

Item No. 9

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/13/01235/FULL
LOCATION	Roecroft Lower School, Church Road, Stotfold, SG5 4NE
PROPOSAL	Move modular buildings to different location, extend existing building, internal & external refurbishment & alterations.
PARISH	Stotfold
WARD	Stotfold & Langford
WARD COUNCILLORS	Cllrs Clarke, Saunders & Saunders
CASE OFFICER	Lauren Westley
DATE REGISTERED	24 April 2013
EXPIRY DATE	19 June 2013
APPLICANT	Willmott Dixon Construction
AGENT	Swanke Hayden Connell Architects
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE	Council owned site and objections have been received.
RECOMMENDED DECISION	Full Application - Approval

Recommended Reasons for Granting

The proposal would not have a negative impact on the character of the area or an adverse impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties and is acceptable in terms of highway safety therefore by reason of its size, design and location, is in accordance with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), policies CS3, CS14 and DM3 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2009).

Site Location:

The application site is located on the northern side of Church Road, Stotfold, to the immediate west of the village church and vicarage. To the north of the site are the rear and side gardens of residential properties, to the south are residential properties facing onto Church Road.

The site is occupied by Roecroft Lower School, which has been closed since July 2012. To the west of the site are playing fields, which were previously used by the school, but which do not form part of this application.

The site is located within the village of Stotfold and contained within the settlement envelope.

The Application:

The scheme seeks to convert the existing primary school into a school for referred students from year four to year eleven, involving the construction of two new-build

extensions as separate wings, the re-location of two modular buildings within the site, the creation of MUGA on an existing play ground, and the internal re-modelling and refurbishment of the existing buildings.

One wing will provide additional class rooms, whilst the other will provide two spaces for the teaching of vocational subjects of motor vehicle maintenance and construction. The rearward extension has been reduced in size during the course of this application, to provide an increase separation distance between the proposal and the surrounding residential properties.

The extensions to the school will follow the same building design as the existing school, and will be single storey in height.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

Section 7 - Requiring Good Design

Section 8 - Promoting Healthy Communities

Core Strategy and Development Management Policies - North (2009)

CS3 - Healthy and Sustainable Communities

CS14 - High Quality Development

DM3 - High Quality Development

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Local Transport Plan: Appendix 7 - Parking Standards

Planning History

None relevant

Representations

Stoffold Parish Council Originally objected to application on following grounds:

- *The northern extension, due to its scale and proximity to the boundary with No. 4 Rook Tree Lane, would have an overbearing and dominating effect on the property. There would be a loss of daylight throughout most of the day due to the orientation, along with loss of views.*
- *If the room is used as a music technology room, there is the potential to create a noise disturbance.*
- *The narrow passage formed between the new building and property boundary would make a natural walkway with associated loss of privacy to the residents of No. 4.*
- *Due to the differences in ground levels between site and No. 4, the proposal would be a relatively tall building, the floor levels in the extension should be dropped as much as possible to accommodate the difference.*

Following the revisions to the application, further consultation was carried out and a revised response was received -

- *As long as this is a permanent amendment without any later phase where the additional extension is reintroduced in the*

original suggested area, then it is welcomed and accepted, the objection by the Stotfold Town Council is withdrawn.

A note was included advising that should it be found possible to lower the floor and roof height of the extension, then this would be supported, to further reduce the impact on the neighbouring property.

Neighbours
(One objection)

A single storey extension, of a similar size to a two storey extension, is to be built 3m from dining room window. Will result in loss of light and outlook.

Will leave a 1.5m wide space between new building and boundary, meaning people will have to walk right next to boundary.

Elevations are misleading, don't show correct height of extension.

Following the revisions to the application, further consultation was carried out and a revised response was received -

-Having viewed the proposed amended plan showing the removal of the end classroom, it makes that end wall much more acceptable, although one feels without the drop in floor levels that end wall will still be huge and imposing.

Consultations/Publicity responses

Sport England

No comment

Archaeology

No objection, subject to conditions.

Highways

As discussed, my understanding is that the proposals are for an educational establishment offering education to up to 70 children. It is assumed that 70 pupils are approximately half the number of pupils that would have attended the school when it was a standard lower school.

The additional information submitted indicates that there will be approximately 25 staff and most of the pupils will either travel on foot or by mini bus.

