

Item No. 7

APPLICATION NUMBER CB/14/04865/REG3
LOCATION Roecroft Lower School, Buttercup Road, Stotfold, Hitchin, SG5 4PF
PROPOSAL Demolition of existing pre-school structure. Extensions and alterations to existing school building/site to provide 5no. additional class bases, extension to existing classroom, creation of additional car park, revised playground arrangements, works to the fabric of the existing school including conversion of existing courtyard in Dining Area.
PARISH Stotfold
WARD Stotfold & Langford
WARD COUNCILLORS Cllrs Clarke, Saunders & Saunders
CASE OFFICER Alex Harrison
DATE REGISTERED 15 December 2014
EXPIRY DATE 09 February 2015
APPLICANT Children's Services, Central Bedfordshire Council
AGENT David Turnock Architects
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE CBC application with two objections that cannot be addressed by conditions.

RECOMMENDED DECISION Full Application - Approval

Reasons for recommendation:

The proposed extension to the school will allow for the accommodation of expected growth in the catchment area. The design is such that the two storey extension in place of the existing pre-school building would sit comfortably in the context of the principal school building. The conversion of the existing detached building and provision of entrance porch have a negligible impact on the character of the area. Concerns over the impact from traffic and parking are noted and are considered to be addressed through the scheme providing a new 12 space car park and a proposed condition requiring a revised travel plan to be approved and reviewed. As a result the proposal is considered to adhere to the requirements of policies CS3, CS14, DM3, DM4 and DM9 of the Core Strategy and Management Policies, November 2009; National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012). It is also considered acceptable in light of the technical guidance within the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide 2014.

Site Location:

The application site is a school site located on the south side of Buttercup Road, within a larger residential development that lies to the south side of Stotfold. The wider area was a designated an allocated residential site. To the north, south and west of the site are existing residential properties. To the east of the site is a large open field.

The site is occupied by Roecroft Lower School, which currently has 289 children between the ages of 4-9. There was an independently run nursery unit (run by Pippin Pre-School) within the school which is to be relocated to a nearby purpose built building. The existing main school building was constructed 3 years ago. Planning permission was granted in 2014 (CB/14/02925/REG3) for a two storey building at the southern extent of the site to accommodate a relocated nursery unit.

Access to the site is from Buttercup Road, with the existing parking access to the north end of the site and the pedestrian access on the western side.

The Application:

The application seeks planning permission for the demolition of the existing pre school building and the extension and alteration for the exiting school to provide 5 additional classrooms, and enlarged classroom, an additional car park, revised playground arrangements new entrance porch and alterations to cover an existing courtyard to create a dining area. Adaptations are also proposed to an existing detached building within the site to provide toilet facilities.

The extension will allow for the expansion of the school to accommodate the levels of growth in the area. The works are required to expand the school to a 450 place Lower School by September 2016 and are to include the areas of expansion shown on the Accommodation Schedule, which includes consideration of expansion to the existing Dining Hall.

The principal part of the scheme is a two storey extension to replace the single storey structure. It has been designed to reflect the character of the school and provides teaching and staff facilities over two floors with balcony area associated with some classrooms. The single storey porch extension would sit under an existing canopy structure. The proposed car park utilises an existing access and formalises it as an area, providing 12 additional spaces.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

Core Strategy and Development Management Policies – North (2009)

Policy CS3 - Healthy and Sustainable Communities

Policy CS14 - High Quality Development

Policy DM3 - High Quality Development

Policy DM4 - Development Within and Beyond Settlement Envelopes

Policy DM9 - Providing a range of transport

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (2014)

Planning History

Case Reference	CB/14/02925/REG3
Location	Roecroft Lower School, Buttercup Road, Stotfold
Proposal	Erection of part two storey and part single storey nursery unit

Decision with entrance canopy and outdoor covered area.
Granted
Decision Date 19/09/2014

Case Reference CB/10/02054/NMA
Location School Site, Land South Of Stotfold, Norton Road, Stotfold
Proposal Non Material Amendment: New 300 place lower school and pre-school facility as approved on planning permission CB09/00227/REG3 dated 4 September 2009. Amendments proposed to alter roof ridge height, amendments to windows, omit finished floor level references and amendments to walling, fencing and gates

Decision Non-Material Amendment - Granted
Decision Date 05/07/2010

Case Reference CB/09/00227/REG3
Location School Site, Land South Of Stotfold, Norton Road, Stotfold
Proposal Council 3: New 300 place Lower School and Pre-School facility

Decision Regulation 3 - Granted
Decision Date 04/09/2009

Representations: (Parish & Neighbours)

Stotfold Council Town No objections to the basic principle of the school enlargement, however we wish to make the following comments: the provision of on-site parking for staff will be insufficient with the expansion of pupil and staff numbers, exacerbating existing on-road parking problems. We have received several comments from residents concerned about the current parking issues in this immediate area, and feel that it is essential that the one-way system is installed and parking restrictions instigated and enforced, once the road is adopted.

