

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	23 November 2016
<b>Application Number</b>	16/07361/FUL
<b>Site Address</b>	Bitham Brook County Primary School Arundell Close, Westbury, Wiltshire, BA13 3UA
<b>Proposal</b>	Existing primary school extended in a 2 phase development, additional informal and formal hard play area added.
<b>Applicant</b>	Wiltshire Council
<b>Town/Parish Council</b>	WESTBURY
<b>Electoral Division</b>	WESTBURY EAST – Gordon King
<b>Grid Ref</b>	387684 151706
<b>Type of application</b>	Full Planning
<b>Case Officer</b>	Eileen Medlin

### **Reason for the application being considered by Committee**

The council's scheme of delegation requires states that:

Applications submitted by Wiltshire Council will not be dealt with under delegated powers where an objection has been received raising material planning considerations.

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

The purpose of the report is to assess the merits of the proposal against the policies of the development plan and other material considerations and to consider the recommendation that the application be approved.

#### **2. Report Summary**

The main issues discussed in this report are:

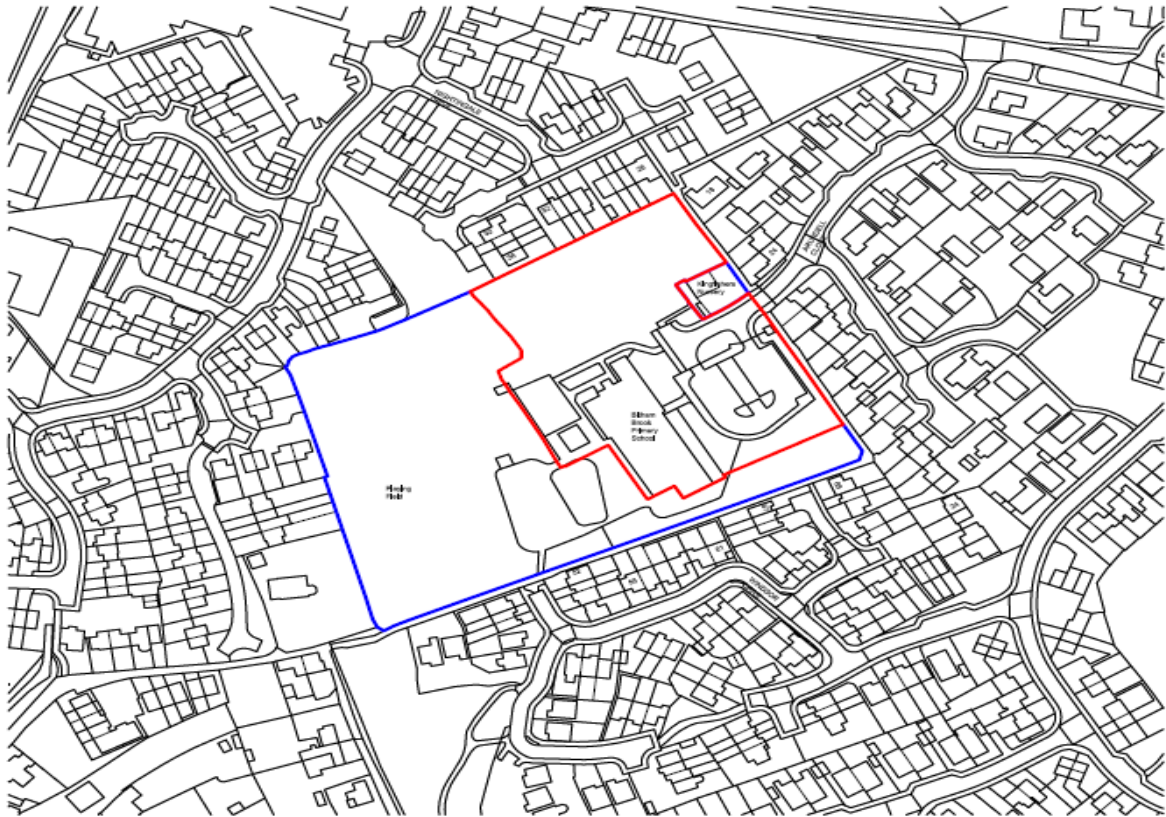
- The principle of the development,
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area,
- Impact on neighbouring residential amenities,
- Highway safety and parking.
- Archaeology

#### **3. Site Description**

The existing school is located off Arundell Close in Westbury, located in a predominantly residential area. The application site (which is illustrated on a reproduced plan on the next page) comprises the school building, parking areas and the landscaped area to the north of the school building. The application site is not located within the Conservation Area and the nearest heritage asset (located along Alfred Street) is over 200 metres away with numerous unlisted properties and streets in-between.

