

App.No: 141334	Decision Due Date: 11 December 2014	Ward: Old Town
Officer: Richard Elder	Site visit date: 12 November 2014	Type: County Council
Site Notice(s) Expiry date: 14 November 2014		
Neighbour Con Expiry: 6 November 2014		
Weekly list Expiry: n/a		
Press Notice(s): n/a		
Over 8/13 week reason: Within determination period		
Location: The Cavendish School, Eldon Road, Eastbourne		
Proposal: ESCC Consultation: Construction of new two storey, two form entry primary school including nursery provision with associated parking, 2no. 3G sports pitches, playing surfaces and games court as an extension to the existing school.		
Applicant: East Sussex County Council (Director of Children's Services)		
Recommendation: No objections subject to appropriate conditions		

Executive Summary:

Whilst there are concerns about this proposal, especially the lack of engagement in selecting sites for new schools despite on-going discussions about provision of school places more generally across the town, it is considered that the clear emphasis in the NPPF on the provision of new school places, and the fact that the loss of playing field will be replaced by alternative provision in the form of artificial sports pitches, means that the principle of development is acceptable.

Subject to appropriate conditions relating to restriction of car parking hours of use, use of Cobbold Avenue access and noise associated with play areas, it is considered that the proposal would not adversely affect surrounding residential amenity due to its appropriate siting, scale and bulk.

With regard to design, whilst the aesthetic design of the proposed school is not of particularly high quality, it is acknowledged that its role as a school and budgetary constraints may not facilitate outstanding design but it is considered that its functional appearance, use of quality materials and appropriate siting would not adversely affect visual amenity or the streetscene in this location.

Planning Status:

Predominantly residential area.

Relevant Planning Policies:

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Paragraph 72 Importance of school places in locations and number to meet the local demands

Paragraph 74 Retention of open space

Core Strategy Local Plan 2013 Policies

B1 Spatial Development Strategy and Distribution

B2 Creating Sustainable Neighbourhoods

C5 Ocklynge & Rodmill Neighbourhood Policy

D7 Community Sports and Health

D10a Design

E1 Infrastructure Delivery

Eastbourne Borough Plan Saved Policies 2007

UHT1 Design of New Development

UHT4 Visual Amenity

H09 Conversions and Change of Use

HO20 Residential Amenity

UHT15 Conservation Area

TR10 Safe Routes to School

TR11 Car Parking

NE28 Environmental Amenity

LCF16 Criteria for New Schools

LCF18 Extension of Education Establishments

Site Description:

Cavendish Secondary School is a 2 storey substantial school building (constructed as Eastbourne High School grammar school for girls) located on the north side of Eldon Road in the Old Town part of Eastbourne on a site which slopes steeply from south to north and marginally less steeply from west to east.

The campus is set in 4.425 hectares and includes the main school building from 1939, with extensions from 1979, 1983, 1993 and 1996; green playing fields as well as hard and soft landscaping. The campus site is terraced to accommodate the buildings and sports facilities on even ground, with a vehicular access snaking all the way around the building, except for a small section at the western end. The site is accessed from Eldon Road by car and pedestrian with a second vehicle entrance from Cobbold Avenue.

The school is situated within a predominately residential area of detached and semi-detached 2 storey houses, and is located approximately 1.3 miles from the Eastbourne mainline train station via Victoria Drive.

A contemporary church building is located opposite on the south side of Eldon Road.

Relevant Planning History:

EB/1978/0520

Erection of single-storey craft block (Phase 1).

Resolved: No objections. 1978-11-07

EB/1979/0384

Extension to existing School in the form of a detached craft and teaching block. Resolved: No objections, concern expressed. 1979-08-29

EB/1990/0376

Erection of a two-storey building linked to existing sports hall, to provide changing rooms and sports facilities on the ground floor and conference/display area on the first floor, and formation of car-parking area fronting Eldon road. Granted, subject to conditions. 1990-09-10

EB/1991/0393

Erection of two-storey and single-storey extensions to School, in-filling of 2 light wells and formation of 5 additional car-parking spaces.

