

App.No: 140737	Decision Due Date: 28 July 2014	Ward: Upperton
Officer: Jane Sabin	Site visit date: 19 June 2014	Type: Planning Permission
Site Notice(s) Expiry date: 27 June 2014		
Neighbour Con Expiry: 27 June 2014		
Weekly list Expiry: 4 July 2014		
Press Notice(s): N/A		
Over 8/13 week reason: N/A		
Location: St Thomas A Becket RC Infant School, 3 Tutts Barn Lane		
Proposal: Provision of a double mobile classroom unit to the south-west of the main building for a temporary period until August 2020.		
Applicant: East Sussex County Council (Director of Children's Services)		
Recommendation: Approve conditionally		

Executive Summary:

The proposed development is considered to be acceptable for the temporary period proposed, and would not have an adverse impact on visual or residential amenity, or highway safety, and it therefore complies with the relevant policies in the Eastbourne Borough Plan (Saved Policies 2007), the Core Strategy Local Plan 2013 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Planning Status:

Educational establishment
Willingdon Levels flood storage catchment area

Relevant Planning Policies:

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

- 4. Promoting sustainable transport
- 7. Requiring good design

Core Strategy Local Plan 2013

- B1 Spatial Development Strategy and Distribution
- C2 Upperton Neighbourhood Policy
- D8 Sustainable Travel

Eastbourne Borough Plan Saved Policies 2007

- UHT1: Design of New Development
- UHT4: Visual Amenity

HO20: Residential Amenity
TR2: Travel Demands
TR11: Car Parking
LCF18: Extension of Educational Establishments
US4: Flood Protection and Surface Water Disposal

Site Description:

This modern (1970's) single storey school building is principally visible from Prideaux Road (the section which connects Lewes Road to Kings Drive), and sits at a significantly lower level than the public highway. The building has been extended, as have all schools, and the grounds comprise a variety of surfaces and structures commensurate with primary school use.

Relevant Planning History:

130212

Demolition of existing prefabricated nursery building, and erection of replacement timber framed "Home Lodge" building, together with new play area.
Approved conditionally 20 May 2013

Proposed development:

Planning permission is sought for the provision of a double mobile classroom unit (two classrooms) sited adjacent to the boundary with the adjoining junior school and between the back of the building and the main road. This would require some excavation of part of a bank and the subsequent loss of one tree.

The building would measure 17m by 8m, with a height of 3m, and would be finished in the usual "East Sussex Green".

The applicant has identified a need to accommodate an additional four forms of entry across the town from September 2014, rising to five in 2015. This is driven by an increase in the birth rate and new housing development. In the long term, two new primary schools are planned at Cavendish and Ratton, due to open in 2015. In the short term, the additional pupils must be accommodated, and therefore a new form of 30 children will be admitted at St Thomas a Becket; this will also require one further full time and one part time teacher. Consent is sought for a period of six years to support the additional intake from Year R through to Year 6, with removal of the unit in 2020.

Consultations:

The Specialist Advisor (Planning Policy) has identified a financial contribution of £441 towards compensatory flood storage (Willingdon Levels).

The Specialist Advisor (Arboriculture) does not consider that the tree to be felled should be a constraint to the proposal, but has expressed concern that no arboricultural report has been submitted to assess the stability of the remaining two trees following the excavation of the bank, given their proximity to the new classrooms.

Highways ESCC – no formal response at the time of writing this report, however concern has been expressed at the lack of information submitted with the application, particularly as the school is located adjacent to a busy main road and the sometimes

problematic junctions with Tutts Barn Lane and Gorringe Road. It is anticipated that a formal response will be reported verbally at the Committee meeting.

Neighbour Representations:

At the time of writing this report, one objection and one observation had been received; the consultation period has not expired and any further representations will be reported verbally. The representations received cover the following points:

- A temporary consent may lead to a request for a permanent building
- Parking – parents use both sides of Gorringe Road, and this severely impacts on access to the (nursing) home; parents block private driveways in Mill Gap Road (resulting in verbal abuse), and ignore double yellow lines, white lines and disabled bays

Appraisal:

Principle of development:

It is considered that there is adequate space within the site to accommodate the proposed unit. Whilst a more permanent structure would be preferable in this visible location, it is acknowledged that the timeframe is too narrow, both in terms of the first date the unit is needed, and that a permanent structure of this size for a period of six years would not be economical.

Impact of proposed development on amenity of adjoining occupiers:

The unit would be sited adjacent to the boundary between the infant and junior schools, and would not have any impact on residential amenity.

Design issues:

The proposed unit is a standard one used throughout the county. Its position would be visible from the main road, but it is a very practical location in terms of the operation of the school for the benefit of the pupils. The only other location available would be on the grassed area adjacent to the entrance drive, which is remote from the main building and well outside the secure playground. Taking into account the reduced ground level proposed for the proposed structure, its colour (green with a felt roof) and the backdrop of the existing low flat roofed buildings against which it would be seen, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable for the period proposed.

Impacts on trees:

The tree to be removed is a severely imbalanced cherry, suppressed by other trees, and therefore cannot be regarded as a constraint to the proposed development. The agent has indicated that the stability of the remaining trees would be considered during the build programme as a matter of course. The Head has also confirmed that the trees are regularly inspected and are under regular management.

Impacts on highway network or access:

Parking has long been an issue in the vicinity of the school, as it is for most schools. This particular school has a very wide catchment area, and although it is on a bus route, it is some distance from the town centre so would involve a very long bus journey from some parts of the town. As a result, it is the case that car journeys to and from the school are higher than average. Added to this, the surrounding streets are narrow (Tutts Barn Lane, Gorringe Road, Mill Gap Road) and the main roads are extremely busy, necessitating double yellow lines (Prideaux Road, Lewes Road, Kings Drive). Details have been requested regarding the number of staff and visitors, and whether there is sufficient

parking to accommodate all within the site; this should be available in time for the Committee meeting. The parking and traffic issues appear to be concentrated for two periods each day, at around 9am and 3pm; the former coincides with the normal morning rush hour, whilst the latter lasts slightly longer (as parents arrive early to obtain a parking space and there is less urgency to leave promptly). The crux of the issue is whether an additional 30 pupils would exacerbate the situation to such an extent that planning permission should be refused. It is likely that some of the additional pupils may already have siblings at the school, and some may live in the local area; on this basis, it is considered reasonable to assume that this would result in approximately 20 additional cars for each period. Taking into account that this is one of the main roads into the town centre, and that it is always busy even outside of the normal rush hours, it is considered that the likely increase would not be so severe as to warrant a refusal.

Planning obligations:

The contribution towards compensatory flood storage is low, and therefore not economical to collect.

Human Rights Implications:

The impacts of the proposal have been assessed as part of the application process. Consultation with the community has been undertaken and the impact on local people is set out above. The human rights considerations have been taken into account fully in balancing the planning issues; and furthermore the proposals will not result in any breach of the Equalities Act 2010.

Conclusion:

The proposed development is considered to be acceptable for the temporary period proposed, and would not have an adverse impact on visual or residential amenity, or highway safety, and it therefore complies with the relevant policies in the Eastbourne Borough Plan (Saved Policies 2007), the Core Strategy Local Plan 2013 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Recommendation:

Approve conditionally

Conditions:

- 1) Commencement within 3 years
- 2) Removal by August 2020

Informatives:

It is recommended that the stability of the trees in the vicinity of the excavated area is fully investigated before the unit is placed in position.

Appeal: Should the applicant appeal the decision the appropriate procedure to be followed, taking into account the criteria set by the Planning Inspectorate, is considered to be written representations.