

## **Item No. 10**

<b>APPLICATION NUMBER</b>	<b>CB/14/01817/FULL</b>
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>Redborne Upper School, Flitwick Road, Ampthill, Bedford, MK45 2NU</b>
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	<b>Erection of a new building to provide assembly hall, classrooms, staff offices, sanitary accommodation and external works.</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>16 May 2014</b>
<b>EXPIRY DATE</b>	<b>15 August 2014</b>
<b>APPLICANT</b>	<b>Redborne Upper School and Community College</b>
<b>AGENT</b>	<b>Stephen George &amp; Partners</b>
<b>REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE</b>	<b>This development is categorised as a major due to the amount of floor space, the site is within the Green Belt.</b>
<b>RECOMMENDED DECISION</b>	<b>Full Application - Granted</b>

### **Summery of Recommendation**

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 significantly harm the amenities of neighbours and there is no unacceptable impact upon the character and appearance of the street scene or general locality. The site is located within the South Bedfordshire Green Belt, however due to the Very Special Circumstances of Redborne Upper School creating a learning environment which is required for the proper functioning of the school, and there being no location outside the Green Belt, where this facility could be located on the site. It is also in accordance with The National Planning Policy Framework, and 'Design in Central Bedfordshire', Adopted 2010.

**Reason for committee to determine – This development is categorised as a major due to the amount of floor space, the site is within the Green Belt.**

### **Site Location:**

The application site is Redborne Upper School, Flitwick Road, Ampthill. Redborne School was built in the 1950s and covers a large area of land bounded by Flitwick Road and the A507 bypass. The application site occupies an area of the northern part of the curtilage of the school grounds and is currently laid to grass. The application site is to the south of the large cluster of school buildings.

The school site is located on the outskirts of Ampthill town and falls outside the settlement envelope and is in the South Bedfordshire Green Belt.

The land to the north of the site forms part of a larger site (land at Warren Farm) which has been identified for housing in the Core Strategy. Outline consent has been granted for up to 410 dwellings, together with open space, accesses and surface water retention basin (CB/12/01496/OUT).

### **The Application:**

This application seeks permission for a two storey, 6 classroom block to include offices, stores, WC facilities and green rooms, a 6th form centre, and a new hall/theatre.

The building would be constructed in 2 phases, with the hall and green rooms as phase 1, and the classrooms and 6th form centre as phase 2.

The building would be some 2200sqm of new educational floor space. The total height of the building would be some 9.5 metres in height.

The block would be on an area of existing sporting facility, currently a shot-put, high jump and long jump area. The area is to the south of the main bulk of the school buildings on the "northern" side of the site to the west of residential properties

### **RELEVANT POLICIES:**

#### **National Policies**

National Planning Policy Framework

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

DM3: Protection of Amenity

CS14: High Quality 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**

**Application:** Planning  
**Validated:** 02/07/2012  
**Status:** Decided  
**Summary:**  
**Description:** Single storey extension to Design and Technology Building.

**Number:** CB/12/02186/FULL  
**Type:** Full Application  
**Date:** 17/08/2012  
**Decision:** Full Application - Granted

**Application:** Planning  
**Validated:** 10/05/2012  
**Status:** Decided  
**Summary:**  
**Description:** Installation of a 21.4m long, 3.3m wide canopy to cover an open walkway to create a multi-use outside space.

**Number:** CB/12/01591/FULL  
**Type:** Full Application  
**Date:** 28/06/2012  
**Decision:** Full Application - Granted

**Application:** Planning  
**Validated:** 06/02/2012  
**Status:** Decided  
**Summary:**  
**Description:** The construction of a new artificial grass sports pitch with perimeter ball-stop fencing, floodlights and ancillary features

**Number:** CB/12/00468/FULL  
**Type:** Full Application  
**Date:** 16/03/2012  
**Decision:** Full Application - Granted

**Application:** Planning  
**Validated:** 08/06/2011  
**Status:** Decided  
**Summary:**  
**Description:** Erection of single storey infill extension

**Number:** CB/11/01958/FULL  
**Type:** Full Application  
**Date:** 18/07/2011  
**Decision:** Full Application - Granted

**Application:** Planning  
**Validated:** 18/06/2010  
**Status:** Decided  
**Summary:**  
**Description:** Variation of Condition: CB/09/06964/Full dated 07/04/2010. Extension to dining room to North School. Details of Storm water disposal need to be approved.