Resolved: No objections. 1991-11-05

EB/1993/0256

Approval of reserved matters for the erection of a two-storey building, linked to existing sports hall, providing sports facilities and changing rooms, with conference and exhibition facilities on the first floor.

Granted, subject to conditions.

1993-09-14

940605

Erection of a two-storey sports hall and amenities building, linked to existing sports hall, with multi-purpose/exhibition facilities on the first floor.

Planning Permission Approved conditionally 17/11/1994

950063

Retention of a single mobile classroom unit.

County Council County Council – Objection 23/04/1995

950324

Provision of a 2.4 metres high wire mesh enclosure to house approximately 50 cycles. Planning Permission County Council – Objection 21/07/1995

991174

Provision of a base transceiver station (six antennae and four dishes with ancillary equipment) on the roof of Cavendish School.

Prior Notification (telecoms) 21/03/1999

030021

Retention of a single mobile classroom unit.
County Council - No Objection 15/02/2003

030257

Extension of two science laboratories at first floor, new covered access and store on ground floor. Removal of open fire escape, and replacement with new enclosed staircase. County Council - No Objection 20/06/2003

100347

Formation of porch and ramp to main entrance, re-configuration of vehicle parking and circulation area. County Council – Objection 14/07/2010

110383

Conversion of existing double garage to classrooms
County Council - No Objection 25/07/2011

130458

Erection of steel mesh fence
2m wall to 3.0m wall with mesh fence, including replacement 3.0m high gates. County Council – Objection 02/07/2013

Proposed development:

The application involves the construction of a two storey (plus basement) primary school building of approximately 2000m² gross internal area with associated external hard and soft landscaping works. The works will also include the refurbishment of approximately 620m² existing accommodation in the basement of the existing Secondary School.

A feasibility study was undertaken in 2014 to assess the potential options for providing a 2 form entry (2FE) primary school on the Cavendish site and investigating how a nursery could also be provided.

The preferred option is an all-through school to make best use of the current building so that facilities can be shared to enable more efficient / effective use of space avoiding duplication where possible. The proposed accommodation will provide much needed primary school places for children in Eastbourne.

Housing data provided by Eastbourne Borough Council shows that Town Centre, Meads, Upperton and Seaside will see the greatest housing growth in the period to 2027. With the exception of Seaside all these areas would be attracted to a new school at Cavendish.

The proposed two storey building would be sited directly adjacent to the western side of the existing school at an elevated level (due to the sloping site) on an area currently used for playing fields. The new school building

would be linked to the existing school building via a basement and ground floor link to facilitate shared facilities between the schools.

The basement would primarily accommodate the link between the 2 schools to providing internal access to the existing schools canteen, the ground floor would provide the main hall, classrooms and nursery while the first floor would provide mainly classrooms only. There will be an open, double height space above the main entrance. The area surrounding the building would be designated as play areas and landscaped accordingly.

Addressing the loss of playing field area, 2 x 3G mult use pitches would be provided on half of the existing hard play area to the east of the site and a new 'games court' would replace 2 tennis courts to the north side of the site adjacent to Cobbold Avenue. The remaining areas of playing fields/areas would remain the same.

Vehicular access to the site would be gained via the existing main vehicular entrance from Eldon Road and a new one way internal vehicular circulation route provided along the site frontage, exiting to the south east corner of the site. Within this area, 22 new parking spaces would be provided including 2 disabled spaces and a 'Drop off and Pick up' point with 10 layby spaces.

Other measures to be introduced include staggered start and finish times of the secondary, primary and nursery School to reduce congestion around the site and promoted alternative modes of transport to the school, such as walking, cycling, scooters instead of motor vehicles.

An existing entrance to the north east corner of the site adjacent to no.1 Cobbold Road is proposed to be widened and used for a vehicular and pedestrian entrance providing 18 visitor and staff parking spaces. This would couple with a service and emergency access road running to the back of gardens facing Willingdon Road and leading to the rear of the new and existing school.