The school grounds also contain a playing field to the west and a nursery to the east. Vehicular access to the site is gained off Arundell Close via Bitham Park.

A public footpath (WEST1) runs along the eastern and southern boundary of the site providing good pedestrian links in all directions. There is a pedestrian gate on the southern boundary providing access for pupils living to the south and west of the site. The footpath on the east forms part of a pedestrian link to Coop Car Park to the north where the school has a park and stride arrangement.



#### **4. Planning History**

There have been about 28 planning applications since the 1980s on this site pursuant to the erection of the school, extensions and outbuildings, the nursery building and mobile classrooms (including numerous renewals of planning permission).

#### **5. The Proposal**

This application seeks permission to extend the existing primary school in two phases resulting in a two-form entry school. This would increase the school accommodation from the existing 300 roll capacity to 420 pupils. The first phase would comprise 2 additional classrooms, an extension to the hall, and provision of a covered external space (to be converted into a studio hall as part of Phase 2), circulation corridors and WCs. The second phase would comprise 4 class rooms, technology room, 2 small group rooms, a large group room, a studio hall (covered area converted into studio hall in this phase), circulation and WCs and associated external play spaces.

Overall there would be four new classrooms as one existing classroom would be converted to group rooms and the existing temporary classroom would be removed as part of the development.

The proposal would extend the existing school building to the north. The extension would be single storey with a maximum ridge height of 7.5 metres. Phase 1 would increase the gross internal floor area by 289sqm and Phase 2 would increase the floor area by a further 441sqm.

The proposal also includes the provision of covered bike storage to accommodate 80 cycles and bin storage to the west of the existing nursery building. In addition, a new Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) is proposed in the north eastern corner of the school site. It would be enclosed by a wire mesh fence. No floodlighting is proposed.

During the course of the application, on-site parking provision has been increased to provide 8 additional spaces with additional demarked drop-off spaces and a proposed designated no parking area to the front of the refuse collection point.

The following plans illustrate the proposed development.



Phase 2 East Elevation



Phase 2 West Elevation

## 6. Local Planning Policy

The Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) was adopted on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015 and therefore holds full weight in planning terms. The following Core Policies (CP) are relevant when assessing this application: CP1 (Settlement strategy), CP2 (Delivery strategy), CP3 (Infrastructure requirements), CP32 (Westbury Area Strategy), CP41 (Sustainable construction and low carbon energy), CP51 (Landscape), CP52 (Green Infrastructure), CP56 (Contaminated Land), CP57 (Ensuring high quality design and place shaping), CP58 (Ensuring conservation of the historic

environment), CP60 (Sustainable Transport), CP61 (Transport and Development), CP62 (Development impacts on the transport network), CP64 (Demand Management), CP67 (Flood Risk)

When adopting the WCS, some policies continue in force from the West Wiltshire District Local Plan (1<sup>st</sup> Alteration) (WWDLP) were saved. Those which are relevant to this application include: U1a (Foul Drainage/sewerage treatment)

Wiltshire Waste Core Strategy - WCS6 (Waste Audit)

The following Council publication also merits due consideration:

- Wiltshire Car Parking Strategy

## **7. Summary of Consultation Responses**

Westbury Town Council – Supportive, but raised concerns about access and parking

Wiltshire Council Highway Officer: – No objection, following the increase in on-site car parking spaces and an updated travel plan.

Wiltshire Council Drainage Officer: – No objection following revisions to the drainage strategy

Wiltshire Council School Places Team: – Supportive of the provision of additional accommodation

Wiltshire Council School Travel Advisor: – Supportive, subject to condition seeking further updates to school travel plan

Wiltshire Council Archaeologist: – No objection, subject to condition.

Wiltshire Council Ecologist: – No objections

## **8. Publicity**

Two site notices were erected near the site; one near the main entrance and one near the pedestrian entrance to the rear of the site. Individual neighbour notifications were also sent to neighbouring occupiers surrounding the school grounds.

