

REGULATORY COMMITTEE
11 FEBRUARY 2009

**OGBOURNE ST GEORGE: PROPOSED EXTENSION TO EXISTING SCHOOL BUILDING
TO FORM A NEW HALL AND ANCILLARY FACILITIES AT OGBOURNE ST. GEORGE
AND ST. ANDREW PRIMARY SCHOOL
(Application No. K/59788)**

Purpose of Report

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

Site

2. The application site is within Ogbourne St. George and St. Andrew School in the village of Ogbourne St. George, to the north of Marlborough. The High Street lies to the north of the site, with residential properties on the opposite side of the road. To the west and east of the site are more residential properties, with those to the west being located at a lower level than the school. The property to the immediate west is Grade II listed. Trees line the southern boundary of the school site, beyond which is building that is similar in style to the school. Chantry Meadow lies beyond the neighbouring building.
3. The proposed site for the extension is located to the west of the existing school buildings, on an area of playing field. The school building itself dates from the 1970's and is of brick construction with a flat roof. A mobile classroom unit stands to the rear of the main building.
4. Location and site plans are attached at **Appendices 1 and 2.**

Planning History

5. In brief, the relevant planning history of the site is as follows:

<u>K.21108</u>	Siting of single mobile unit with toilets approved 20 th January 1994.
<u>K.36767</u>	Retention of a single mobile unit with toilets approved 25 th February 1995.
<u>K.46846</u>	Retention of a single mobile unit with toilets approved 13 th February 2004.

Proposal

6. Planning permission is being sought for the erection of an extension to form a new school hall with ancillary facilities. The proposed building measures a maximum of 20.4 metres in length with a width of 13 metres. The height to the ridge is 6.9 metres, with the eaves at 3.5 metres. The building will comprise a main hall, a dining store, a kitchen area and a P.E. store.

Planning Policies

7. The following Development Plan policies are considered relevant to this proposal.
 - Policies PD1, HH1, HH5, NR7 and NR8 of the Kennet Local Plan (KLP).
8. These relevant planning policies are set out in **Appendix 3**.

Consultation

9. **Local Member, Mr. Christopher Humphries** – no comments received.
10. **Kennet District Council** – no objection subject to conditions covering landscaping and archaeology.
11. **Ogbourne St George Parish Council** – no objection subject to the imposition of conditions regarding hours of use and that it should not compete with village hall.
12. **Countryside Section** – no objection. Landscaping needs relocating into hedgeline. A Construction Method Statement should be used to ensure that there is no risk of injury or destruction to either bats or their roost.
13. **County Archaeologist** – advises that the site lies in an area that is potentially archaeologically sensitive and a programme of archaeological works should be secured by condition.
14. **Local Highway Authority** – no objection.
15. Copies of the consultation responses referred to above are available for inspection in the **Member's Room**.

Publicity

16. The application has been advertised in the local press and by site notice. In total 11 letters of objection have been received. Points raised are detailed below:
 - No explanation provided of how the size of the hall was decided.
 - Hall should not be used for community activities to the detriment of the existing village hall.
 - Highway safety due to increased out of hours use.
 - Conflicts with Local Plan Policies.
 - Increased noise through extended hours.
 - Noise during construction.
 - Design does not fit with existing school building.
 - Loss of view.
 - Proposed planting would reduce light.

- Loss of outdoor space.
 - Impact on Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
 - Hours of use should be restricted.
 - Overall size of building out of keeping with village.
 - Increase in traffic.
 - Inappropriate siting.
 - Devaluation of property.
17. One survey, showed 82% of residents supported the proposal in principle. One petition, containing 77 signatures, raised concern about the proposed hall not competing with the existing village hall.

Planning Considerations

18. The planning application must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
19. The main issues to be considered with regard to this application are:
- Dimensions and use of the proposed hall.
 - Design.
 - Impact on landscape character including Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty/Conservation Area.
 - Impact on listed building.
 - Impact on ecological interests.
 - Impact on amenity and any other material considerations.

Dimensions and use of the proposed hall

20. Despite the supporting documents submitted with the application detailing the requirement for the new building at the school and providing details of the activities that would be undertaken within it, a number of objections were received stating that the documents failed to justify the height and overall size of the building.
21. A revised Design and Access Statement providing additional justification for the hall was subsequently submitted. This explains that the proposal would allow the school to fulfil its responsibilities under the national curriculum. The dimensions of the building are very much driven by the use that will take place within it. In particular, it will provide the required height within which to install 2.9 metres high wallbars, allowing sufficient headroom for teaching P.E. to Key Stage 2 pupils.

