

**ATWORTH: PROPOSED RETENTION OF A DOUBLE MOBILE CLASSROOM
WITH TOILETS AT ATWORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL
(Application No. W.04.1436.CP)**

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the above application and to recommend that conditional planning permission be granted.

The Site

2. Atworth Primary School is located east of Bradford Road and lies within the village of Atworth, north-west of Melksham.
3. The main permanent school building is a two storey, coursed rubble stone, Grade II listed building with a natural slate pitched roof. The original building dates from 1828 and was enlarged in 1882 with an additional single storey school room, utilising the same materials. One double mobile classroom (ref: 493(90)) is sited to the south-east and rear of the structure on recreational grassland.
4. To the east and rear of the school is a fenced outdoor swimming pool which is enclosed by the school playing fields and to the south-east by open fields. Adjacent to the south-west of the school building is a tarmac play space.
6. The application site lies within the Atworth Conservation Area.
7. A location plan is attached at **Appendix 1** and a site plan at **Appendix 2**.

Planning History

8. In brief the planning history of the site is as follows:

<u>W.90.0980</u>	Planning permission granted to site a double mobile classroom with toilets.
<u>W.95.0619</u>	Planning permission granted to retain a double mobile classroom with toilets.
<u>W.99.1373</u>	Planning permission granted to retain a double mobile classroom with toilets.

Proposal

9. Conditional planning permission is sought for the retention of a double mobile classroom with toilets at Atworth Primary School.

10. The Director of the Department for Children and Education has submitted the following statement in support of this application:

"Accommodation currently available at Atworth School includes two permanent and two temporary classrooms. Double building WCC493(90) now requires renewal planning permission.

Forecast pupil numbers are:

April	2005	2006	2007	2008
Number on Roll	80	80	79	94

Predicted numbers indicate that the school will need to maintain a four class structure for the foreseeable future and therefore needs to retain all accommodation currently located on the school site. The school is making full use of this accommodation at present time. The permanent building has one small classroom, which restricts the size of classes in this room. Due to the temporary building's age and the school's continuing requirement for 4 classes, we would plan to replace it with permanent accommodation within the next five years. However, this is subject to adequate New Deal for Schools (NDS) funding being received from the Department for Education and Skills within the time period.

Five-year planning permission is requested for temporary building, number WCC493(90) at Atworth School."

Planning Policy

11. Policies CF1 and CF27 of the Adopted West Wiltshire District Plan 1st Alteration (May 2004) are considered relevant to this application.
12. All relevant planning policies are set out in the attached **Appendix 3**.

Consultations

13. **West Wiltshire District Council** - objects to the application and comments as follows:

The retention of the proposed double mobile classroom is considered detrimental to the setting of the Grade II listed building. A temporary building of this type, size, condition and design is considered detrimental to the setting of the listed building.

14. **Atworth Parish Council** - no objections.
15. **Countryside Section** - no objections.
16. **Highways Development Control** - no objections.

Publicity

17. The application has been publicised by way of the local press and site notice. A neighbour notification exercise was carried out and no representations have been received.

Planning Considerations

18. The planning application proposes the retention of a double mobile classroom with toilets, located on an area of recreational grassland within the curtilage of a listed building and in the Atworth Conservation Area. The main issues to be considered with regard to this application are:

- Continuing educational need for this facility
- Visual impact

Educational need

19. It is necessary to retain the double mobile classroom with toilets to provide adequate accommodation for the predicted number of pupils in attendance at the school.
20. The mobile classroom was originally sited at the school in 1990. Given the age of the structure, the Education Authority intends to replace it with a permanent build within the next five years. This, however, is subject to the availability of NDS funds.

Visual impact

21. Double mobile classroom (ref: 493(90)) is located to the south and rear of the main school building. The structure is not visible from the public highway and is in a reasonable aesthetic condition.
22. The most obvious vantage points in relation to the mobile classroom are from 'The Stone Barn' and 'Fairfield Barn', located to the south-west along Bradford Road. From these viewpoints the school site is partially obscured by a variety of mature trees and shrubs which ensure that the mobile classroom is not unduly visually intrusive to the aforementioned residential properties.
23. Given the minimal visual impact of the mobile classroom and the landscape features at the site, it is considered that the development would leave the character and appearance of the Atworth Conservation Area unharmed.
24. The mobile classroom is located ten metres to the south-east and rear of the listed school house and is a sufficient distance from the structure as not to detract from its unique architectural features or from its position within the historic streetscape of the village. The nature of the development is temporary and there is sufficient natural vegetation to further mitigate any adverse effect that the siting of a temporary classroom would have on the character and setting of the listed building.

Conclusion

25. In view of the established educational need for the double mobile classroom and the negligible effect of the structure on the Atworth Conservation Area and the setting of a listed building, it is considered that the application is acceptable in terms of the Development Plan and that there are no overriding material planning considerations that would justify refusal of the application.

Recommendation

26. That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:-
1. The development hereby granted is for a limited period of five years from the date of this permission.
 2. The land upon which the mobile classroom is sited shall be restored to its former condition after the units are removed.

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The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

Consultation replies