Whilst this still does not give a clear understanding of the travel patterns; I am content that there will not be any detriment to the public highway. A requirement for a travel plan condition is recommended.

Public Protection

The supplementary comments from the applicant regarding noise from motor vehicle maintenance, construction classes and the music room are noted, and based on the submitted information and proposed locations within the school building

this is not likely to be detrimental to residential amenity.

A condition is recommended to be attached to any approval requiring the details of the air handling equipment.

There are concerns that noise from the MUGA, in particular from balls hitting hard surfaces, including the proposed metal fence and people noise, will affect residents. A condition is recommended to control the hours of use.

Contaminated Land	No comment
Disability Discrimination Officer	No response received
Play and Open Space Officer	No response received
Architectural Liaison Officer - Bedfordshire Police	No response received

Determining Issues

The main considerations of the application are;

1. Principle of development
2. Effect on character and appearance of building and area
3. Effect on residential amenity
4. Parking and access

Considerations

1. Principle of development

The site is occupied by the recently vacated Roecroft Lower School, which provided infant and junior education services. The school was originally established in the mid-1980's. This application has been submitted on behalf of Academies of Central Bedfordshire, who are proposing to convert the school into school for year four to year eleven, for referred pupils. The curriculum will include hair and beauty, catering, construction and motor vehicle provisions at the core of the curriculum, with horticultural and agricultural education as secondary curriculum, with academic support. The school is to cater for 35 students, rising to 70 students in 18 months.

The National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 70 requires local planning authorities to plan positively for the provision of community facilities to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments. Paragraph 72 provides strong support for ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of communities and to give great weight to the need to expand and alter schools. Policy CS3 supports in principle the upgrading of education facilities.

It is therefore considered that the principle of extending and upgrading the existing educational facility, within the settlement envelope of Stotfold, is supported in principle by the national policy and the Council's adopted policies, subject to consideration of the issues listed below.

2. Effect on character and appearance of building and area

The proposed extensions to the school are to the front and rear of the existing building, with a small infill to front reception area, and the re-location of two modular buildings within the site.

The extensions have been designed so as to be in keeping with the style of the existing buildings, the heights, detailing and window and door layouts are all consistent with the original building.

The relocation of the modular buildings, to the existing parking area, will improve the appearance of the school from Church Road, and allow for a more legible front entrance to the school, with improved access into the building from the parking areas.

The creation of the MUGA on the existing play area will involve the erection of fencing, the details of which have been conditioned.

As such, the proposals are considered to be consistent with the overall design and appearance of the existing buildings, and improve the overall layout of the site.

3. Effect on residential amenity

The application is for the upgrading of an existing educational establishment, and therefore the nature and character of the use is already established. However as the site is generally surrounded by residential dwellings, with the north-eastern boundary backing directly on to the side and rear gardens of residential properties, regard needs to be given to the impact that the proposal, in particular the extensions, will have on these properties.

The proposed northern extension has been modified over the course of the application, reducing the size of the proposal to ensure an adequate separation distance between the proposal and the side wall of No. 4 Rook Tree Lane, which has a habitable window on the side elevation. The extension is now sited a minimum of 8m from the rear boundary, increasing to 10m, meaning that there is approximately 10.5m separation distance between the side facing window of No.4, and the new building. This has ensured that the 45° light lines are maintained and despite the change in ground levels, the separation distance will ensure that adequate outlook will be achieved.

The properties across Church Road will have clear views of the front extension, part of which is to be used for motor vehicle maintenance classes, however from the information provided in relation to the type of equipment to be used, and the school hours of 9am till 3pm, no adverse impact on the residential amenity is expected.

The MUGA is to be located to the north of the existing buildings, on the site of the existing hard surfaced playground. The MUGA will involve the erection of

additional fencing, which will increase the useability of the area, but it is not expected to result in a detrimental increase to noise and disturbance, particularly given the suggested conditions to control the hours of its use.

The relocated modular buildings would be a sufficient distance away from the nearest dwelling to ensure that there would be no overbearing impact on the amenities of any neighbouring dwelling.

Conditions have also been suggested in relation to boundary treatments and external lighting, to ensure that these elements will not have a detrimental impact on the residential amenities of surrounding properties.