22. The hall would also have the added benefits of allowing a full school assembly to take place, together with providing space to act as a canteen. The provision of the kitchen area would allow school meals to be served. The school currently has no purpose built hall or dining space and assemblies and dining take place within the school's circulation space. It is considered that in terms of inclusion benefits, the new school hall would be a significant improvement over the existing situation.
23. With regard to the concerns over competition between the school hall and the local village hall, these are not planning matters and have no bearing on the acceptability of the proposed development. The letter of representation, which cites Local Plan Policies in support of not prejudicing the viability of an existing element of the community, is not relevant to this type of proposal.
24. The Parish Council also raises concerns over the potential detrimental impact the school hall could have on the long term viability of the village hall. A condition was recommended to ensure the two facilities would not be in direct competition with each other. Again, these are not planning matters and the requested condition would not meet the legal tests for planning conditions.

Design

25. In terms of the overall design, the building is of a different architectural style to the main school. This has drawn a number of objections expressing the view that the hall would not 'fit' with the existing school buildings.
26. The application site is adjacent to a Conservation Area and a Listed Building, and located within an AONB. Care must therefore be paid to the overall appearance, materials and finish of the proposed development. In this instance, officers consider it inappropriate to replicate the design of the main school building. This stance is supported by guidance contained within both PPG15 and PPS7 and also Local Plan Policies. However, any new building constructed in such sensitive areas should be of a high quality design and should not cause significant adverse harm to the area.
27. The proposed extension to the hall has drawn on the local scene for design cues, and these include slate roof, oak framing and a natural coloured render. Whilst the design of the building is different from that of the main school, it cannot be said to be out of keeping with the character of the area. Indeed, the existing school building is considered to be of little architectural merit. Replicating the design would bring the school 'design' into closer proximity with the Conservation Area which has the potential to impact the appearance and character of the Conservation Area.
28. The design proposed is a more traditional building form but the proposed materials would give the building a softer appearance compared with the utilitarian appearance of the school building. In this regard, it is considered the design of the proposal would preserve the character of the adjacent Conservation Area.
29. Having special regard to the AONB, Policies NR7 and NR8 of the KLP require the preservation of these areas, except in certain limited circumstances where development that would not cause significant adverse harm may be permitted. Such circumstances include the provision of development for the social well-being of a rural area and proposals for the enjoyment of its amenities. In this case, it is considered the long term benefits the hall will provide for pupils of the school are acceptable in terms of policy relating to AONBs. The design makes use of sympathetic materials and a tree lined boundary of similar height to the proposed structure lies to the south of the site, partially obscuring views beyond. Therefore, the proposal is not considered to cause significant adverse harm to the AONB.

Impact on listed building

30. To the north-west of the proposed extension lies a Grade II listed building. This is located more than 30 metres from the school building (as extended). The listed building is located at a lower level than the school and is sited behind a boundary consisting of mixed hedge and tree planting, with the highest element of the hedge being directly opposite the north-west elevation of the proposed hall. The combined effect of the slope and screening allows only the chimney and roof of the property to be seen above the boundary. It is considered that this, combined with the distance from the boundary, is unlikely to have a detrimental impact on the setting of the listed building.

Impact on ecological interests

31. An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey was submitted with the application. It found that there was a large common pipistrelle bat maternity roost behind the cladding of the main school building in the north-west corner. This roost would not be directly affected by the new hall.
32. The County Council Ecologist has raised no objection to the scheme, but recommends that a Construction Method Statement be prepared to demonstrate how bats will be protected during the course of the works on site. This can be secured through the imposition of conditions.

Impact on amenity

33. The proposed new hall is sited to the north-west side of the existing school building and located in line with its existing front wall. This is located approximately 23 metres from the carriageway edge and 27.5 metres from the curtilage of the properties directly opposite. No residential properties are located in the immediate vicinity to the rear of the school.
34. Prior to the submission of the formal planning application a pre-application process was entered into by the applicant which involved the local community in consultations on the design of the building and its intended use. As part of the process residents were invited to meetings to view plans and express any concerns. As a result of these meetings, a number of amendments were suggested, and duly made, before the scheme was submitted for consideration in its current form. The amendments included reducing the size of the window facing properties to the north of the site. This was to reduce overlooking. A covered way was also removed from the proposals.
35. However, whilst a number of revisions have been made to the design, residents have objected on a number of other points likely to cause amenity issues. These are addressed below.
36. A number of concerns were raised about highway safety in relation to extended use of the hall. The school currently has a parking area to the front of the main building, and there has been no indication that this will be altered in any way. The extension to the school is not designed to bring about an increase in student numbers, but to provide space to enable the P.E. National Curriculum to be met and for assembly use. As such, the existing parking to the front of the school is considered to be sufficient. Furthermore, the Local Highway Authority raises no objection to the application on highway grounds.