The projected increase in pupils on the entire site from 2015 to 2023 would be approximately 200 pupils due to the projected reduction in pupil numbers as a consequence of the Gildredge House Free School.

With regards additional staff employed, the submitted application form states that there are 100 existing staff and 50 proposed staff (150 in total) but no indication as to the split between full/part-time.

Consultations:

Internal:

Specialist Advisor (Arboriculture) – Objection to the new vehicular exit point onto Eldon Road leading to the loss of at least 1 mature Elm street tree to the south east corner of the site which should be retained as a constraint to development.

Specialist Advisor (Planning Policy) – No objection in principle subject to design and amenity impact considerations.

External:

N/A

Neighbour Representations:

1 objection and 1 letter of support have been received (forwarded on to ESCC) and cover the following points:

Objection:

- Increased traffic on Eldon Road and surrounding streets.
- Increased parking at peak drop off and pick up times.
- Additional congestion in an already congested area at busy junction.
- Limited proposals for reducing car usage.

Support:

- Since current intake at school has been reduced and projected school population by 2020 will be only 10% more than at present, traffic would not be a problem.
- Enhanced facilities for pupils would outweigh objections.

Appraisal:

Principle of development:

The application site is located within the Ocklynge & Rodmill neighbourhood as identified in the Eastbourne Core Strategy Local Plan 2006-2027 (adopted 2013). The neighbourhood vision for Ocklynge & Rodmill states: Ocklynge & Rodmill will increase its level of sustainability by improving access to services and facilities and making the neighbourhood friendlier for pedestrians and cyclists, whilst continuing to promote access to open spaces and creating a more inclusive community.

Core Strategy Policy C5: Ocklynge & Rodmill Neighbourhood Policy states that the vision for Ocklynge & Rodmill neighbourhood will be promoted by a number of measures including: increasing the provision of local community and health facilities; creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment through public realm improvements; protecting important greenspaces across and adjacent to the neighbourhood; and promoting the provision of safe walking and cycling routes.

The Eastbourne Core Strategy Local Plan identifies that schools are vital community facilities, and that there is a demand of additional school places up to 2027, the delivery of which will be directed through the Infrastructure delivery policy.

Core Strategy Policy E1: Infrastructure Delivery states that the Council will work closely with public agencies, utility companies and infrastructure

providers to ensure that the necessary infrastructure to support future housing and employment development is available, and that the strategic infrastructure requirements will be set out in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (October 2014) recognises that:

- *There is a need for additional 'early years' provision and where possible new nursery facilities should be located on the same site as existing or new build primary schools; and*
- *There is an identified shortfall of up to 6 forms of entry across Eastbourne over the Core Strategy period, which equates to 180 school entry places.*

There are two local policy issues relating to this application: the expansion of educational provision of the site, and the loss of part of the school playing field.

Firstly, it is recognised that paragraph 72 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that the Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. It also states that local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:

- give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools; and
- work with schools promoters to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.

The site is identified on the Policies Map as being part of the designation for Borough Plan Policy LCF18: Extension of Educational Establishments. This policy states that planning permission will be granted for additional education facilities within sites identified for educational use, provided that:

- a) the development has no significant detrimental effect on residential, visual or environmental amenity (see Policies HO20, UHT4 and NE28);*
- b) the development is acceptable in terms of siting, scale and materials, and appropriate landscaping is provided (see Policy UHT1);*
- c) the development has good, safe and secure access by public transport, on foot and by bicycle, where access is considered to be inadequate a travel plan and the development of safe routes to school will be required (see Policies TR3 and TR10);*
- d) appropriate provision is made for access by people with disabilities and with mobility problems.*

In addition, Borough Plan Policy LCF16: Criteria for New Schools states that planning permission will be granted for new schools where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that there is a need for such a facility, provided that:

