

REGULATORY COMMITTEE
14th MARCH 2007

**LAVERSTOCK AND FORD: RETENTION OF A DOUBLE MOBILE CLASSROOM
WITHOUT TOILETS AND A DOUBLE SCIENCE MOBILE AT ST. EDMUND'S
CHURCH OF ENGLAND GIRLS' SCHOOL, CHURCH ROAD, LAVERSTOCK,
FOR WILTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
(Application No. S.07.8001)**

Purpose of Statement

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

The Site

2. St. Edmund's School is located approximately 2.5 kilometres north-east of Salisbury City Centre. St. Joseph's School lies to the north of the site and Wyvern College to the south. The two mobile classrooms are located to the east of the main school building, adjacent to hard surface playground area (mobile WCC 760(99)) and the main school building (mobile WCC 673(94)). The mobile classrooms are visually screened from the north, south and west by existing on-site buildings and neighbouring schools and are partially screened to the east by other on-site mobile classrooms. Further east, beyond the mobile classrooms there is a wide area of open grassland (sports pitches). The application site is not visible from the public highway, not in a Conservation Area or within the curtilage of a listed building and not within any Landscape Designation Area.
3. A location plan is attached at **Appendix 1** and a site plan at **Appendix 2**.

Planning History

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

<u>S.02. 0061</u>	Siting of one double science mobile classroom and one double mobile classroom with office and removal from site of one single mobile classroom without toilets (WCC 242(71)). Planning permission granted 18 th February 2002.
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The Application

5. Conditional planning permission is sought for the retention of a double mobile classroom without toilets (WCC 760(99)) and a double science mobile (WCC 673(94)) at St. Edmund's Church of England School for a period of five years.
6. The following supporting statement accompanied the planning application for renewal of planning permission for temporary unit numbers WCC 760(99) and WCC 673(94):

"Accommodation currently available at St. Edmund's Church of England Girls' School includes both permanent and temporary classrooms. Double building numbers WCC 673(94) and WCC 760(99) now require renewal planning permission.

Past pupil numbers are:

September	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number on roll	787	796	792	812	808	809

Forecast pupil numbers are:

September	2007	2008	2009	2010
Number on roll	818	844	862	897

Predicted numbers indicate the school will need to maintain the existing class structure for the foreseeable future and therefore needs to retain all the accommodation currently located on the school site.

Five-year planning permission is requested for temporary building numbers WCC 673(94) and WCC 760(99) at St. Edmund's Church of England Girls' School, Salisbury."

Planning Policy

7. The following policies are considered relevant to this application:
- Policies C1, C18, G8 and PS5 of the Salisbury District Local Plan (SDLP) (adopted June 2003)
 - Policy C5 of the Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan (WSSP) (adopted April 2006).
8. The policies are set out in full in **Appendix 3**.

Consultations

9. **Salisbury District Council** - objects on the grounds that the two mobile classrooms are visually unsuitable (it is stated that they can be viewed from the open countryside to the east) and as the structures are mobiles, should only be for temporary use.
10. **Laverstock and Ford Parish Council** - objects in principle to all mobile classrooms on the Laverstock Schools' campus and wishes to see them all removed through an acceptable building programme at the site therefore removing this unsightly sprawl.
11. **Local Member Mr. K. Wren** - no comment received.
12. **Environment Agency** - no objection.
13. **Countryside Section** - no objection.
14. **Highways Development Control** - no objection.
15. Copies of consultation replies referred to above are available for inspection in the **Members' Room**.

Publicity

16. The application has been advertised in the local press and by site notice. No letters of representation have been received.

Planning Considerations

17. This planning application seeks permission to retain on site one double mobile classroom without toilets and one double science mobile classroom. Salisbury District Council and Laverstock and Ford Parish Council have objected to the proposal principally on the grounds of visual appearance of the two mobile classrooms viewed from the countryside to the east and within the school site. The mobiles were only intended for short-term temporary use.
18. Members should note that the two mobile classrooms are in an acceptable state of repair.
19. The main issues to be considered with regard to this application are:
- Educational need
 - Visual impact
 - Compliance with policy

Educational need

20. The supporting documentation provided with the application indicates that class sizes will continue to increase, year-on-year for the next four/five years. As a result, existing classrooms would continue to be near capacity. In light of the forecast increase in pupil numbers at the school, there appears to be a demonstrable need for the retention of the two existing mobiles.
21. It is noted that the application seeks retention of existing structures rather than new development. The retention of the two mobile classrooms would allow for the continuation of lessons without curtailing other teaching functions within the school.
22. The objection raised by Salisbury District Council that the structures are only for short-term temporary use and are visually discordant is acknowledged. However, in view of the long-term aspirations to rebuild the school (subject to funding), it would not be appropriate to replace the mobile classrooms with permanent buildings in the short term.
23. The objection raised by the Parish Council that the retention of the two mobile classrooms would maintain the cumulative appearance of 'unsightly sprawl' and that there is a wish for all mobile classrooms at the location to be removed and replaced through an acceptable build programme is acknowledged. However, current funding constraints mean that it is not possible to replace temporary facilities with permanent structures.

Visual impact

24. The two mobile classrooms proposed for retention are well screened from public view to the north, south and west. They are not clearly identifiable from the east (as both are screened by existing mobile classrooms and set against the mass of the main school buildings). They are not visible from the public highway to the west. The appearance of the two mobile classrooms would not alter and there would be no tangible change to the aesthetics of the location.

25. The objection raised by Salisbury District Council suggests that the proposed retention of the two mobile classrooms would be to the detriment of the views from the countryside to the east. The two mobile classrooms, when viewed from the public right of way on Laverstock Down, are screened and set below the roofline of existing mobile classrooms. Therefore, in this instance, the mobiles would have a very limited impact on the character of the neighbouring area.

Compliance with policy

26. The planning application seeks permission to retain a double mobile classroom without toilets and a double science mobile for five years. Salisbury District Council objects to the proposal on the grounds that the mobile classrooms would be of an unsuitable visual appearance when viewed from the neighbouring countryside. The proposed retention of the two mobile classrooms would accord with the criteria detailed in Policy C1 of the SDLP by virtue of the fact that they would not be detrimental to the natural beauty or amenity of the area. The two mobile classrooms are screened by other mobile classrooms that have current planning permission and are viewed against the existing urban backup of the main school and neighbouring buildings.
27. The retention of the two mobile classrooms would accord with Policy PS5 of the adopted SDLP as the facilities are required by the Local Education Authority. It is noted that there is no obligation for such facilities to be of permanent construction.
28. The two mobile classrooms would continue to use the existing soakaway and mains network and therefore would not adversely affect water quality and would be compliant with Policies G8 and C18 of the adopted SDLP and Policy C5 of the adopted WSSP.

Conclusion

29. The application seeks permission for the retention of a double mobile classroom with toilets and a double science mobile at St. Edmund's Church of England Girls' School.
30. The two objections received are acknowledged. Although it would be preferable to have permanent build rather than temporary mobiles on site, it is considered that the educational need outweighs these concerns in this instance.
31. The application has been considered and, in view of the established educational need for the facilities provided by the development and the minimal visual impact to the surrounding area, it is considered to be in accordance with the Development Plan and other material planning considerations.

Recommendation

32. 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.
- Reason: To enable the County Planning Authority to review the position at the expiration of the period referred to.*

2. The land upon which mobile units WCC 673(94) and WCC 760(99) are situated shall be restored to its former condition within the first available planting season after the units are removed.

Reason: To ensure the reinstatement of the land.

GEORGE BATTEN

Director of Environmental Services

Report Author

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Senior Planning Officer

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

Consultation replies