Neighbours 3 letters received raising the following summarised planning objections:

- Buttercup Road should be a one way street but is being used as two-way and is dangerous for residents. Vehicles block pathways and resident's driveways.
- Increased traffic will increase the danger. The extension is unsuitable as the roads cannot accommodate the additional traffic.
- Travel plan is out of date and contains a number of errors.
- Current school parking is insufficient with staff parking on Buttercup Road.
- Drop-off could be incorporated into the scheme.

Site Notice erected 07.01.2015

Consultations/Publicity responses

Bedfordshire and River Ivel Internal Drainage Board	Please note the Board have no comments to make with regard to the above planning application.
CBC Highway Officer	No comments provided at the time of drafting this report.
CBC Ecologist	No objection to the proposal, however, given the NPPF supports development delivering a net gain for biodiversity I would like the new building to incorporate 2 integral bat boxes high on the southern elevation.
CBC Public Protection	I note that the application is to extend an existing school and that the potentially noisy areas such as play areas and playing fields are generally either retained or enlarged in the same locations as existing. I further note that the relocated pre-school is a separate application. With regard to lighting provision again the applicant intends to retain existing wherever possible and new lighting is proposed to be linked in to the existing timing device. It would be helpful if the applicant could provide additional details regarding the proposed additional lighting and how any light spillage or nuisance is currently/will be controlled. I therefore have no objections to the proposed development.
CBC Education Officer	No comments provided.
CBC Tree and Landscaping Officer	Proposal is for demolition of an existing building with construction of a new one. The site is relatively new and all planting is young and only just established. With the application is a landscape plan that details additional planting to the site as part of this application. This includes new planting of trees and hedgelines around the car park area and some planting around the new extension area. The species, sizes and densities of planting are acceptable.
Sport England	Sport England makes no objection as a statutory consultee to the planning application subject to a planning condition being imposed on any planning permission relating to securing a community use agreement for the playing field as set out in this response.
Sustainable Transport Planner	This school has an existing obligation (via condition) to submit an annual monitoring report for their existing travel plan which was submitted as part of their previous expansion application.

As the conditions of this existing requirement have not been met we have no evidence to demonstrate that the school is managing its existing travel issues to an acceptable level. With that in mind, it is not possible to support the new application from a travel planning perspective until the obligations under the existing travel plan condition is met.

If the new development of the school is approved, a monitoring report for the existing travel plan is needed, as per the original condition. It will also be vital to condition this development to update this travel plan again in light of the new arrangements and for this plan to be submitted and agreed to prior to occupation of the new building.

Determining Issues

The main considerations of the application are;

1. Principle of development
2. Effect on character and appearance of surrounding area
3. Impact on residential amenity of neighbouring properties
4. Parking, access and travel plans
5. Other matters

Considerations

1. Principle of Development

Paragraph 72 of the NPPF states that the National Government places great importance on ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places are available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. It goes on to say that Local Planning Authorities should *'give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools'*. Policy CS3 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies mirrors this guidance and states that the Council will ensure appropriate infrastructure is provided for communities by supporting in principle the upgrading of education facilities.

Given that the proposal will allow for an improved layout of the lower school and its potential expansion in the future, this is considered to be supported in principle, subject to the detailed design and layout of the scheme which is discussed further below.

2. Impact on character, appearance and streetscene

The proposed building has been designed to reflect the character of the existing school building, adopting a number of design elements that are apparent on the existing building. For example the nature of openings and the inclusion balcony areas matches an existing wing of the school.

As a school site there are a number of views into the site making it a principal feature in the area. The materials proposed will match the existing and would have an acceptable impact in the streetscene. It is slightly unfortunate that the striking character of the existing building, clad in red faced material will be lost however the matching materials cannot be said to change the character to a

detrimental extent. The building as proposed will sit comfortably as an extension to the school and while increasing its prominence does not do so to the extent that it is considered to harm the character of the area.

The works to the single storey detached building will have a negligible impact on the character of the area and the entrance porch extension is located towards the rear which minimises its impact, although the works itself are negligible, providing additional entrance space under an existing canopy area. The proposed additional car park utilises an existing gated entrance with minimal streetscene impacts.

The proposed works are therefore considered to have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area whilst providing a much needed facility for the community.

3. Impact on neighbouring amenity

The school site is an existing establishment and it sits within a predominantly residential area as can be expected. The extension to the building would increase the number of class rooms at the school and therefore increase the number of pupils attending. Consideration is given to the fact that the school use is an existing operation and facility within the community. Therefore any impact on amenity terms likely exists at present. While there is an increase in pupil numbers it is not considered that there would be an increased noise impact in the area that would detrimentally harm the neighbouring residents in this area.

The physical form of the extension will not harm neighbouring amenity in terms of impact on light and shadowing and the proposed car park extension is considered to have a negligible impact at most.

Matters of parking convenience and safety and their relationship with the residential nature of the area are considered below. The proposed works are not considered to result in development that would detrimentally harm neighbouring amenity and are therefore considered acceptable in this respect.