**Number:** CB/10/02081/VOC  
**Type:** Variation of Condition  
**Date:** 13/08/2010  
**Decision:** Variation of Condition - Granted

**Application:** Planning  
**Validated:** 26/04/2010  
**Status:** Decided

**Number:** CB/10/01489/FULL  
**Type:** Full Application  
**Date:** 21/06/2010

**Summary:** **Decision:** Full Application - Granted  
**Description:** Full: Installation of a canopy in the centre of enclosed quad in the north school site.

**Application:** Planning **Number:** CB/09/06964/FULL  
**Validated:** 16/02/2010 **Type:** Full Application  
**Status:** Decided **Date:** 07/04/2010  
**Summary:** **Decision:** Full Application - Granted  
**Description:** Full: Extension to North School

**Representations:  
(Parish & Neighbours)**

**Ampthill Town Council** Support the development

**Neighbours** No comments received.

**Consultations/Publicity responses**

**Sport England** No comments received.

**Environment Agency** No comments received.

**Environmental Health** No comments to make.

**Highways** No objection.

The proposal is for a new building on the existing school site, to comprise of a assembly hall, classrooms and sixth form area. The proposal will also include a hard standing area for an emergency vehicle. There will be no increase in cycle or vehicle parking provision.

The school currently has 1502 students (444 of which are sixth formers) and 194 staff. The proposal will not increase the number of staff or pupils although it has been identified that an expected increase of 173 pupils will occur in the imminent future.

The current guidance requires 1 parking space per 30 pupils for parent parking, 1 space per 2 members of staff, 1 visitor space per 7 members of staff and 1 space per ten 2<sup>nd</sup> year sixth formers; the current parking provision is adequate.

**Tree and Landscape** No objection.

Suggested replacement tree planting.

## **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. Redborne Upper School is the only upper 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.

The site is completely washed over by the South Bedfordshire Green Belt, where certain types of development are considered acceptable in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. Development considered suitable within the Green Belt is silent on education facilities, and therefore it is considered that the construction of a large new building would be considered inappropriate development, and would therefore be harmful to the South Bedfordshire Green Belt. When a development would be harmful to the Green Belt, Very Special Circumstances need to be demonstrated.

#### Very Special Circumstances:

The site is the only upper school within Ampthill, and it provides education facilities for pupils for the area surrounding the town. The expansion of the education facilities within this location is a necessary requirement due to the pupil numbers resulting from recent housing growth within the area.

It is considered that there is no other upper school that would be in a sustainable location suitable to take the additional pupil numbers, and therefore the

expansion of the existing school is necessary. The whole site is washed over by the Green Belt, and therefore there is no alternative than to create a new building within the existing school grounds.

It is noted that within the National Planning Policy Framework:

*Paragraph 37 - Planning policies should aim for a balance of land uses within their area so that people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities.*

and

*Paragraph 72 - The Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a pro active, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:*

- *give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools.*

Although the National Planning Policy Framework is silent within the Green Belt on the development of education facilities, it is considered there is a general presumption in favour of this type of facility. It is considered that the need for these enhanced education facilities within a sustainable location would amount to Very Special Circumstances, as to allow the harm to the openness of the Green Belt. This is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

## **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 built on a "north site" and a "south site". The school site is formed of a large number of separate builds, in a mix of single and two storey, predominantly brick construction. 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 designed to be constructed in 2 phases to meet the needs of the growing school. The 1st phase would provide a new theatre, with tiered seating, this is why a 1st floor is required on the building. The 1st phase of the development would be more utilitarian in appearance than the development would upon completion. There is no particular design style throughout the school, but the new building has been designed to complement the modern Design and Technology Building.

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

The siting of the new building would be set back some 118 metres from the main length of Flitwick Road. Although there is a residential crescent of properties off

Flitwick Road, which would back on to this development. It is considered that with the site levels being lower than the road, and the mature screening along the boundaries, there would not be any significant views from the public realm of this building once it was constructed. It is considered that the building would have no significant impact upon the character or appearance of the streetscene in Flitwick Road.

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

The nearest residential dwelling (Sandown) not associated with the school would be approximately 60 metres to the east, the curtilage of this property would be some 21 metres from the new building. Due to this distance and the good level of screening afforded to the rear of this property, this proposal will not significantly impact on the residential amenities of this or any other residential properties.

