

**REGULATORY COMMITTEE
13TH FEBRUARY 2008**

**WESTBURY: CONSTRUCTION OF THREE NEW CLASSROOMS AT MATRAVERS
SCHOOL, SPRINGFIELD ROAD FOR WILTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL.**
(Application No: W/07/09025)**Purpose of Report**

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

The Site

2. Westbury Matravers School is situated on Springfield Road to the south-west of Westbury town centre.
3. The proposed three classroom building would be situated to the north of the main school building, adjacent to the drama and music teaching block. The school is not within a Conservation Area and the building would not affect the setting of a listed building.
4. A location plan is attached at **Appendix 1** and a site plan at **Appendix 2**.

Site History

5. W/99/00274 New drama and music teaching block. Permission granted 8th April 1999.

The Proposal

6. Matravers School is experiencing a period of expansion due to the increase in housing development in Westbury. It is anticipated that pupil numbers will exceed the capacity of the school (1,111 pupils) in September 2008.
7. Actual/forecast pupil numbers are as follows:

September	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Pupil Numbers	1,078	1,087	1,122	1,182	1,228	1,247	1,293

8. The County Council has secured contributions from housing developers to provide additional teaching accommodation at the school and it is proposed to construct a building comprising of three classrooms. As the school has ambitions to relocate to a new site in Westbury within the next 10 years, the building would be demountable so that it could be reconstructed on the new site.
9. Two of the new classrooms would be used for the teaching of drama and this would enable two existing drama rooms to be refurbished for science and maths teaching. All three new classrooms would also be used as examination space.

10. The building would be cedar clad to match the adjacent drama and music teaching block. The roof would be flat.
11. The type of building proposed could be brought onto site and be ready for use within a matter of days, thereby causing the minimum disruption to the school.

Planning Policy

12. Policy CF1 of the West Wiltshire District Plan First Alteration 2004 is considered relevant to this application.
13. This policy is set out in **Appendix 3**.

Consultations

14. **Local Member, Mr. C. Newbury** – no comment received.
15. **West Wiltshire District Council (Planning)** – no objection.
16. **West Wiltshire District Council (Environmental Health)** – advise that there is no evidence on the historic maps to suggest that land contamination is an issue anywhere on the application site.
17. **Westbury Town Council** – no objection.
18. **County Countryside Section** – advise that the proposal should not represent any significant impact on existing ecology of the site. However, if mature trees are to be removed, a survey for bats should be undertaken in advance of operation. Construction material should not be stacked against hedges or trees, nor heavy machinery parked within 5 metres of hedges or mature trees.
19. **Local Highway Authority** – advise that development will not lead to loss of formal parking provided on site, therefore there is no requirement for additional parking provision within the site.
20. Copies of all the consultation responses will be available for inspection in the **Members' Room**.

Publicity

21. The application has been publicised by an advert in the press, site notices and neighbour notification. Two letters of representation have been received. One of the letters includes a petition signed by 26 residents of Springfield Road who are concerned that the loss of parking spaces on the school site may lead to teachers parking on Springfield Road. The other letter raises concern over contaminated land on the school site and the additional litter and disruption that the additional pupils may entail.
22. Copies of representations are available in the **Members' Room**.

Planning Considerations

23. The planning application must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations exist which justify departure from the Plan.

24. The proposed classroom building would be located to the north of the main school, within the main built-up area of the school and would not be visible from outside of the school site.
25. Having taken into account the consultation responses, letters of representation and Development Plan policies, it is considered that the main issue in the determination of this application is the loss of informal car parking spaces from the siting of the three classrooms and the impact this may have on the amenity of residents of Springfield Road.
26. Policy CF1 of the West Wiltshire District Plan states that the development of land for schools and higher education will be permitted provided the proposals are acceptable and having regard to scale, siting, access, parking provision, residential amenities and other environmental considerations.
27. The application site is an area of rough ground, formerly used as a builder's compound to store plant and materials during construction of the adjacent dance and music building. Following completion of the dance and music building, the application area has been used as an unofficial parking area for around 10-12 cars. Local residents are concerned that the cars which use this area may now be displaced to Springfield Road. Springfield Road does not benefit from off-road or residents' permit parking but as the road is a public highway, there are no formal means of preventing non-residents from parking.
28. However, as the application area is used unofficially for parking, approving this planning application would not remove any formal parking spaces from the site. The Local Highway Authority has not objected to the proposal because there would be no reduction in car parking provision. As the three new classrooms are not expected to generate significantly more traffic, the Local Highway Authority does not consider it necessary for additional parking provision to be created within the site. In terms of the maximum parking standards set out in the West Wiltshire District Plan, the existing number of parking spaces is sufficient. Therefore, it would appear that the application site is used as a result of its convenient location, rather than lack of capacity for parking on the school site.
29. A visit to the school on a Tuesday afternoon in term time confirmed that there were a number of official car parking spaces available within the school site and that Springfield Road too had plenty of spaces for residents to park. It is accepted that the site visit only provided a snapshot of the situation and that some days/times will be busier. However, it was clear during the site visit that parking spaces on the school site are being lost due to inconsiderate parking, i.e. cars parked over two potential spaces. The situation was similar on Springfield Road where excessive space was being left between parked cars, again taking up two potential spaces with one car.
30. In discussions with officers, the school has confirmed that a white lining machine will be used to better demarcate parking spaces on the school site to encourage more efficient parking.
31. The Adopted School Travel Plan shows that the majority of students get to school by means other than the car but includes measures to further reduce car use and promote alternative means of travel to and from the school site.

Other Issues

32. A resident of Indigo Gardens, approximately 100 metres north-west of the application site, has objected to the application on the basis that they already suffer from pupils smoking and dropping litter in Indigo Lane, a footpath which runs between the property and the school. The resident is concerned that additional development at the school will exacerbate these problems. However, Indigo Lane is not within the School's ownership or control and it would be beyond the Council's powers to require the school to keep the footpath tidy. There are other means to address such problems if they materialise, such as the issuing of street litter control notices by the District Council.

Conclusion and Reasons for the Recommended Decision

33. The construction of the three classrooms is necessary to provide accommodation for increasing numbers of pupils at Matravers School. The classrooms would be located within the main built up area of the school. There has been no objection from the District Council or Westbury Town Council. The existing parking provision on site meets the maximum parking standards for educational facilities set out in the West Wiltshire District Plan and no objection has been raised by the Local Highway Authority.
34. It is considered that, with the imposition of conditions as set out below, the application is in accordance with the Development Plan. The application meets a community need and there are no material considerations which would dictate that planning permission should not be granted.

Recommendation

35. That planning permission be granted for the above reasons and subject to the following conditions:
1. The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
 2. The development hereby permitted shall take place in complete compliance with the particulars contained in the application and plans AL(0)02 A, AL(0)03 B, and AL(0)20 dated August 2007.

Reason: To ensure the details of the development are carried out in accordance with the application as approved.
 3. No development shall take place until samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. Development shall be in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development harmonises with the setting.

4. Construction materials shall not be stored against hedges or trees and heavy machinery shall not be parked within 5 metres of hedges or mature trees. All trees and shrubs on and immediately adjoining the site shall be protected from damage during the course of works on the site. This shall be in accordance with the relevant British Standards (BS 5837:2005).

Reason: To ensure that the root systems of hedges and trees are not damaged.

GEORGE BATTEN

Director of Environmental Services

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

Consultation replies and correspondence