- a) *the development has no significant detrimental effect on environmental, residential or visual amenity (see Policies NE28, HO20 and UHT4);*
- b) *the scheme is acceptable in design terms (see Policy UHT1 a), b) and g));*
- c) *the development has good, safe and secure access by public transport, on foot and by bicycle, where access is considered to be inadequate a travel plan and the development of safe routes to school will be required (see Policies TR3 and TR10);*
- d) *appropriate provision is made for access by people with disabilities and those with mobility problems;*
- e) *where appropriate sports facilities should be designed with future dual use in mind, including independent access to changing and indoor sports facilities.*

In terms of accessibility, the application identifies that there will be four pedestrian access points, and two access points for cyclists, including a total of 35 secure cycle parking spaces. It also identifies that the scheme provides a total of 40 new parking spaces, including two disabled spaces, and that parking numbers are in line with the parking standards set out by East Sussex County Council Highways. In addition, the Transport Assessment submitted with the application concludes that 'there are unlikely to be any significant unacceptable traffic impacts from the proposed new school'. Therefore it is considered that, subject to amenity and design issues, Borough Plan Policies LCF18 and LCF16 have been satisfied.

The application will result in the loss of part of the school playing field in the south east corner of the site to accommodate the new primary school. Paragraph 74 of the NPPF states that existing open space, including playing fields, should not be built on unless: the open space is surplus to requirements; the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision; or the development is for alternative sports and recreation provision.

In addition to this, Core Strategy Policy D7: Community, Sports and Health states that the loss of any community, sports or health facilities will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the facility is no longer required to meet current needs, or where alternative and improved provision can be made elsewhere in Eastbourne that is accessible to local people.

The application proposes the provision of two new 3G (artificial) sports pitches, although it appears that these are located on existing playgrounds. Whilst these do not provide the equivalent quantity of playing field loss, they do provide a significantly higher quality of playing field that can be used all year round, as opposed to the grass pitches that may be unusable during parts of the winter.

The NPPF is clear that great weight should be given to the need to create, expand or alter schools in order to ensure that a sufficient choice of school

places are available to meet the needs of existing and new communities, which is significant in determining the application.

However, it also recognises that local planning authorities and school promoters should work together to identify and resolve key planning issues. Despite on-going discussions on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan relating to overall school provision in Eastbourne, East Sussex County Council did not engage with Eastbourne Borough Council on the specific site and the key planning issues before the application was submitted.

Although the application will result in the loss of part of the school playing field, replacement provision will be made by the provision of new artificial sports pitches that will be available all year round, and therefore this could be considered a suitable replacement.

Whilst there are concerns about this proposal, especially the lack of engagement in selecting sites for new schools despite on-going discussions about provision of school places more generally across the town, it is considered that the clear emphasis in the NPPF on the provision of new school places, and the fact that the loss of playing field will be replaced by alternative provision in the form of artificial sports pitches, means that the principle of development is acceptable subject to compliance with other relevant policies in the Local Development Plan and Core Strategy.

Impact of proposed development on amenity of adjoining occupiers and surrounding area:

Policies LCF16 and LCF18 of the Eastbourne Local Plan (Extension of Educational Establishments) states that planning permission will be granted for additional education facilities within sites identified for educational use, provided that the development has no significant detrimental effect on residential, visual or environmental amenity.

Policy B2 of the Eastbourne Core Strategy seeks to protect the residential and environmental amenity of existing and future residents.

The nearest residential properties to the proposed school building would be nos. 2a and 4 Eldon Road. The nearest part of the school building would be 25 metres to the rear garden boundary of no.2a Eldon Road and 26.7 metres to the rear garden boundary of no.4 Eldon Road. Given the pattern of development in the area, this distance is considered to be appropriate. The 2 storey height of the school, which would be at a lower level than these properties due to the sloping site, would not appear significantly dominating or unneighbourly in views to the west and the provision of a flat roof to the school would keep height and bulk to a minimum.

Due to the distance between the proposed school building and the nearest residential property and the siting of the building at a lower level, it is considered that the height, scale and bulk of the proposed building would not

result in any significant loss of sunlight, daylight or outlook to surrounding residential properties.

