

## **Item No. 12**

<b>APPLICATION NUMBER</b>	<b>CB/13/02192/FULL</b>
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>Alameda Middle School, Station Road, Ampthill, Bedford, MK45 2QR</b>
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	<b>A two storey, ten classroom block to include office stores, WC facilities and three group rooms; A new hall for curriculum delivery and lunch time provision; Expansion of the playground area to provide a trim trail; Replacement and additional parking; Coach turning facility; New canopies over the existing quad areas; New gates and pupil entrance; Internal reconfiguration for improved facilities to support its SEN provision and improvements to the technology resource.</b>
<b>PARISH</b>	<b>Ampthill</b>
<b>WARD</b>	<b>Ampthill</b>
<b>WARD COUNCILLORS</b>	<b>Cllrs Duckett, Blair &amp; Smith</b>
<b>CASE OFFICER</b>	<b>Annabel Gammell</b>
<b>DATE REGISTERED</b>	<b>24 June 2013</b>
<b>EXPIRY DATE</b>	<b>23 September 2013</b>
<b>APPLICANT</b>	<b>Alameda Middle School</b>
<b>AGENT</b>	<b>DLA Town Planning Ltd</b>
<b>REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE</b>	<b>The site is on land which CBC owns, this development is categorised as a major due to the amount of floorspace proposed and there has been an objection from the town council.</b>
<b>RECOMMENDED DECISION</b>	<b>Full Application - Granted</b>

### **Recommended Reason for Granting**

The proposal is in conformity with Policies DM3, CS14, CS15 of the Development Management Policies of the Core Strategy Adopted 2009, or Policies 1, 4, 21, 38, 43 and 45 of the Central Bedfordshire Development Strategy (draft), as it does not have an adverse impact upon the character or appearance of the surrounding area and does not seriously harm the amenities of neighbours and there is no unacceptable impact upon the character and appearance of the street scene or general locality. It is also in accordance with The National Planning Policy Framework, and 'Design in Central Bedfordshire', Adopted 2010.

**Reason for committee to determine – The site is on land which Central Bedfordshire Council owns, this development is categorised as a major due to the amount of floor space proposed and there has been an objection from the Town Council.**

## **Site Location:**

The application site lies to the north of Station Road and south of Woburn Street within the settlement envelope for Ampthill. The site comprises of a range of modern school buildings forming Alameda Middle School which is located just north of The Firs Lower School. The site is constrained by built development and the Alameda Walk, the large proportion of the existing site is covered in single storey school buildings, constructed in a utilitarian adhoc style, largely of buff brick with a mix of flat and dual pitched roofs.

## **The Application:**

This application seeks permission for a two storey, 10 classroom block to include offices, stores, WC facilities and group rooms, a new hall, expansion of playground, installation of trim trail, replacement and additional parking provision, coach turning provision, canopies over existing court yard areas, gates and pupil entrance, internal reconfiguration in the main school building.

The building would be constructed in 3 phases, with 6 classrooms and ancillary rooms as the 1<sup>st</sup> phase, the hall as the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase, and an additional 4 classrooms as the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase. The phasing will depend on budget and pupil numbers, however phase 1 would be intended for pupils starting September 2015.

The classroom block would be at the frontage of the school, on an area of existing parking, the parking would be relocated to the rear of the school site, in the place of existing temporary classroom units.

## **RELEVANT POLICIES:**

### **National Policies**

National Planning Policy Framework

### **Core Strategy/Development Management Policies**

DM3: Protection of Amenity

CS14: High Quality Development

CS15: Heritage in Development

### **Central Bedfordshire Development Strategy (Draft)**

Policy 1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Policy 4 – Settlement Hierarchy

Policy 21 - Provide Community Infrastructure

Policy 38 – Within and Beyond Settlement Boundaries

Policy 43 – High Quality Development

Policy 45- Historic Environment

### **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

'Design in Central Bedfordshire'. Adopted SPD Design Guide, 2010

## Planning History

CB/10/00953/FULL	Retention of two single and one double classroom units for a temporary period. <b>Granted.</b>
CB/09/01198/FULL	Single storey side entrance. Additional works to extend existing enclosed hard surface play area. <b>Granted.</b>
MB/04/00913/CC	Installation of two double temporary classroom units and one single temporary classroom unit. <b>Granted.</b>
BC/CC/2003/19	Extensions to form hall, music room, science labs and 5 classrooms and relocated 2 temporary classrooms. <b>Granted.</b>

## Representations: (Parish & Neighbours)

**Amphill Town Council** Support the principle of extending the school, however the design is out of keeping with the adjacent conservation area, it is considered wholly inappropriate, concerns over drainage, and the assess for coaches, concerns for tree protection, concerns over construction worker parking/traffic managements during busy times.