Following the public notification process the following was received from third parties:

- A petition of 32 signatories was received from the residents of Arundell Close raising concerns about access and parking;
- A further 6 letters of objection have been received raising concerns about the following:
  - Access
  - Parking including illegal and inconsiderate parking
  - Congestion
  - Visual Impact to Nightingale Drive

## **9. Planning Considerations**

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require that the determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

**9.1 The principle of the development** - The application proposes the extension of an existing primary school within the settlement of Westbury. Core Policy 1 supports the growth of market towns such as Westbury and where necessary the expansion of existing facilities to

support this growth. The need for additional places at Bitham Brook Primary School is largely a result of the residential development currently under construction at The Mead (ref: 13/03568/OUT) and the recently approved planning application for residential development at Bitham Park (ref: 14/09262/OUT). The first phase of development would accommodate the increase in pupils coming from The Mead and the second phase of development would accommodate the additional pupils coming from Bitham Park. Core Policy 3 requires new development to provide for necessary off site infrastructure arising from the proposals. Section 106 financial contributions were secured from the referenced housing developments towards additional school places. Whilst Core Policy 32 does not specifically mention primary school education, it is supportive of improving existing facilities. The provision of essential infrastructure to meet the growing needs of Westbury is therefore supported in principle. The Council's education team fully support this application as referenced in Section 7.

**9.2 Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area** - The application proposes to extend the school to the north, elongating the existing building. Whilst the extension would be single storey, the roof height would be the equivalent to a two storey building in places with a maximum ridge height of 7.5m. The design of the proposed building would be in keeping with host property with the same ridge, eaves height, window detailing and materials proposed. The extension would sit comfortably within the plot and would not appear a cramped form of development.

Ancillary buildings such as cycle and bin storage are also proposed. The proposed shelters would be open sided with gullwing roofs. The bin store would be enclosed by 2m high timber fencing. It is considered that these buildings would not appear incongruous within school grounds.

A new MUGA would be fenced by a wire mesh fence. Again it is considered that this would not appear incongruous in the school grounds.

Overall, the proposed development has been carefully planned and would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area; and the proposals are considered policy compliant with Core Strategy Policy 57.

**9.3 Impact on Neighbouring Residential Amenities**: - This section covers the impact on residential amenities of adjoining local residents with respect to privacy, overshadowing and outlook. Impact as a result of parking is discussed in the next section. As stated in the previous section the building would be extended to the north in a linear fashion. It is considered that there would not be any adverse impact on those properties located to the east (Pintail Way) and south (Windsor Drive) given the distance from the proposed extension. It is furthermore considered that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on those neighbouring occupiers living in Arundell Close given the distance to those properties and the intervening nursery building. The proposal extends the school closer to residential properties on Nightingale Drive. It is acknowledged that No's 25 to 32 Nightingale Drive have rear windows which face onto the application site whilst No 36 presents a flank elevation to the site. The proposed extension would however be over 16m from the schools northern boundary and would have a ridge height of 6.25m at its closest point. None of the neighbouring properties on Nightingale Drive would have direct views of the proposed extension as those facing the site are orientated with windows facing to the east of the proposed extension. It is therefore considered that the proposed extension would be sufficiently distant from the neighbouring properties along Nightingale Drive and would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on residential amenities.

The application also proposes a hard play area and a multi-use games area to be located near the sites northern and eastern boundary. It is proposed to screen these areas with landscape planting with no floodlighting being proposed.

The applicant has also advised that the area would be used during school hours and for after school clubs only, which usually finish at around 4pm.

The proposed cycle storage buildings would be sufficiently distant from neighbouring occupiers and would be of a height, design and size that would not have an adverse impact on residential amenity.

Overall it is considered that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable or adverse impact on residential amenity in accordance with Core Policy 57 and paragraph 17 of the NPPF.

**9.4 Highway Safety and Parking:** - The proposal would increase the school to a two form entry primary to be constructed over two phases with a resultant increase in pupils and staff. Plans have been revised during the course of the application to increase parking provision.

