

10/01735/R3FUL: NEW CLASSROOM BLOCK AND PLANT ROOM, NEW ENTRANCE CANOPY, EXTENSION TO CLASSROOM AND DEMOLISH TWO CLASSROOMS AT LONGTHORPE PRIMARY SCHOOL BRADWELL ROAD, NETHERTON, PETERBOROUGH

VALID: 22.12.2010

APPLICANT: MRS I CLARK

AGENT: MR J STOKES

REFERRED BY: HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES

REASON: THE IMPACT CAUSED BY THE PROPOSALS ON THE AMENITY OF THE OCCUPIERS OF NEIGHBOURING DWELLINGS AND UPON THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA

DEPARTURE: NO

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## **1 SUMMARY/OUTLINE OF THE MAIN ISSUES**

The main considerations are:

- The effect of the proposals on the amenities of the occupiers of nearby dwellings
- The impact upon the character of the area
- The impact on the transportation network

The Head of Planning Services recommends that the application is **APPROVED**.

## **2 PLANNING POLICY**

In order to comply with section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan policies set out below, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### **Development Plan Policies**

**Key policies highlighted below.**

#### **The Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement)**

##### **DA2 The effect of a development on the amenities and character of an area**

Planning permission will only be granted for development if it can be satisfactorily accommodated on the site itself, would not adversely affect the character of the area and would have no adverse impact on the amenities of the occupants of nearby properties.

##### **T1 The transport implications of new development**

Planning Permission will only be given for development which does not harm any element of the transportation network.

##### **PPS1 Delivering sustainable development**

Planning permission should only be granted if a development is sustainable, in terms of materials, design and community

### **3 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL**

Permission is sought for the erection of a new 6 classroom block and plant room, new entrance canopy, an extension to an existing classroom, construction of a corridor extension and the demolition of two existing classrooms.

### **4 DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

The site lies within Longthorpe, an area 1.5 miles to the east of the city centre. The school itself occupies a site of 2.95 hectares and is surrounded on all sides by residential development. Currently the school is enclosed by 1.8 metre weld mesh fencing and the schools field is unenclosed and available for public use. There is also an area of public open space to the east of the school site.

The school comprises of predominantly 1970's buildings of utilitarian design. The majority of the buildings are constructed from red brick with brown concrete roof tiles. The school has a dedicated car park with 21 standard spaces and 1 disabled space.

### **5 PLANNING HISTORY**

Application Number	Description	Date	Decision
00/00119/R3FUL	Extension to provide new classroom and multi-purpose room	01.02.2000	17.03.2000
02/00145/R3FUL	Extension to hall	07.02.2002	27.03.2002
02/00360/R3FUL	Retention of 1x3 bay mobile unit	18.03.2002	08.05.2002
03/00398/R3FUL	Single storey classroom extension including new paved area and macadam footpath	21.03.2003	02.06.2003
06/00690/FUL	Erection of garage for storage	05.05.2006	20.06.2006
07/00085/FUL	Installation of toll top railings to existing wall	19.01.2007	23.03.2007
07/01833/FUL	Single storey extension	29.11.2007	17.01.2008
08/00746/R3FUL	Erection of automated arm barrier to school car park	04.06.2008	29.07.2008
10/01735/R3FUL	New classroom block and plant room, new entrance canopy, extension to classroom and demolish two classrooms	22.12.2010	

### **6 CONSULTATIONS/REPRESENTATIONS**

#### **INTERNAL**

**Head of Transport and Engineering** – No objections

**Landscape Officer** - The only trees on site do not appear to be affected by the proposed buildings works, nor the removal of old fence & installation of new fence. As such, I have no objections.

#### **EXTERNAL**

**Architectural Liaison Officer (Cambridgeshire Constabulary)** – I have no objections, recommendations, or observations.

#### **NEIGHBOURS**

Letters of objection have been received from 20 local residents raising the following issues:

- Extra traffic
- Noise nuisance from new classrooms
- Overlooking loss of privacy
- Overshadowing of Bradwell Road dwellings

- Parking problems
- Poor design
- Lack of appreciation of the impact on nearby residents
- Unacceptable size/scale
- Do not understand why the classrooms are not to be built to the north and west
- Inadequate consultation
- Boundary dispute/encroaches
- Concern regarding security and how site will be secured to prevent intruders
- Damage/vibration to property during construction, temporary access is only feet from dwellings
- Concerns regarding the strip of land between the new block and Bradwell Road properties being designated as new playground
- Some elements of the application form are wrong
- New building will be 3 metres higher than existing buildings and will decrease visual amenity for Bradwell Road Residents
- New classrooms are too close to Bradwell Road residents
- Design is not in keeping with existing buildings
- Extension would appear to be a one size fits all solution
- Lights are often left on, would lead to a light pollution problem if repeated in new block
- Difficult to see the need for the new building when number of children in the area is decreasing
- Increased number of students will lead to worse parking issues
- Access road will lead to loss of ancient hedgerow and possible damage to old oak tree
- Bad behaviour of students close to rear boundaries of Bradwell Road is harming amenity of the occupiers of the adjacent dwellings

