received referred to the application for housing in Stondon (12/2929) or this applications relationship with it and those are not matters for assessment as part of the determination of this application.

### **Consultee responses:**

Highways	No objection subject to conditions
Trees and Landscaping	Concerned about the loss of a large tree at the front of the site
Highways	No objection subject to conditions
Play Officer	No objection
Sport England	No objection

### **Determining Issues:**

The considerations in the determination of this application are:

1. The principle of the development
2. Appearance
3. Neighbours
4. Trees and landscaping
5. Traffic and parking
6. Other matters

### **Considerations:**

#### **1. Principle**

The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) states that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities and that decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of community facilities to enhance the sustainability of communities. It states that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

This development would result in a larger village hall for the local community and policy supports the delivery of facilities like these.

If the development went ahead (i.e. the applicant and the Council negotiated the transfer of land at the site), an area of Stondon Recreation Ground would be given over for use by the school. Typically, the loss of public open play space like this would be avoided but Sport England and the Council's Play Officer have acknowledged that the area of land in question has limited value in recreation terms because of its size and location. As such, and particularly given the local value that a larger village hall would have, the loss of this open space would be acceptable in principle.

## **2. Appearance**

The extension would have a modern design but its narrow width and positioning on the building would prevent it from conflicting to the point of harm with the existing building. A colourful canopy at the front would add visual interest to the building and would be befitting of its apparent main use as a facility for the local nursery group.

## **3. Neighbours**

The nearest residential building would be over 30m away from the extension and that would ensure that no harm would be caused to living conditions there. One objector wrote to express concern over the visual intrusion of the building on their living conditions but given the modest scale of the addition and the distance from neighbouring houses, it could not cause serious harm in that respect. The car park would be nearer to existing neighbours than the extension but would still be far enough away to prevent any harm being caused. The front of the site is already characterised by informal and occasional parking. The provision of additional parking spaces might deter people from parking on the road, as they do at the moment.

## **4. Trees, landscaping and play space**

The extension to the parking area would result in the loss of landscaping at the site and the loss of one mature tree would be particularly significant. The applicant has indicated a willingness to implement a significant replacement landscaping scheme at the site, including an appropriate replacement tree and a condition would ensure that this came forward. Whilst the loss of this tree would be regrettable, in the context of a suitable replacement and the wider community benefit of the development, it would not warrant the refusal of the planning application.

The provision of an amenity area for people using the extended village hall would add further to facilities at the site.

## **5. Traffic and parking**

The submitted plans show the addition of 10 parking spaces at the site to facilitate the increased use that would accompany the extension. In reality, two of those spaces would likely be less usable (both would interrupt rights of way)

but the doubling of parking provision would acceptably mitigate the impact of the development on the local highway network. However, when large numbers of people use the hall at one time, people do park on the road and whilst the larger parking area would reduce that, it would not eradicate it.

## **6. Other matters**

### School land

This application site includes land owned by the Council. In granting this planning application, the Council would be under no obligation to accept the land transfer this would be required to facilitate the development and that would be dealt with independently of the planning process. The appropriate planning notices were served on the Council and the school.

### The use of the village hall

A number of people have objected to the development because they feel that the extension would benefit one nursery school, rather than the community as whole. Whilst the extension does appear to have been designed with the nursery in mind, it would allow for the use of the existing hall at times that it would not previously have been available. Notwithstanding that, who uses the hall is a matter for those that operate it and is not a material planning consideration. Ultimately, this development would result in the expansion of local community facilities.

### The layout

A number of people objected because it was felt that kitchen facilities would not be available for those using the main hall. Whilst the internal layout is not, for the most part, a planning matter, the design was amended so that the kitchen serving the main hall was increased in size.

### The status of the village hall

It is understood that the lease on the village hall has around 19 years left to run and some people have objected on the grounds that the facility would not be available for the community in the long term. Any terms of this lease are not material in the determination of this application.

Recommendation:

That Planning Permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

- 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 **No development shall commence at the site before samples of materials to be used in the external surfaces of the extension have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out as approved.**

**Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the development would be satisfactory.**

- 3 The development shall not be occupied before details of showing that all on site vehicular areas shall be surfaced in a stable and durable manner have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall show arrangements for surface water from the site to a soak away within the site. so that it does not.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and sustainable drainage.

- 4 **No development shall commence at the site before details of secure and covered cycle/scooter parking and a buggy bar have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out as approved.**

**Reason: In the interest of sustainable transport.**

- 5 **No development shall commence at the site before a scheme to show construction worker parking arrangements has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out as approved.**

**Reason: To ensure that construction causes the minimum disruption to other road users.**

- 6 **No development shall commence at the site before a landscaping scheme for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include a tree to replace that which would be felled at the front of the site and shall be carried out as approved in the planting season after the development is commenced.**

**Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance at the site.**

- 7 Prior to the first use of the extension hereby approved, the additional parking spaces shall be provided as approved and be permanently retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that adequate car parking is provided to meet the needs of the development.

8 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers [10351-LP, 10351-05, 10351-04-C, 10351-01 and 10351-02].

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

**Reason for approval:**

The development would improve this community facility in Stondon and would be acceptable in principle. The loss of outdoor play space would be acceptable by virtue of its existing value as recreation space and the wider community benefits of the development. There would be no harmful impact on the appearance of the site or on living conditions at neighbouring properties. There would be no harmful impact on the safe and free flow of traffic. The development would be in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), the Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2009) and Design in Central Bedfordshire (a guide for development) (2010).

**Notes to Applicant**

1. The applicant is advised that the approval of this planning application in no way implies the agreement of the Council to any land exchange, which will need to be considered independently to this application.

**DECISION**

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