The proposal would increase parking provision to 45 spaces. This is 9 spaces below the Council's maximum parking standards for this type of development. As these are maximum standards there is not a fixed requirement to meet them in the same way as the minimum standards set for parking in new residential developments. Therefore whilst there is a shortfall below the maximum recommended parking provision, the proposal is considered to be acceptable. Due cognisance should be given to the location of the school, within close proximity to residential areas. The application is supported by the Council's highway team and school travel advisor and is policy compliant with Core Strategy Policy 64: Demand Management.

The existing vehicular access to the school is via Arundell Close and this would not be altered as part of the proposed development. Arundell Close is a cul-de-sac comprising detached and semi-detached properties. There is a mix of bungalows and two storey properties in the Close; with the majority of properties having access to off street parking and garaging.

The school was constructed at approximately the same time as the surrounding residential properties and some residents of Arundell Close have complained about the existing situation with regard to school children being dropped off and picked up; and a petition in addition to individual letters of objection, has been received raising concern about the likely exacerbation of the existing situation.

To support the application, a Transport Assessment and School Travel Plan were submitted. The Transport Assessment includes a survey undertaken on the morning opening time and afternoon closing time of the school. Based on the 2016 School Travel Plan, the Transport Assessment concludes that there would be 44 extra vehicle trips as a result of the increase of pupils. It also concludes, having appraised the local road network, that there is sufficient capacity along the local roads and within the Co-op car park (if it is required) to satisfy any increased demand for child drop off or pick up parking.

The School Travel Plan acknowledges that the number of children arriving at school by car is above the Wiltshire average even taking into account rural schools with a wider catchment and fewer travel/transport options. This is surprising given that 65% of the pupils on the school roll live within 0.5km of the school. However, it also shows that there is scope for improvement. It is duly noted that the transport survey was undertaken as a 'hands up' survey so it is not possible to cross reference with the data on pupil distances to the school to find out how many pupils that live within 0.5km of the school walk, cycle or scoot to school. The Council's School Travel Plan Advisor has asked that a full parent survey is undertaken following the occupation of Phase 1 and again following the occupation of Phase 2.

It is also worth noting that the additional pupil accommodation that the expanded school is intended to accommodate is expected to come from the two recently approved housing developments located to the north of the site. The entrances to these developments are within 500m of the application site and would benefit from on-site travel plan coordinators.

By way of reference, condition 19 imposed on planning permission ref 13/03568/OUT (the Mead) requires that:

*No development shall commence on site until a Full Travel Plan based on the submitted*

*Framework Travel Plan has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The Full Travel Plan shall include details of implementation and monitoring including the appointment of a travel plan co-ordinator for 6 years, and shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed details. The results of the implementation and monitoring shall be made available to the Local Planning Authority on request together with any changes to the plan arising from those results.*

Condition 21 of planning permission 14/09262/OUT which was allowed on appeal (appeal ref APP/Y3940/W/15/3130433) (Bitham Park) reads:

*No dwelling shall be occupied until a Travel Plan based on the submitted Framework Travel Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Travel Plan shall include details of implementation and monitoring including the appointment of a travel plan co-ordinator, details of access to the monitoring information for the local planning authority and details of mechanisms for agreeing and incorporating changes to the approved Travel Plan. The Travel Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.*

Officers acknowledge that there would be a consequential increase in the volume of traffic at school drop off and pick up times during the AM and PM peak. However, it is considered that this can be suitably managed to avoid unacceptable adverse impacts to local residents. The most effective way to secure improvements is through a School Travel Plan. The Council's school travel advisor has stated that the current travel plan is adequate, but there is scope for improvement.

Members of the committee are advised that specific areas for improvement can be secured by planning condition and capture the following:

- Promotion of safe walking routes to school by identifying and mapping routes (particularly off-road footpaths), park-and-stride locations, and five- and ten-minute walking zones;
- Establishment and operation of a walking bus from appropriate park-and-stride locations such as the Co-op car park;
- Establishment of a rota of parents to monitor parking on Arundell Close;
- Undertaking a full parent survey following the occupation of Phase 1 and Phase 2.

Any adverse transport impacts created as a consequence of the development could be mitigated against and managed by way of an updated school travel plan and as such the proposal is considered acceptable in this regard. The requirement for a travel plan is in accordance with Core Policy 61: Transport and New Development.