Letters of objection have been received from local residents raising the following issues but are no longer material considerations as the fencing realignment has been removed from the application:

- The field has been open to the public for over 30 years
- Area to the west is not suitable as public open space
- A compromise as to the amount of field to be enclosed can surely be sought
- Realignment of the fencing is misleading
- Realignment of the fencing will affect property values
- Would destroy the open plan nature of the area maintained by covenants
- Fencing would destroy a lovely open view
- Trees are protected and fence must not cause damage to them
- Loss of landscaping
- Loss of community facility
- Contrary to policy LT3 and LT6 of the Peterborough Local Plan
- Loss of aspect/view
- Impact on community
- Schools use of the field is limited, they don't use it evenings and weekends
- Loss of field would lead to childhood obesity problems
- Would leave the area deficient of public open space
- Local impacts should be evaluated and reported before application is considered
- Not necessary no ofsted requirement to fence field
- Against local/government policy

A petition signed by 370 objectors has been received relating to the realignment of the fence, but as this element has been removed from the application the petition is no longer relevant to the application.

Letters of support have been received in relation to the application stating:

- Residents have known that the land south of the school belongs to the education authority
- Sharpe and undesirable objects are often picked up from the field
- Dog mess is a problem on the field
- A successful school will enhance property prices
- Teaching staff should not waste valuable time inspecting the play area

- Improvements to the school are long overdue.

Any representations of support regarding the fence are no longer relevant to the application as this element has been removed from the application.

## **COUNCILLORS**

No Councillor objections have been received

## **7 REASONING**

### **a) The principle of the development**

The school has stated that the classrooms are undersized and there are suitability issues with the existing building. Special education need provision is compromised by a lack of dedicated facilities. The staffroom is too small and there is no library.

Capacity of the school will remain unchanged as a two form entry primary school with capacity of 420 pupils.

The alterations will provide improved staff room facilities, a new library, improved administration offices and a better grouping of classrooms.

### **b) The effect of development on the amenities of the occupiers of nearby dwellings**

The primary area of concern surrounding the application is the 6 classroom extension to the east of the existing school building and its impact upon the adjacent neighbours of Bradwell Road.

The building will be sited 10.0 metres from the rearmost boundary of the neighbouring dwellings and 22 metres from the rear elevation of said properties.

The 6 classroom block is substantially higher than the existing school buildings at 7.7 metres. The apex of this roof would be 21 metres from the rearmost boundary of the Bradwell road properties and 33 metres from the rear elevation of the properties respectively.

It is accepted that construction of the new block would result in overshadowing of the amenity space of these neighbouring dwellings throughout the day and more severely throughout the winter months, however the overshadowing of amenity space is not considered severe enough to warrant refusal. The building will not cause unacceptable overshadowing to the primary habitable room windows of the Bradwell Road houses and will not significantly reduce the amount of direct sunlight entering the rooms.

The height of the building and its closeness to neighbouring properties is broadly in line with other developments within the city, albeit these developments are generally housing developments the impacts are judged to be broadly equivalent.

The obscuring of the outlook of the Bradwell Road dwellings is not generally considered to be a material planning consideration and given that the apex of the proposed dwelling would be some 33 metres from the rear elevations of the adjacent Bradwell Road properties the proposal is not considered to be unacceptably overbearing.

The siting of a playground area between the proposed new classroom block and the dwellings of Bradwell Road is not considered to be materially different to existing situation of a playing field. It would appear that the children are free to play on the area at the moment and therefore the designation as a playground area is not likely to result in a materially worse impact upon the amenity for the occupiers of the neighbouring dwellings, through noise or antisocial behaviour.

The siting of large double doors in the north facing elevations of the new block is a concern and it is possible that noise emanating from the classrooms might result in increased disturbance to the occupiers of the adjacent dwellings. The Local Authority consider that this issue could be adequately

addressed through the appending of a condition restricting the insertion of double doors on this north facing elevation, allowing only single doors for access.

The objection regarding the potential for light pollution nuisance through the leaving on of lights throughout the night can be adequately dealt with through condition and is unlikely to result in unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbouring dwellings.

The potential for damage caused to adjacent properties by construction vehicles using the temporary access is not considered to be a material consideration in determining the application. The temporary period when construction is occurring is not likely to result in unacceptable disturbance to nearby residents from vehicles using the access road.

The relocation of the sheds to adjacent to adjacent to the rear boundary of 9 Doddington Drive will not result in unacceptable overshadowing or overbearing to the occupiers of 9 Doddington Drive or the dwellings adjacent.