4. Parking, access and travel plans

Buttercup road serves the school as well as a number of residential properties. At the time of determining this application the Town Council have advised that the road is currently subject to temporary signage designating it as a one-way street in an unofficial capacity. Concerns raised from third party letters relate to the impact of pick-up and drop-off times during the day and the impact of staff parking on Buttercup Road throughout the day.

The proposal to provide an additional car park will provide a further 12 parking spaces within the curtilage of the school and therefore seek to address concerns that have been raised over staff parking on Buttercup Road itself. It is considered that the use of this car park by staff would reduce the instances of parking on the street and therefore go some way to easing congestion and parking concerns.

The application was accompanied by a Travel Plan, which is not considered to be acceptable. The travel plan is also the subject of concerns by a number of residents, namely that it is not a complete consideration and contains

discrepancies in parts. There are concerns that the school has not been managing any existing travel issues and it is considered that an acceptable and implemented travel plan is a key element of minimising the impact of traffic in this area. The Sustainable Transport Officer has confirmed that the submission of an acceptable travel plan can be dealt with via condition to address this issue and this is considered reasonable.

The concerns of residents regarding pick-up and drop-off traffic are acknowledged and it emphasises the importance of monitoring a travel plan to achieve less reliance on the car. A revised condition will be proposed here to require approval of a new travel plan accommodating potential capacity from the proposed extension. The Council has the mechanism to consider enforcement action against non-compliance with conditions and therefore if problems persist the matter can be raised and followed up.

5. Other matters

Recreation provision within the school

The proposed classroom extension will sit on a larger footprint than the existing structure to be removed. As a result there will be a loss of playground as a result of the works. The scheme accommodates this by extending another existing playground further towards the allotment area of the site. The proposed additional car park has also resulted in the need to relocate the existing sport pitch to ensure it can be provided. Sport England has raised no objection and the scheme therefore does not compromise the recreation provision at the school.

Sport England have requested a condition be included on the decision notice requiring the school to enter into a community use agreement for the playing field. The application does not include the provision of new playing field areas. The pitch is to be relocated as part of the scheme but within the playing field area set out in the original application for the school in 2009.

It is considered that to introduce such an agreement through the planning system to an established school area would amount to a condition that is not related to the development proposed and is therefore somewhat unreasonable. In any case it is likely that such an agreement is more of a civil matter between the Education Authority and Sport England and is not the type of agreement that should be secured through the planning system. For these two reasons it is considered that such a condition will not be added in this instance.

Bat Boxes

The Ecologist has requests provision be made of two such boxes for the development as a biodiversity enhancement. As an extension to an existing school which already provides playing fields, strategic landscaping and an allotment area it is not considered necessary in this instance for the design of the building to accommodate bat boxes. The proposal will not result in harm to biodiversity and encouraging bats to a school site raises questions over whether or not this would be an appropriate requirement.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission be 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 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 the existing building in the interests of the visual amenities of the locality.
(Policy 43, DSCB)

- 3 The planting and hard and soft landscaping scheme shown on approved Drawing No. 001 dated 10/12/2014 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 shall mean 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 with others of a similar size and species.

Reason: To ensure an acceptable standard of landscaping.
(Policies 43 and 58, DSCB)

- 4 The development shall not be occupied or brought into use until the parking scheme shown on Drawing No. 001 has been completed. The scheme shall thereafter be retained for this purpose.

Reason: To ensure provision for car parking clear of the highway.
(Policy 27, DSCB)

- 5 Notwithstanding the details in the application hereby approved, prior to the building hereby approved being brought into use, a new School Travel Plan shall be prepared and submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall contain details of:

- the establishment of a working group involving the School, parents and representatives of the local community
- pupil travel patterns and barriers to sustainable travel
- measures to encourage and promote sustainable travel and

transport for journeys to and from 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.

All measures agreed therein shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved plan and there shall be an annual review of the Travel Plan to monitor progress in meeting the targets for reducing car journeys generated by the proposal.

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

- 6 **No development shall take place until details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority of the proposed additional lighting to be installed at the site. Details shall include the nature of lighting and luminance levels with detail of. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and shall thereafter be retained.**

Reason: To ensure the provision of additional lighting is done so without causing harm to neighbouring 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 AL0101_P01, 001, AK0001_P05, AK0002_P09, AK0003_P09, AK0005_P06, AK0008_P03, 14613cv-02, 14613cv-03 and 9637/E/116 Rev P1.

Reason: To identify the approved plan/s and to avoid 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. It is advised that the applicant uses of the 'iOn Travel' website (www.iontravel.co.uk/centralbedfordshire) to manage their travel plan and implement the actions contained within it. It also benefits applicants by helping them to fulfil their planning conditions through the use of the reporting part of the tool

3. The applicant is advised that further information regarding the updating of the School Travel Plan is available from the Sustainable Transport Team, Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire, SG17 5TQ.

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

This application has been recommended for approval. Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution regarding a travel plan and an agreement to require details to be approved by condition was reached. 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.

DECISION

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