

Application Ref: 15/00662/R3FUL

Proposal: Change of use from caretakers dwelling to building for the use of before and after school care centre and holiday play scheme centre. Single storey side extension

Site: Caretakers House, 9 The Pentlands, Gunthorpe, Peterborough
Applicant: Peterborough City Council

Reason: The Head of Planning Services has requested the application be heard by the Planning and EP Committee

Site visit: 27.05.2015

Case officer: Mr M A Thomson
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Recommendation: **REFUSE**

1 Description of the site and surroundings and Summary of the proposal

Site Description

The Application site comprises a detached two storey property (with a garage outbuilding to the side), which has historically been occupied by the school caretaker for Gunthorpe Primary School. The property is located within the grounds of the School and has dedicated parking for two vehicles. The property is accessed from The Pentlands, which also serves the staff car park. To the immediate north and east are residential properties. Whilst the application site is situated within a backland location, it is in a visually prominent position with passing vehicle and pedestrian traffic accessing the school.

Proposal

The Applicant seeks consent to change the use of the former caretakers house to a before and after school care centre, and holiday play scheme centre. A large single storey side extension is also proposed. To facilitate development, an existing single storey rear extension and car port would be demolished.

The extension would have a floor area of 5.8m x 10.35m and stand at 2.5m to the eaves and 3.7m to the ridge. The proposal would be constructed out of matching materials.

The proposed centre would accommodate up to a maximum of 44 children aged between 4yrs - 17yrs and operate Monday to Friday between the following hours;

Term time - 07:30 - 09:00 and 15:00 - 18:00

Holiday periods - 07:30 - 18:00

2 Planning History

No relevant planning history

3 Planning Policy

Decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan policies below, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

Section 8 - Social, Cultural and Recreational Facilities

Developments should plan for the provision and use of shared space, community services and other local services; guard against the unnecessary loss of valued services/facilities; allow established shops, facilities and services to develop/modernise; and ensure an integrated approach to the location of housing, economic uses and communities facilities and services.

Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011)

CS16 - Urban Design and the Public Realm

Design should be of high quality, appropriate to the site and area, improve the public realm, address vulnerability to crime, be accessible to all users and not result in any unacceptable impact upon the amenities of neighbouring residents.

Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012)

PP02 - Design Quality

Permission will only be granted for development which makes a positive contribution to the built and natural environment; does not have a detrimental effect on the character of the area; is sufficiently robust to withstand/adapt to climate change; and is designed for longevity.

PP03 - Impacts of New Development

Permission will not be granted for development which would result in an unacceptable loss of privacy, public and/or private green space or natural daylight; be overbearing or cause noise or other disturbance, odour or other pollution; fail to minimise opportunities for crime and disorder.

PP12 - The Transport Implications of Development

Permission will only be granted if appropriate provision has been made for safe access by all user groups and there would not be any unacceptable impact on the transportation network including highway safety.

PP13 - Parking Standards

Permission will only be granted if appropriate parking provision for all modes of transport is made in accordance with standards.

4 Consultations/Representations

PCC Transport & Engineering Services (10.06.15)

Comments - The Local Highways Authority have requested a Transport Statement setting out how it is anticipated that the facility would operate.

PCC Property Services

No comments received

Local Residents/Interested Parties

7 letters of representation and a letter from Cllr Knowles have been received raising the following concerns;

- Increase in traffic;
- Lack of parking;
- Increased levels of noise adjacent to residential properties;

- Loss of amenity to residential properties;
- Hours of use;
- Visual Appearance (extension);
- Litter;
- Poor consultation (site notice and letters);
- Lack of information on the application;
- Security;
- The building should be used sold on as a dwelling; and
- An Environmental Impact Assessment should be submitted.

5 Assessment of the planning issues

Design and Layout

Policies CS16 and PP2 seek to ensure any development would not have an adverse impact on the character of the area.

The existing carport and single storey rear element are of no historic or architectural interest and their loss is accepted.

The proposed extension would be single storey and utilise a mono pitched roof design. It would nearly double the size of the building. It would be set behind the principal elevation and would have a similar width to the original building. Due to the shallow roof pitch the proposal would result in a very large roofscape. Whilst the original building is set away from the road it is in a visually prominent position and it is considered that the width and design of the extension would look disproportionately large to the original building and would therefore have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the original building and area. As such the proposal does not accord with Policies CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011) and PP2 of the Peterborough Policies DPD (2012).

Neighbour Amenity

Policy PP3 seeks to ensure that any development would not result in an unacceptable overbearing impact, loss of privacy, light or amenity.

The proposal once completed would cater for up to 44 children between the ages of 4 yrs to 17 yrs. The building would operate Monday to Friday between the hours of;

- Term time - 07:30 - 09:00 and 15:00 - 18:00; and
- Holiday periods - 07:30 - 18:00

Letters of representation have raised concern with the intensification of use of the site, as well as a loss of privacy and issues of noise and disruption generated by the children using the facility and the coming and going of vehicles.