With regard to any potential noise impact, there are several play areas proposed around the southern, eastern and northern sides of the new building. These may have an adverse noise impact from children playing during break and lunch times and an increase intensification of play areas in comparison to the existing playing field. As such, it is considered that a condition may be necessary to provide noise reduction measures through provision of acoustic fencing to the rear boundaries of nos. 2, 2a and 4 Eldon Road and associated dense planting as well as limited play times to minimise any disturbance.

The provision of a widened vehicular and pedestrian access onto Cobbold Avenue and a car park for 18 cars adjacent to no.1 Cobbold Avenue may result in some noise and disturbance to this property from revving engines, manoeuvring cars, doors slamming, people talking in the car park and general servicing arrangements. It is therefore recommended that the use of this entrance car park be limited to no later than 9.00pm in the evening and no earlier than 7.30am in the morning in order to mitigate any nuisance or disturbance to the occupiers of this property. It may also be prudent to limit this car park to members of staff only.

With regards the use of the sports pitches, it is considered that an informative is necessary to be included on any permission that provision of floodlights would require a separate planning application.

As such, it is considered that the proposal would not adversely impact on surrounding residential amenity and would accord with Policies LCF16 and LCF18 of the Eastbourne Local Plan and Policy B2 of the Eastbourne Core Strategy.

Design and Siting:

Policy LCF18 of the Eastbourne Local Plan (Extension of Educational Establishments) states that planning permission will be granted for additional education facilities within sites identified for educational use, provided that the development is acceptable in terms of siting, scale and materials, and appropriate landscaping is provided.

Policy UHT1 of the Eastbourne Local Plan states that proposals will be required to harmonise with the appearance and character of the local area and be appropriate in scale, form, materials (preferably locally sourced), setting, alignment and layout. Policy UHT4 states that proposals which have an unacceptable detrimental impact on visual amenity will be refused.

Policy D10a of the Eastbourne Core Strategy requires new development to make a positive contribution to the townscape and urban heritage.

The siting of the proposed school to the east of the existing building fronting Eldon Road would appear to be the most appropriate area within the site for the new school given the topography constraints of the site, maintaining the existing building line of the existing school building and utilising the existing main vehicular entrance to the school.

The aesthetic design of the proposed new school has been kept simple and clean to enhance the schemes sense of place and individual identity and to contrast appropriately with the 1930's appearance of the existing school utilising mostly traditional materials referenced in the local vernacular. The main face materials would include brick and grey metal standing seam cladding.

The design appears functional in appearance with no real noteworthy innovative or original features. However, given its role as a new school where development budget is usually a constraint, paragraph 61 of the NPPF recognises that securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations where connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment may compensate for its relatively ordinary visual appearance. It is considered, therefore, that the proposed siting and design of the new school is appropriate in this location and would sit comfortably within the streetscene next to the existing school building on this relatively large site.

As such, it is considered that the proposal would accord with Policies LCF18, UHT1 and UHT4 of the Eastbourne Local Plan and Policies B2 and D10a of the Eastbourne Core Strategy.

Impacts on trees:

Policy NE28 of the Eastbourne Local Plan states that development proposals will be judged on their effect on environmental amenity.

The council's arboricultural officer has been consulted and raises objection to the proposal and comments as follows:

Due to the lack of the submission of a comprehensive tree survey to accompany the application, it is not certain which trees are to be retained and which to be removed. However, it is assumed from the documentation that 2 lime trees located to the front of the site would be removed to facilitate the front car park and pick up and drop off area. These trees have been classified as A1, and according to BS5837 2012: these trees should be considered a constraint to the development and taken into account at design stage. The loss of these trees would be noticeable in the street scene, but could be compensated for by a suitable replacement planting scheme.

After consulting with ESCC Highways, it is likely that the proposed vehicular exit onto Eldon Road for the new car park will result in a visibility splay being required which would lead to the loss of at least one rare and important

mature highway Wheatley Elm tree. This tree forms part of the original avenue tree planting within Eldon Road, and the loss of a rare mature Elm tree for the sake of a visibility splay is not acceptable and will be detrimental to the street scene and environmental amenity. It is considered that this tree is worthy of retention and should be considered a constraint to this development.

