

App.No: 140737 (PPP)	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: Deferred by Planning Committee		
Location: St Thomas A Becket Rc Infant School, 3 Tutts Barn Lane, Eastbourne		
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:

This application was reported to Planning Committee meeting on 8 July 2014 and Members were 'minded' to refuse planning permission due to a number of issues relating to the siting, scale and form of the development and the number of pupils.

This application falls to Eastbourne Borough Council to determine and officers had tried to secure amendments to the scheme to mitigate the concerns raised by members. The applicants have not been able to accede to any changes to the scheme and they claim this is the one and only location within the site where the mobile classroom can be accommodated.

The applicant has confirmed that the additional school role will be increased by 30 pupils and the second classroom space will be utilised by existing classes from within the school.

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
- 3) Submission of updated Travel Plan

Members note:- The report from July 2014 has is attached below.

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 a replacement timber framed "Home Lodge" building, together with new play area.

Approved conditionally 20 May 2013

Proposed development:

Full 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. It would not involve the loss of a significant amount of usable play space. The specific site has been chosen as it is located

within the secure area (complying with safeguarding requirements), provides the best link to school facilities for the pupils, and has the least impact on play areas.

The building would measure 17m by 8m, with a height of 3m, and would be finished in the usual "East Sussex Green". It is a standard unit, used in many schools, and meets all requirements in respect of space and insulation. The applicant states that it has been sited with the narrowest elevation facing the road to reduce noise, and this would be helped by the trees on the boundary

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

Satisfied that there is sufficient parking on site to accommodate additional staff. Having visited the site several times to observe the drop off and pick up situation, the issues of on-street parking and delays to traffic are noted. These are inherent problems at many schools for short periods of time, twice a day during term time. It is also noted that a proportion of children walk to school from the surrounding area, and it is likely that some of the new places will go to local children; sharing a site with the junior school increases the likelihood of some places being allocated to siblings already attending. This will limit the increase in vehicular trips to the site. The existing Travel Plan needs to be updated, and should aim to reduce the number of car trips, thereby reducing demand for parking and congestion; it is noted that it is intended to provide a crossing patrol which would regulate the use of the zebra crossing and reduce congestion. The school also operates breakfast and after school clubs, which also helps to reduce pressure at peak times. Although there is concern that additional pupils will affect the highway network, bearing in mind the points above, the limited increase in pupil numbers and an updated Travel Plan, it is considered that the impacts will not result in a significant worsening of the situation, and therefore will not create a severe impact.

Neighbour Representations:

One objection and one observation have been received. 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. In terms of the safety of pupils and access to school facilities, it is agreed that the siting of the unit is the most practical.

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, the boundary trees, 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 submitted regarding the number of staff and visitors, and it is clear that there is sufficient parking to accommodate all within the site. 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
- 3) Submission of updated Travel Plan

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 course of action to be followed, taking into account the criteria set by the Planning Inspectorate, is considered to be **written representations**.