

# REPORT TO THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

Report No.

Date of Meeting	23 April 2008
Application Number	08/00314/FUL
Site Address	Sheldon School, Hardenhuish Lane, Chippenham
Proposal	Cycleway, fire engine access, secure cycle shelters and additional car parking
Applicant	Sheldon School
Town/Parish Council	Chippenham
Grid Ref	390825 174332
Type of application	FUL

## Reason for the application being considered by Committee

- This application has been submitted to the Committee for decision under the scheme of delegation in force after the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2002 because 5 letters of objection have been received

## Summary of Report

This is a proposal for the permanent retention of a previously allowed temporary access track at the southern part of the Sheldon School campus for cycle and emergency access, together with the reorganisation of parking for cars and bicycles across the campus as a whole.

This report is prepared to allow Members of DC Committee to consider the proposal in the context of planning policy and guidance. The key points to consider are as follows:

- Implications of Policy C3 of the adopted North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011
- Reorganisation of parking and highway safety
- Visual appearance of vehicular access

## Officer Recommendations

Planning Permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

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## Proposal and Site Description

This is a proposal for the creation of a permanent access road to be laid across the southern part of the Sheldon School campus. This follows a previous temporary planning permission (07/00715/FUL refers) for the creation of an access road in the same location for construction traffic relating to the new sixth form centre currently being built (which was permitted under the earlier 06/02636/FUL). Any permission now granted would effectively supersede the temporary permission previously granted.

The new road is to only allow for bicycle and pedestrian access to from Hardenhuish Lane, although it is proposed that the road could also be utilised by emergency vehicles and for refuse collection.

Largely as a result of expected increases in staff and pupil numbers before 2009, the new road is accompanied by wider proposals for the improvement of the existing point of access to Hardenhuish Lane and the reorganisation of car/bicycle parking on the site together with the retention of the contractors compound (previously intended for use during the construction of the sixth form centre) as PE and recreation space.

As per the temporary track, the land over which the permanent track would pass is entirely within the defined school campus, although although likely to be visible from public vantage points, would always be so within the context of school buildings and infrastructure. The land itself is sloping towards the southern boundary of the school and is formally maintained and planted with a variety of trees.

## Relevant Planning History

Application number	Proposal	Decision
06/02636/FUL	Creation of sixth form centre comprising study centre and science laboratory	Approved 07/12/06
07/00715/FUL	Temporary access road	Approved 13/06/07

## Consultations

**The Town Council** - No objection

**Wiltshire County Council Highways** - No objection subject to conditions

## Representations

Six (6) letters of objection received. Main issues raised:

- Support the creation of the creation of the cycleway and access or to the additional parking, but object on the basis that the additional parking deals only with the enlarged sixth form facilities and not with the underlying safety problems with parking in and around the school, Hardenhuish Lane and Old Hardenhuish Lane (especially the on street parking by staff and students at Old Hardenhuish Lane).
- The retention of the access lane would contravene the condition imposed under the earlier planning permission.
- The school's transportation policy is not working at present.
- A further access onto Hardenhuish Lane would cause a highway safety issue – busy road, on a hill where traffic speeds are high and where staff/pupils of schools park on the road

- Could encourage parents to make increased of Old Hardenhuish Lane by accessing via the double mini-roundabout turning into Hardenhuish lane, dropping-off children and then proceeding back south towards Chippenham.
- Visual impact of bicycle shelters (and their remoteness from main part of school), the widened access and loss of trees.

## **Planning Considerations**

### Reorganisation of parking and highway safety

The proposed retention of the new access road also involves the widening of the road from that previously permitted and improvements to its junction with Hardenhuish Lane and its resurfacing with more permanent materials. The proposal also includes the retention of the contractors compound, permitted under 07/00715/FUL, for use as a recreation area and additional hardstanding for emergency vehicles.

The reorganisation of car parking on the wider school campus will involve the creation of an additional 12 parking spaces (bringing the total to 150 general spaces, plus 2no. disabled spaces and 1no. dedicated to motorcycles). The reorganisation will result in the majority of car parking to be positioned on a currently grassed area to the north of the site, adjacent to the sports hall, which can all be accessed via the main school entrance. An additional area of 18 “overflow” parking spaces with a re-enforced grass type surface, would be created for invigilators and parents evenings etc. It is expected that the additional spaces would meet the anticipated increase in staff and pupil numbers.

The creation of 140no. bicycle parking spaces are to be provided on the site. The majority will be positioned alongside the new access road to the south of the campus, with the remaining adjacent to the main car parking area to the north. All bicycle parking is to be provided as a secure shelter of typical design.