The building has historically been used as a caretakers home and is situated within the grounds of the school. Whilst adjacent residents experience a peak in activity during the drop off and pick up periods, these are limited to set times of the day and only during term time.

The change of use and expansion of the building to cater for up to 44 children and 3 members of staff would be a material intensification of the application site. The facility would be independent from Gunthorpe Primary School therefore could attract children from outside the immediate area and could result in additional vehicle movements outside of these core school pick up and drop off periods. This impact would be exacerbated given that the premises would operate outside of term time. As such the intensification of use of the building, changing from a single dwelling to a building that would cater for a large number of children not connected with Gunthorpe Primary school, would have an unacceptably adverse impact on the general enjoyment and amenity of adjacent occupiers.

The extension would reduce the amount of space around the existing building, leaving two small parcels of land available for outdoor play. The supporting information has advised that the school may permit the premises to use the school playing fields, however the playing fields are located over 100m from the building and given that only three members of staff would be employed it would be likely that children would play immediately to the rear gardens of existing properties on Gunthorpe Road and the neighbouring dwelling at the Pentlands. Given the proximity of the site to adjoining neighbours, the number of children and the hours of operation this would have a harmful impact on the amenity of the adjoining neighbours. As such the development does not accord with Policy CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011) or PP3 of the Peterborough Policies DPD (2012).

A letter of representation has raised concern that the proposal would result in a loss of privacy generated by the change of use to the first floor to office and an art/music room. It is believed that these windows currently serve as principal windows serving bedrooms therefore there is already an element of overlooking between properties, however the proposed use could result in an intensification of these upstairs rooms. Whilst there is a distance of 21 metres between the rear wall of the application site and neighbour to rear, which is generally considered an acceptable separation distance with respect to overlooking, given the levels of intensification and the hours that the facility would operate, this is considered to have an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbours to rear and does not accord with Policy CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011) or PP3 of the Peterborough Policies DPD (2012).

Access and Parking

Policy PP12 and PP13 seek to ensure that the development would be provided with satisfactory off-street parking and would not constitute a highway safety hazard.

The Local Highways Authority have requested a Transport Statement be submitted as trips could be generated not in association with Gunthorpe Primary School. However, it is understood that the development would seek to share the existing school parking spaces on site, which would be available outside of core hours, and it was observed on site that the school car park has in the region of 30 spaces and three spaces would be created for members of staff. As such the additional vehicle movements generated by the site across the proposed hours of operation are not considered to exacerbate the current peak drop off and pick up periods, and on-site parking could be provided outside of these hours and during holiday periods.

Other Matters

Letters of representation have raised a number of concerns, which include;

Litter – Whilst there is a risk that littering may increase, it is not considered so significant that planning permission could reasonably be refused.

Consultation - It is understood that one property did not receive the neighbour consultation letter that was issued by the Local Planning Authority.

Lack of Information - On receipt of the application there was information outstanding relating to the number of children which would use the facility, the proposed hours of use and days of operation, where drop off and pick up would occur and what the first floor of the building would be used for; however further to Case Officer requests this information has been submitted and sent out for neighbour reconsultation (Expired 07.07.15)

Security - Given the nature of development it is not considered that the proposal would constitute a security issue, to either the application site itself or neighbouring properties.

Reuse as a dwelling – Alternative uses for the building cannot be considered as the Council has to determine the application that has been submitted.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) - The development proposed does not fall within

Schedule 1 or 2 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (2011) and accordingly an EIA is not required.

6 Conclusions

The proposal would result in an unduly large and visually incongruous extension that would have an unacceptably adverse impact on the character and appearance of the host building and area.

The building would change from a single dwelling to a building that would cater for a large number of children not connected with Gunthorpe Primary school, and would operate outside of core school hours. It would result in harmful levels of noise and disruption over and above the existing situation exacerbated through the coming and going of traffic. This unacceptable impact would be exacerbated as children would likely play immediately outside the building, thereby having a harmful impact on the amenity of adjoining neighbours.

Whilst the proposed development would bring back into use an empty building and facilitate a valuable community facility, this is not considered to outweigh the above concerns and accordingly the proposal is contrary to Policies CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011) and PP2 and PP3 of the Peterborough Policies DPD (2012).

7 Recommendation

The case officer recommends that Planning Permission (Regulation 3) is **REFUSED**

- R 1 The proposal would result in a large and incongruous extension that would have an unacceptably adverse impact on the character and appearance of the host building and area, and is contrary to Policy CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011) and PP2 of the Peterborough Policies DPD (2012).
- R 2 The intensified use of the building which would change from a single dwelling to a building that would cater for a large number of children not connected with Gunthorpe Primary school, and would operate outside of core school hours, would result in harmful levels of noise, traffic and disruption over and above the existing situation. Furthermore, children would likely play immediately outside the building, thereby having a harmful impact on the amenity of the adjoining neighbours and is contrary to Policy CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011) and PP3 of the Peterborough Policies DPD (2012).

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