**Neighbours** No comments received.

## Consultations/Publicity responses

**Education Department** This extension to the school site, is completely supported, and necessary to provide middle school places within the Amphill area.

**Environmental Health** No comments.

**Highways** No objections conditions to be recommended on the late sheet

**Tree and Landscape** No objections

## Determining Issues

The main considerations of the application are;

1. **Principle and Background**
2. **Impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area**
3. **Impact on the residential amenities of neighbouring properties**
4. **Other matters to be considered**

## Considerations

### 1. Principle and Background

Within the Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy and Development Management Document (2009) Section 3.19.12 indicates the New Development required for Ampthill, this includes 118 Homes built between 2001-2008, 291 Planned for Homes, and a requirement for an additional 250-500 New Homes. Alameda Middle School is the only middle school within Ampthill, and it has a requirement to expand to meet the additional need for the housing in the local area. Section 106 money has been collected for education purposes; this funding would facilitate the expansion of the school site.

The school has been relying on temporary classroom accommodation, however this is only considered appropriate development when it could be considered that the need for the structures is temporary for example a spike in pupil number. Where possible a permanent solution should be found. It is evident that with the amount of new housing being constructed in Ampthill that school expansion is necessary.

### 2. Design and Impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area

#### Design

The school has been significantly extended since its original construction, and in a piecemeal way, this has led to the school site being predominantly covered in single storey buildings. Due to pressure on the existing site, it is judged appropriate to allow a 2 storey building, as this is an economical use of the space available. The building has been design to maximise the use of the existing car parking area, which is at the front of the site. Other areas of the school site were considered, but for the size of the building required this location offered the most flexibility. The existing parking area would be relocated to the rear of the school on the area of existing temporary classroom units.

The building has been designed to be constructed in 3 phases to meet the needs of the growing school. With the additional pupil numbers there would not be enough space within the existing hall for lunch times and games lessons, therefore an additional hall would be needed. Due to the sports curriculum the additional height is required on this part of the building. It is considered that the design of the existing school is of utilitarian brick work. This new building would represent a new phase in the school's history. It is designed to have a modern appearance with contrasting horizontal and vertical lines to separate the phases and create an interesting and functional learning environment. Coloured panels have been chosen by the school to contrast with the brick built traditional buildings on the site. It is judged that although this does not match, it would be appropriate within the setting. The school is a learning environment for middle school age children, and it is considered that a bright colourful modern building would be more inspiring than a standard brick built construction.

Part of the application is linking canopies over the existing quads and court yards within the existing school, as the school is constructed in separate buildings, the canopies would provide a dry route system from different sections

of the school to facilitate a safe joined up school.

The additional play space is to provide additional outside play areas to accommodate the increased pupil numbers on the site. The trim trail would allow for a varied exercise and activity programme for the school.

### Impact upon the visual amenity and character of the surrounding area

The school grounds are set back approximately 120 metres from Station Road, and the building would be some 130 metres set back. It is considered that the side elevation of the new hall building from this distance would have no significant impact upon the character or appearance of the streetscene in Station Road.

It would be possible to obtain views of the buildings between the mature trees from Alameda Walk. However, its visual impact would be mainly limited from within the site. The Alameda Walk is part of the Ampthill Conservation Area, it is considered that this building would preserve the views of the adjacent Conservation Area. The existing school buildings are currently single storey and of standard brick construction, it is not within the Conservation Area. It is accepted that the new building would be visible, however it is considered that the modern addition would add interest to the school site, and not detract from the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. The new school building would be located approximately 125 metres from the Conservation Area.

