

REGULATORY COMMITTEE
13th DECEMBER 2006

**DOWNTON: SURE START CHILDREN'S CENTRE AT THE TRAFALGAR SCHOOL,
BREAMORE ROAD, FOR WILTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
(Application No. S.06.8016)**

Purpose of report

1. To comment on the application and to recommend that permission for a new Children's Centre be granted subject to conditions.

The Site

2. The Trafalgar School is located off the A338 Breamore Road to the south of Downton. It is proposed to locate the Children's Centre to the south-west of the main school site where it would be visible from the road and to potential users of the Centre.
3. A location plan is attached at **Appendix 1** and a site plan at **Appendix 2**.

Planning History

4. There is no planning history on this site.

The Proposal

5. Children's Centres are at the heart of the Government's Every Child Matters: Change for Children Programme which seeks to provide support for families with children under the age of five.
6. The Trafalgar School at Downton was identified as a site for a Children's Centre as it is well placed as a hub for the delivery of services for residents of Downton and south-east Wiltshire. The Centre would offer family support, parental outreach, child and family health services and links with Jobcentre Plus. The Centre would have a meeting room available for use by childminders, community groups, health and social workers. There would also be a small interview room for private meetings and one-to-one consultations. The Centre would be fully wheelchair accessible.
7. Many of the families and children whom the Centre would support will already be involved in the Primary School and many of the services for the surrounding villages will be taken out to them rather than people coming to the Centre. As the centre is within walking distance of Downton village it is not expected to increase the volume of traffic to the school. However, additional car parking spaces would be needed to accommodate the Centre Manager and visiting professionals.
8. A Phase 1 Habitat Survey revealed no evidence of the presence of habitats of nature conservation importance or protected species. Downton School is located within a Groundwater Source Protection Area and a Special Landscape Area (SLA).

Planning Policy

9. The following policies are considered relevant to this application:
 - Policy DP1 of the Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016
 - Policies G1, G2, PS1, PS5 and PS6 of the Salisbury District Local Plan 2003
10. All relevant policies are set out in the attached **Appendix 3**.

Consultations

11. **Salisbury District Council** - no objection.
12. **Downton Parish Council** - no objection.
13. **Environment Agency** - no objection subject to a condition to ensure that the development includes water efficiency measures.
14. **Sport England** - no objection. Based on the revised layout plan which shows a 400 metre running track, the proposed development would not have a significant adverse impact on playing pitches on the site.
15. **Countryside Section** - no objection.
16. **County Archaeologist** - no objection.
17. **Highways Development Control** - no objection.
18. **Local Member (Mr. J. Johnson)** - no comment made.

Publicity

19. The application has been publicised by site notice and neighbour notification. One letter of representation has been received.
20. Copies of the consultation replies and representation are available for inspection in the **Members' Room**.

Planning Considerations

21. The planning application must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations exist which justify a departure from the Plan.
22. Policy DP1 of the Structure Plan and Policy G1 of the Salisbury Local Plan state that new development should reduce the need to travel by car and promote the viability and vitality of local communities. Policy PS1 permits facilities for health and community facilities within or adjoining settlements and PS5 permits new education facilities on existing sites. However, Policy G2 of the Local Plan states that new development should avoid unduly disturbing, interfering, conflicting with or overlooking adjoining dwellings or uses to the detriment of existing occupiers. The proposed Centre is in accordance with these policies as it is close to the centre of Downton and would provide an educational, health and community facility without overlooking adjacent properties. Policy PS6 supports proposals for playgroups, day nurseries and child-minding facilities subject to satisfactory access and adequate space available for outdoor play. The Centre would be built on a grassed area but Sport England has not objected to the application subject to the 400 metre running track being retained and not downgraded to a 300 metre track. The additional parking spaces would be surfaced with grasscrete rather than concrete.

23. The application site is within a Groundwater Source Protection Area but as drainage would be via existing sewers and drains, the potential impact on groundwater would not be significant. The Environment Agency has requested water efficiency measures such as dual flush toilets and spray taps to be applied in the Centre. Both these measures have been specified by the Children's Centre architect.
24. A letter of objection was received from a resident whose property is adjacent to the boundary of the main school site. The objection relates to the loss of a view of the school playing field and reduced value of the property if the Centre was built. The resident also considered that a site to the rear of the school would be more appropriate as parents could walk to the Centre via the back of the school and be separated from the traffic at the front of the school. Whilst the resident's concern can be understood, the loss of a private view and loss of property value are not material planning considerations and the application cannot be refused on this basis. As the Children's Centre would be located at least 45 metres from the property there would not be an unacceptable loss of light or privacy. Whilst the Centre would be visible from the property, the two are separated by a line of vegetation and a car park and there would be no views into the property from the Centre. The majority of the Centre's windows and the proposed play area are to the south of the Centre, i.e. on the opposite side of the Centre to the residential property.
25. Of the five sites put forward for the Children's Centre, three (including this option) would result in a loss of view of the playing field from the property. However, the chosen option is the furthest from the property and was chosen as its proximity to the main road would increase awareness of the Centre to the local community. The option of locating the Centre to the rear of the school was considered in the feasibility study. Whilst pedestrian access from Downton was recognised as a positive aspect of the option, there were a number of disadvantages including the school losing an area of tennis courts, noise from the playground disturbing users of the Children's Centre and problems with direct vehicular access to the Centre.
26. The local resident was also concerned that there had been a number of accidents on the A338 close to the access point to the school. However, Highways have not objected to the application on the grounds of an inadequate or dangerous access.

Conclusion

27. The proposal for a Children's Centre at Downton is supported by Development Plan policies which aim to provide community services and improve the vitality and amenity of communities.

Recommendation

28. That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:
 1. The development hereby approved shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the particulars of the development contained in application S.06.8016 and as shown on Drawings Numbers 333/05A and 333/08A

Reason: To ensure the details of the development are carried out in accordance with the application as approved.
 2. The development hereby granted shall commence within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Tree protection

3. All trees and shrubs on and immediately adjoining the site shall be protected from damage during the course of the works on site. This shall be in accordance with the relevant British Standards (BS 5837:2005). In the event that trees become damaged or otherwise defective during such period, the County Planning Authority shall be notified within seven days and a programme of remedial action shall be submitted for approval and thereafter implemented as approved.

Reason: To ensure the protection of trees and shrubs on site and in the interests of visual amenity.

Surfacing of car parking spaces

4. The six additional car parking spaces shown on approved Drawing Number 333/05A shall be surfaced with grasscrete.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and site drainage.

GEORGE BATTEN

Director of Environmental Services

Report Author

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

Consultation replies and correspondence