No other element of the proposal is likely to cause any harm to the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings.

**c) The impact upon the character of the area**

The impact of the new corridor, proposed entrance canopy and small classroom extension will have no impact upon the character of the immediate area other than providing a more visible entrance point for the school, which is considered to be an improvement over the existing situation.

It is the proposed 6 classroom block extension that will have the most significant impact upon the character of the area. The block is 7.7 metres tall, some 2.7 metres taller than the adjacent school buildings and will be clearly visible from the public areas to the south and west of the school. The view from the public area will be changed by the proposed class room block but the impact is not considered to be harmful. The block will be sited against the backdrop of the existing two storey dwellings of Bradwell Road and is approximately the same height as these dwellings and therefore longer views from the public realm are unlikely to be unacceptably harmed by the development.

The block will also be readily visible from the highway of Bradwell Road, between the adjacent dwellings and in longer views from all directions given that it would be approximately 2.7 metres taller than the existing school. However such a change is not necessarily harmful and the height and bulk of the new 6 classroom block are not so large as to fundamentally change the character of the surrounding area.

The design of the new 6 classroom block does not follow the appearance of the existing school buildings; the applicant has stated that it has been designed as a standalone building. This is a common practice for school extensions throughout the city and is an attempt to bring architectural interest into the built form. The current form and design of the school is unremarkable and not particularly attractive. The benefits of introducing a different form to the school balance any harm that might arise from the building proposed, it should also be noted that the dwellings adjacent to the school in no way match the design or material used for the school and that the wider character is varied.

The plans would appear to show that a sedum green roof is proposed for the roof of the new block, with Atherstone Buff Brick for the elevations. This is contrary to the materials used in the existing buildings on site and may result in a visually dominant building. A condition will be appended to the permission requiring approval of all external materials to be used in the construction of all elements of the building to ensure that appropriate materials are used.

There is no evidence that the proposal will damage trees. It would appear that the proposed temporary access is well clear of the protected tree at the front of the school. There will be a loss of a small amount of hedge to make way for the access road and therefore a condition will be appended to the permission requiring the replanting of the hedge following the closing of the temporary access. An objector has stated that this hedge is an ancient hedge, however on site investigation does not appear to support this statement and no protection has been conferred on the

hedge. A condition will be appended to the permission requiring submission of a replanting scheme for any hedge lost through construction.

**d) Impact on the transportation network**

The school have stated that the proposed extension will not increase pupil numbers, staff numbers or hours of operation and that the extension is required to improve certain areas of provision within the school and increase the average size and quality of the classrooms and there is no loss or gain of parking provision within the site.

The local Highways Authority has raised no objection to the proposal and it is considered that the proposal will have no impact upon any element of the transportation network.

## **8 CONCLUSIONS**

Subject to the imposition of the attached conditions, the proposal is acceptable having been assessed in the light of all material considerations, including weighting against relevant policies of the development plan and specifically:

The design of the 6 classroom block is of a type that is common within schools throughout the city and will not significantly harm the character of the area and wider views and the impact of the extensions can be mitigated by the use of appropriate materials.

The 6 classroom block will not cause unacceptable overshadowing or be overbearing to the adjacent dwellings on Bradwell Road.

The siting of a new playground area between the proposed 6 classroom block and the properties of Bradwell Road is not materially different to the existing situation and is unlikely to result in unacceptable levels of additional noise or antisocial behaviour.

There will be no increase in pupil numbers and therefore there will be no additional demand for parking and no negative impact upon any element of the transportation network.

The proposal will not harm the protected tree to the front of the school and the loss of a small section of hedge can be mitigated for a replanting condition.

The proposals are therefore considered compliant with PPS1 and policies DA2 and T1 of the Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement).

## **9 RECOMMENDATION**

The Head of Planning Services recommends that this application is APPROVED subject to the following conditions:

**C1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.**

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

**C2 No development shall take place until samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extensions hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.**

Reason: For the Local Authority to ensure a satisfactory external appearance, in accordance with Policy DA2 of the Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement).

**C3 Notwithstanding the approved plans there shall be no double doors located within the north facing elevation of the 6 classroom extension block.**

Reason: In order to protect the amenity of the occupants of the adjacent dwellings, in accordance with policy DA2 of the Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement).

**C4 The 6 classroom block shall not be externally or internally illuminated between the hours of 20:00 and 06:00.**

Reason: In order to protect the amenity of the occupants of the adjacent dwellings, in accordance with policy DA2 of the Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement).

**C5 Prior to commencement of development a scheme for the replacement of any boundary hedge removed for construction of the temporary access shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any scheme shall include the species and number of any specimens to be used.**

Reason: In order to preserve the character of the area, in accordance with policy DA2 of the Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement).

Copies to Councillors S Dalton, M Dalton and Arculus

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