37. Objections received also raised concerns over the potential for disturbance that could be caused through noise, both during and after construction, of the hall. The Parish Council has recommended a condition restricting hours of use of the hall to prevent disturbance to neighbouring occupiers. It is considered that, due to the location of the school in an area of housing, a condition of this type would be reasonable and would safeguard the amenity of occupiers' neighbouring properties. A condition restricting hours of construction is also considered to be reasonable to avoid disturbance.
38. The planting proposed to the front of the school will be in an area where hedge planting already exists. An objection has been received to the proposed planting, in particular the impact the planting would have on the provision of light to the property in question. Whilst planting is proposed as part of the scheme, the planting of trees does not in itself require planning permission, and as a result it is considered unreasonable to sustain an objection to the scheme on these grounds. However, the distance between the proposed planting would be in excess of 5 metres, with an intervening road. It is therefore not considered that there would be a demonstrable loss of light to the neighbouring occupiers' property.
39. The submitted planting scheme shows three trees being planting to the front of the existing hedge. It is not considered the location of these trees is appropriate and their position should be moved back into the hedge line. A condition requiring approval of the planting details can be added in the event of permission being granted.
40. In a consultation prior to the application being formally submitted the County Archaeologist commented that the site lies within an area that is potentially archaeologically sensitive, within the extent of the medieval and post-medieval settlement of Ogbourne St. George. The County Archaeologist has subsequently confirmed the advice and recommends the imposition of a condition which will safeguard any archaeological interest on the site.
41. Other matters not specifically mentioned above are not considered to be relevant planning considerations.

Conclusion and Recommended Reasons for Granting Approval

42. There is an educational need for the erection of a new school hall for the fulfilment of the P.E. National Curriculum and additional benefits in that the hall would provide required space for assemblies and the serving of school meals.
43. The proposed hall has been designed in a sympathetic fashion to sit comfortably within the context of the area. It is not considered that the proposal would have a significant adverse impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or the adjacent listed building. The proposal is also considered to preserve the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area.
44. In terms of amenity, the proposal is not considered to have a significant adverse impact on existing residential occupiers' amenity, subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions.
45. The proposal is not considered to have a detrimental direct impact on the bat roost within the main school building due to its siting and design.

46. The decision to grant planning permission has been taken having regard to Policies PD1, HH1, HH5, NR7 and NR8 of the Kennet Local Plan and to all relevant material considerations.

Recommendation

47. That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced within three years from the date of the permission.

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

2. The building hereby approved shall not be used other than between the hours of 07.00 – 22.00 hours daily.

Reason: In order to safeguard the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers.

3. No works shall be undertaken on site, including the movement of vehicles within the site, except between the hours:

08.00 – 18.00 Monday to Friday
08.00 – 13.00 Saturdays

No works shall be undertaken on site, including the movement of vehicles, on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.

Reason: In order to safeguard the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers.

4. No work shall be undertaken on site until a revised landscape drawing indicating new areas of planting has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the County Planning Authority. Such scheme once approved shall be carried out in the first available planting season of the approved timetable. Any plants, trees or shrubs that become diseased, damaged or are otherwise removed within the first five years shall be replaced with a species of similar size.

Reason: In order to safeguard the amenities of the area and neighbouring residential occupiers.

5. No works shall be undertaken to any part of the building hereby approved until such time as a Construction Method Statement addressing how the timing of works will take into account the bat roost located on site has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the County Planning Authority. The approved details shall be observed at all times during the subsequent preparatory and construction works.

Reason: To ensure adequate steps are taken to safeguard the existing bat population, and to minimise disruption of their habitat and roost during and after construction.

6. Notwithstanding the approved plans, no work shall be undertaken on site until particulars of the materials (including the provision of samples where appropriate) to be used for external walls, roofs, fenestration and rainwater goods have been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. Such particulars will include the detailed finish (rough sawn, hand tooled, etc.) Slate hooks shall not be used.

Reason: In order to safeguard the character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and adjacent Conservation Area.

7. No development or preliminary groundworks shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the County Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the site of archaeological interest.

GEORGE BATTEN

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

Consultation replies and correspondence.