The applicant's tree schedule and plan makes no reference regarding the two Beech trees adjacent to no.1 Cobbold Avenue and therefore provides no root protection area to ensure they are retained. Should this application be approved in its current form it will potentially lead to the loss of the two Beech trees adjacent to 1 Cobbold Avenue. Therefore it can only be assumed that these trees will be lost to the development or they would sustain such damage during construction that they will fail or die within the next five years. The loss of these trees would be noticeable in the street scene, but could be compensated for by a suitable replacement planting scheme.

Highway and Parking Considerations:

Policy TR11 of the Eastbourne Local plan states that new development must comply with approved maximum car parking standards as set out in the East Sussex County Council Highways SPG parking standards.

Borough Plan Policies LCF16 and LCF18 state that planning permission will be granted for new schools where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that there is a need for such a facility, provided that:

c) the development has good, safe and secure access by public transport, on foot and by bicycle, where access is considered to be inadequate a travel plan and the development of safe routes to school will be required (see Policies TR3 and TR10);

d) appropriate provision is made for access by people with disabilities and those with mobility problems.

In terms of accessibility, the application identifies that there will be four pedestrian access points, and two access points for cyclists, including a total of 35 secure cycle parking spaces. The school is served by a bus route along Eldon Road which serves the surrounding locality and town centre.

The scheme would provide a total of 40 new parking spaces (including 2 disabled spaces) and a drop off and pick up area with provision for 10 cars and that parking numbers are in line with the parking standards set out by East Sussex County Council Highways. In addition, the Transport Assessment submitted with the application concludes that 'there are unlikely to be any significant unacceptable traffic impacts from the proposed new school'. However, it is considered that the submission of a travel plan would be necessary to reduce/minimise the reliance on the car for travel.

Concern is raised, however, with regard to the new vehicular exit point to the south east corner of the site onto Eldon Road which may add to congestion at

this junction during peak times. Visibility splays for this exit would require the removal of 2 Elm street trees which provide significant amenity value. It is considered, therefore, that this exit should be removed and a better solution sought to revise the parking layout and internal circulation to address these issues and to avoid the removal of the street trees.

Human Rights Implications:

The impacts of the proposal have been assessed as part of the application process. Consultation with the community has been undertaken by ESCC 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:

Whilst there are concerns about this proposal, especially the lack of engagement in selecting sites for new schools despite on-going discussions about provision of school places more generally across the town, it is considered that the clear emphasis in the NPPF on the provision of new school places, and the fact that the loss of playing field will be replaced by alternative provision in the form of artificial sports pitches, means that the principle of development is acceptable.

Subject to appropriate conditions relating to restriction of car parking hours of use, use of Cobbold Avenue access and noise associated with play areas, it is considered that the proposal would not adversely affect surrounding residential amenity due to its appropriate siting, scale and bulk.

With regard to design, whilst the aesthetic design of the proposed school is not of particularly high quality, it is acknowledged that its role as a school and budgetary constraints may not facilitate outstanding design but it is considered that its functional appearance, use of quality materials and appropriate siting would not adversely affect visual amenity or the streetscene in this location.

No objection is raised to the potential impact on increased parking demand and traffic generation at pick up and drop off times. However, the positioning of the new vehicular exit point onto Eldon Road may add to congestion at this busy junction, the visibility splays for which would require the removal of at least 1 mature Elm street tree which significantly adds to the visual environmental amenity within the streetscene.

Recommendation:

No objection is raised in principle to the provision of a new school on the site subject to appropriate conditions.

However, concern is raised with regard to the following:

- the new vehicular exit point onto Eldon Road which may cause congestion within the drop off area and exacerbate congestion close to the junction with Willingdon Road.

- the removal of at least 1 mature Elm street tree to facilitate visibility splays serving the new vehicular exit onto Eldon Road which makes a significant positive contribution to the visual amenity of the local streetscene.