The development has been considered in terms of loss of light, the causing of an overbearing impact, loss of outlook and impact upon privacy. The Public Protection Officer has confirmed that they have no objections relating to additional noise, though have recommended a condition relating to this.

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

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

#### Human Rights issues:

There are no known Human Rights issues.

#### Equality Act 2010:

There are no known issues under the Equality Act.

#### Highways Officer Comments:

The highways officer has confirmed that they have no objections to this proposal, and that the school has sufficient parking for the additional pupil and staff numbers.

The highway officer suggested four conditions, relating to the construction of a hardstanding area adjacent to the building for emergency vehicles, details of access points during construction, construction worker parking, and how the developers would suppress dust, and mud during the construction phase. It is considered that the details of the hardstanding area for emergency vehicles adjacent to the building is shown on plan 11-212-001-P02, instead of a condition requiring details, the construction of the details shown is recommended. It is considered that Redborne Upper School is a large site, with sufficient space to accommodate the additional parking/construction vehicles, it is judged that a

condition for access points and construction worker parking are not reasonably necessary in this situation. In addition it is considered that it would be more suitable to include an informative reminding the developer of their duty to ensure the highway is not damaged by the construction of the new development.

## **Recommendation**

That Planning Permission is granted subject to the following:

### **RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS / REASONS**

- 1 The development hereby permitted 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 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the materials schedule as shown on plan number 11-212-001 P07, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the visual amenities of the building and of the area generally.

- 3 The building shall not be occupied until details of replacement tree planting 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.

- 4 Prior to the occupation of the proposed extension and alterations an updated Travel Plan for the school site will be required to reflect the proposed redevelopment, anticipated increase in numbers of staff and pupils. This should include:

- An action plan to mitigate the increased traffic flow
- Targets to reduce car use and increase walking and cycling;
- A timetable to monitor, implement any measures identified and review the travel plan.

Reason: In the interest of pupil safety, to reduce congestion and to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport.



- 5 Prior to the occupation of phase 1 of the building, the hard standing area as shown on plan number 11-212-001-P02 shall be constructed in accordance with approved plans, this shall remain in perpetuity.

Reason: In the interest to getting emergency vehicles within a reasonable distance of the building.

- 6 All plant, machinery and equipment installed or operated in connection with this permission shall be so enclosed, operated and/or attenuated that noise arising from such plant shall not exceed a level of 5dB below the existing background level (or 10dB below if there is a tonal quality) when measured or calculated according to BS4142:1997, at the boundary of any neighbouring residential dwelling.

Reason: In the interest of protecting residential amenity.

- 7 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers 11-212-001-P01, 11-212-001-P10-rA, 11-212-001 P04, 11-212-001 P07, 11-212-001 P06, 11-212-001 SK07, 46888/1, 3953-504, 11-212-001-P02, 5078-51, 11-212-001 P05, 11-212-001 P03.

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.
2. The applicants attention is drawn to their responsibility under The Equality Act 2010 and with particular regard to access arrangements for the disabled.

The Equality Act 2010 requires that service providers must think ahead and make reasonable adjustments to address barriers that impede disabled people.

These requirements are as follows:

- Where a provision, criterion or practice puts disabled people at a substantial disadvantage to take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage;
- Where a physical feature puts disabled people at a substantial disadvantage to avoid that disadvantage or adopt a reasonable alternative method of providing the service or exercising the function;
- Where not providing an auxiliary aid puts disabled people at a substantial

disadvantage to provide that auxiliary aid.

In doing this, it is a good idea to consider the range of disabilities that your actual or potential service users might have. You should not wait until a disabled person experiences difficulties using a service, as this may make it too late to make the necessary adjustment.

For further information on disability access contact:

The Centre for Accessible Environments ([www.cae.org.uk](http://www.cae.org.uk))

Central Bedfordshire Access Group ([www.centralbedsaccessgroup.co.uk](http://www.centralbedsaccessgroup.co.uk))

3. The applicant is advised that photographs of the existing highway that is to be used for access and delivery of materials may be required by the Local Highway Authority. Any subsequent damage to the public highway resulting from the works as shown by the photographs, including damage caused by delivery vehicles to the works, will be made good to the satisfaction of the Local Highway Authority and at the expense of the applicant. Attention is drawn to Section 59 of the Highways Act 1980 in this respect. Best practical means shall be applied to reduce the carriage of mud and dust onto the public highway.

**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 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.