Given the above, the scheme is therefore considered to have an acceptable impact on the amenities of the surrounding residential properties.

4. Parking and access

The existing school use has an existing, unmarked car parking area sited adjacent to the main entrance. The application seeks to retain this area, with 13 staff car parking spaces, 2 visitor spaces, 2 disabled bays, 2 motorcycle spaces and 8 cycle parking spaces.

The school will have approximately 45-50 pupils, rising to 70 pupils over the next couple of years. Pupils will arrive by foot, or by 9 seater mini buses, or taxis, approximately 5-7 mini buses daily.

The total number of staff will vary due to the school being a second site of a dual school operation, with the maximum number of staff being 20-25 persons. Staff travel arrangements will be by car, foot, cycles or motor cycles.

Given the existing school use, it is not expected that the proposed changes to the site will result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or an increase in parking demand.

The Council's Highways Officer does not consider there would be any detriment to highway safety as a result of the proposals, and the impact on the local highway network is therefore acceptable.

Human Rights Act

Based on the information submitted, there are no known issues raised in the context of the Human Rights Act, and as such there would be no relevant implications.

Equality Act

Based on the information submitted, there are no known issues raised in the context of the Equality Act, and as such there would be no relevant implications.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to the following:

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS / REASONS

- 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 **No development shall take place until a written scheme of archaeological investigation , that includes post excavation analysis and publication, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The said development shall only be implemented in full accordance with the approved archaeological scheme.**

Reason: To record and advance understanding of the heritage assets with archaeological interest which will be unavoidably affected as a consequence of the development.

- 3 **No development shall take place until details of the ground levels, floor levels and roof levels of the north east extension hereby permitted, are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only be implemented in full accordance with the approved levels.**

Reason: To produce a satisfactory relationship between the various elements of the scheme and adjacent properties, in accordance with policy DM3 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2009).

- 4 **Prior to the commencement of the use, details of the external lighting to be on the site, shall be submitted to and approved in writing the by the Local Planning Authority. The lighting shall then be installed in accordance with the approved details and thereafter maintained for the duration of the development.**

Reason: In the interests of protecting the visual amenity of the area and the amenities of the surrounding residential occupiers, in accordance with DM3 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2009).

- 5 **Prior to the commencement of the use, details of the fencing to be used around and within the site, shall be submitted to and approved in writing the by the Local Planning Authority. The fencing shall then be installed in accordance with the approved details and thereafter maintained for the duration of the development.**

Reason: In the interests of protecting the visual amenity of the area and the amenities of the surrounding residential occupiers, in accordance with DM3 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2009).

- 6 Prior to the installation of any air handling equipment, air extraction systems, compressors, generators, or plant or equipment of like kind, details, including acoustic specifications, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any approved plant shall be installed thereafter in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect the amenities of surrounding residents, in accordance with policy DM3 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2009).

- 7 The MUGA hereby permitted shall only be used between 0900 hours and 1530 hours, Monday to Friday and at no time on Saturdays, Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.

Reason: To protect the amenity of neighbouring residents, in accordance with policy DM3 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2009).

- 8 Prior to the re-opening of the school and attendance of pupils, a school travel plan shall be submitted to 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
- transport policy(s) of the school
- measures to mitigate any adverse impacts of non-sustainable travel to, from and between the school
- an action plan detailing targets and a timetable for implementing appropriate measures and plans for annual monitoring and review

All measures agreed therein shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved plan unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority.

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

- 9 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers P-ST-A0011 Rev B, P-ST-A0500 Rev B, P-ST-A2100 Rev A, P-ST-A0800, P-ST-A0010, P-ST-A2101 Rev A and SK015.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

Notes to Applicant

1. **Any conditions in bold must be discharged before the development commences. Failure to comply with this requirement could invalidate**

this permission and/or result in enforcement action.

Statement required by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No. 2) Order 2012 - Article 31

The Council acted pro-actively through positive engagement with the applicant during the determination process which led to improvements to the scheme. The Council has therefore acted pro-actively to secure a sustainable form of development in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No. 2) Order 2012.

Reasons for Granting

The proposal would not have a negative impact on the character of the area or an adverse impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties and is acceptable in terms of highway safety therefore by reason of its size, design and location, is in accordance with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), policies CS3, CS14 and DM3 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2009).

DECISION

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