### **3. Impact on the residential amenities of neighbouring properties**

The nearest residential properties not associated with the adjacent lower school or school site would be approximately 40 metres to the east. Due to this distance and the good level of screening afforded to the rear of these properties, the proposals will not significantly impact on the residential amenities of these properties. The building would be adjacent to the middle school bungalow, it is considered that although the new building would be two storey, the amenity of the occupier of the bungalow and the adjacent bungalow known as "Sandye" but associated with the Firs Lower School would be maintained. The development has been considered in terms of loss of light, the causing of an overbearing impact, loss of outlook and impact upon privacy.

No comments have been received from any neighbouring properties in relation to this application.

### **4. Other matters considered relevant to the application**

#### Highways:

Pre application advice was undertaken prior to the planning application being submitted, this included working on the parking area and the coach turning area. The site is extremely constrained, and therefore it is necessary to maximise the space available. A coach turning area would be provided towards the front of the new building and its operation would be a school management consideration, to ensure there would not be a conflict with visitor parking. Car travel to and from the site would be discouraged by the school travel plan. The highway officer is satisfied that the provision of the replacement school parking area, and the new

coach turning area would be appropriate for the development.

### Trees and Landscape:

The Alameda Walk has a large number of mature trees, this building has been designed to respect root protection areas. It is considered that the trees could be suitably safeguarded during the construction of the building, and associated areas. Conditions relating to the protection of trees adjacent to the site are recommended.

### Human Rights issues

There are no known Human Rights issues.

### Equality Act 2010

There are no known issues under the Equality Act.

### Town Councils Concerns

**Out of keeping with the adjacent conservation area, it is considered wholly inappropriate**

This area is covered above, the site is not with the Conservation Area, and although it may be partly visible, it is considered to have a neutral impact. It is considered that the development would not harm or detract from the Conservation Area.

### **Concerns over drainage**

This site would need to comply with Building Regulations regarding suitable drainage on the site. The Environment Agency have been consulted and any comments received will be reported to the Committee.

### **Access for coaches**

The Highway Officer is satisfied that the coach turning area is suitable for the number of buses and the frequency that the coaches would be using the site. The School would have to manage the access arrangements at the start and end of the school day, however there would be a pedestrian entrance on the opposite side of the access to the coach turning area.

### **Concerns for tree protection**

The Tree Officer is satisfied that the root protection areas would be safeguarded, the building and ancillary works have been designed to fit around existing protected trees, and those within the adjacent Conservation Area.

### **Concerns over construction worker parking/traffic managements during busy times**

As this is an existing school site, it would be the schools preference and intention for the large proportion of the works to be undertaken within school

holidays, therefore access to the site would not conflict with the busy times on Station Road.

## **Recommendation**

That Planning Permission is 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      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      The Arboricultural Method Statement supplied with the application should be adhered to in terms of root protection and management of trees on site during construction.  
  
Reason: To ensure the health and longevity of trees both on and off site throughout development.
- 4      **No works shall commence on site until a landscaping scheme to include any hard surfaces, species, sizes and densities of planting 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).**  
  
**Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of landscaping.**
- 5      **Before development begins, details of the levels of the existing ground and proposed ground levels shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and development shall thereafter be implemented accordingly.**  
  
**Reason: To produce a satisfactory relationship between the various elements of the scheme and adjacent properties, to protect the trees around the proposed car parking area.**

- 6 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers 13039 (D) 011, site plan, 13039 (D) 010, 13039 (D) 013, 13039 (D) 080, TPP/AMSSRAB/010A, 13039 (D) 005, 13039 (D) 012, 13039 (D) 051, 13039 (D) 050, 13039 (D) 052, 13039 (D) 053, 13039 (D) 081, 13039 (D) 110, P01, 13039 (D) 082.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

### **Notes to Applicant**

1. This permission relates only to that required under the Town & Country Planning Acts and does not include any consent or approval under any other enactment or under the Building Regulations. Any other consent or approval which is necessary must be obtained from the appropriate authority.

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

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. The Council acted pro-actively through early engagement with the applicant at the pre-application stage 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 is in conformity with Policies DM3, CS14, CS15 of the Development Management Policies of the Core Strategy Adopted 2009, or Policies 1, 4, 21, 38, 43 and 45 of the Central Bedfordshire Development Strategy (draft), as it does not have an adverse impact upon the character or appearance of the surrounding area and does not seriously harm the amenities of neighbours and there is no unacceptable impact upon the character and appearance of the street scene or general locality. It is also in accordance with The National Planning Policy Framework, and 'Design in Central Bedfordshire', Adopted 2010.