Several letters of objection have been received suggesting that the additional access would cause a danger to highway safety. As noted at the time of the application for the temporary access track, whilst there is no reason to doubt the perceptions of those writing the letters or the fact that at certain times the local road network is extremely busy, it must be recognised that there is no evidence to support the view that any element of the proposal or the retention of the new access on to Hardenhuish Lane would present a hazard to highway safety to a point that would justify the refusal of planning permission. Similarly, it is not possible or reasonable to expect this application to resolve existing problems with congestion or on-street parking elsewhere.

Clearly the proposed reorganisation may have an altering effect upon the existing Green Travel Plan (created in association with the 06/02636/FUL permission). This should be subject to conditions.

In the above context it is considered that there is no justifiable reason to diverge from the recommendations of Wiltshire County Council as the authority responsible for highway safety.

### Visual appearance of development

All development is to take place within the readily identified and largely built-up school campus. Nevertheless, the southern part of the school campus is characterised by Several trees were required to be removed to make way for the temporary access and contractors compound permitted under 07/00715/FUL. At that time their removal was agreed as acceptable as the trees did not greatly contribute toward the character of the locality, are not specifically protected and could be removed at any time without the need for consent from the Local Planning Authority.

This application includes a widening of the access road to 3.7m together with a slight realignment. To consider the effect these changes will have upon remaining trees, it is considered that a full landscaping condition should be imposed. This will ensure all existing trees are surveyed, relevant

protected incorporated into the development and where necessary the location of replacement planting.

The additional parking areas will necessitate the removal of two small trees. This is not thought to be prejudicial to the appearance of the site as a whole, but should nonetheless be covered by the comprehensive landscaping scheme, the submission of which, that should be a condition of any planning permission.

The proposed bicycle shelters are of typical design and appearance and are considered to be an entirely expected feature within a school site.

**Recommendation:**

**APPROVE planning permission subject to the following conditions:**

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

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved plans subject to such minor amendments to the development as may be approved in writing under this condition by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that the development is implemented in accordance with this decision in the interests of public amenity, but also to allow for the approval of minor variations which do not materially affect the permission.

3. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until details of the landscaping of the site, including wherever appropriate the retention of existing trees, have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority.

The approved landscaping scheme shall be implemented within one year of either the first occupation or use of the development, whether in whole or in part, or its substantial completion, whichever is the sooner, and shall be maintained thereafter for a period of not less than five years. The maintenance shall include the replacement of any tree or shrub which is removed, destroyed or dies by a tree or shrub of the same size and species as that which it replaces, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of amenity.

4. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted and before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought onto the site for the purposes of the development, details of fencing to be erected for the protection of retained trees/hedges/shrubs shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Fencing for the protection of retained trees/hedges/shrubs shall be erected in accordance with the approved details before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought onto the site for the purposes of the development and shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed in any area fenced in accordance with this condition and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation be made, without the written consent of the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of protecting the existing trees/hedges/shrubs on the site.

5. Prior to the commencement of development details of the surfacing of all of the new hard surfaces approved as part of this planning permission, including all car parking, recreational

space and access roads, shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with those details approved.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to secure adequate method of surface water.

6. The area allocated for parking on the submitted plan shall be kept clear of obstruction and shall not be used other than for the parking of vehicles in connection with the development hereby permitted.

Reason: In the interest of amenity and road safety.

7. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved by this planning permission, details of the alterations to the accesses to the site, including any gates, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interest of Highway safety.

8. Provision shall be made within the site for the disposal of surface water so as to prevent its discharge onto the highway details of which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing to the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interest of Highway safety.

9. Prior to the commencement of development an amended Green Travel Plan, taking into account of the parking and access re organisation hereby approved, shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development and future operation of the school site shall be carried out on accordance with the conclusions, recommendations and undertakings included within the plan.

Reason: In order to reduce reliance upon the private car as the means of accessing the site.

### **Informative**

This decision relates to documents/plans submitted with the application, listed below. No variation from the approved documents should be made without the prior approval of this Council. Amendments may require the submission of a further application. Failure to comply with this advice may lead to enforcement action which may require alterations and/or demolition of any unauthorised buildings or structures and may also lead to prosecution.

284903/P-SITE-01 rev.P3 and bicycle shelter - manufacturer details

### **Reason for Decision**

**Reason for approval:** The proposal is considered to comply with the provisions of Policy C3 of the adopted North Wiltshire Local plan 2011.

**Appendices:** None

**Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:** 1.20; 2.02; 4.04; 5.01