It should be noted that paragraph 32 of the NPPF advises that "*development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe*". Whilst no severe cumulative residual impacts have been identified by officers, recommended improvements made to the school travel plan can mitigate against the expressed local concern.

Overall the proposed development is considered to acceptable in transport grounds.

**9.5 Archaeology:** - The desk based assessment submitted with the application has highlighted the potential for archaeological remains to be impacted by the proposals, in particular relating to the Romano British period. Therefore further field evaluation is required. The County Archaeologist has suggested a condition requiring a written programme of archaeological investigation to be submitted and approved before commencement of development.

**10. Conclusion (The Planning Balance)** - The proposed development would deliver much needed school infrastructure to the town of Westbury and the proposals would not have an

adverse impact on the character of the area, the amenities of adjoining occupiers or transport safety. As such the proposals are considered to be acceptable and in accordance with the development plan.

**RECOMMENDATION** - Approve with 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 the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Red Line Location Plan; Existing Site Plan Rev A; Phase 1 Site Plan Rev A; Roof Plan Existing and Phase 1; Roof Plan Phase 2 Rev A; All Phases GIFA (Gross Internal Floor Area) Plans Rev A; Ground Floor Existing and Phase 1 Plan and Phase 1 Section; Ground Floor Phase 2 and Sections B and C Rev A; Existing Elevations; Phase 1 Elevations ; Phase 2 Elevations Rev A; Elevations All Phases Rev A, received 30<sup>th</sup> August 2016. Phase 2 Site Plan Rev C, received 20<sup>th</sup> October 2016. Bin and Cycle Stores, received 03<sup>rd</sup> November 2016

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. No development shall commence on site until:

- A written programme of archaeological investigation, which should include on-site work and off-site work such as the analysis, publishing and archiving of the results, has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and
- The approved programme of archaeological work has been carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To enable the recording of any matters of archaeological interest.

4. No development shall commence on site (including any works of demolition), until a Construction Method Statement, which shall include the following:

- a) the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
- b) the loading and unloading of plant and materials;
- c) the storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
- d) the measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction;
- e) the hours of construction, including deliveries;

has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The approved Statement shall be complied with in full throughout the construction period. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved construction method statement.

REASON: To minimise detrimental effects to the neighbouring amenities, the amenities of the area in general, detriment to the natural environment through the risks of pollution and dangers to highway safety, during the construction phase.

5. Phase 2 of the development shall not be brought into use until the parking area shown on the approved plans has been consolidated, surfaced and laid out in accordance with the approved details. This area shall be maintained and remain available for this use at all times thereafter.



REASON: To ensure that adequate provision is made for parking within the site in the interests of highway safety.

6. Phase 2 of the development shall not be brought into use until the cycle parking facilities shown on the approved plans have been provided in full and made available for use. The cycle parking facilities shall be retained for use in accordance with the approved details at all times thereafter.

REASON: To ensure that satisfactory facilities for the parking of cycles are provided and to encourage travel by means other than the private car.

7. Phase 2 of the development shall not be brought into use until an updated School Travel Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Travel Plan shall include:

- Promotion of safe walking routes to school by identifying and mapping routes (particularly off-road footpaths), park-and-stride locations, and five- and ten-minute walking zones;
- Establishment and operation of a walking bus from appropriate park-and-stride locations such as the Co-op car park;
- Establishment of a rota of parents to monitor parking on Arundell Close;
- Details of implementation and monitoring and shall be implemented in accordance with these agreed details.

The results of the implementation and monitoring shall be made available to the Local Planning Authority on request, together with any changes to the plan arising from those results.

REASON: In the interests of road safety and reducing vehicular traffic to the development.

8. Phase 2 of the development shall not be brought into use until the refuse and recycling facilities shown on the approved plans have been provided and made available for use. These facilities shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details thereafter.

REASON: To ensure the provision of satisfactory facilities for the storage of refuse and recycling.

9. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match in material, colour and texture those used in the existing building with the exception of the Trespa Cladding System to be used on the end elevation of phase 1 which shall be in accordance with the details submitted with this application.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area.

10. The MUGA hereby permitted shall only be used between the hours of 09:00 and 18:00 from Mondays to Saturdays only.

REASON: To ensure the creation/retention of an environment free from intrusive levels of noise and activity in the interests of the amenity of the area.