

REGULATORY COMMITTEE
18 MARCH 2009

MELKSHAM WITHOUT: PROPOSED NEW HALL, FOUR CLASSROOM EXTENSION AND ASSOCIATED ANCILLARY WORKS, TEMPORARY RELOCATION OF EXISTING TWO JOINED MOBILE CLASSROOMS AND TEMPORARY SITING OF DOUBLE MOBILE CLASSROOM AT SHAW CE PRIMARY SCHOOL, CORSHAM ROAD, SHAW (Application No. W/08/09018)

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 the grounds of Shaw CE School in the village of Shaw, which is located to the north-west of Melksham. To the west of the site runs the Corsham Road (B3353). Residential properties are located on the opposite side of the Road. To the north and east of the site lies the school playing field. The building to the immediate south of the proposed classroom extension is a Grade II* listed church. The boundary of the school's playing field consists of mixed tree and hedge planting and is well contained. A golf course lies to the north-east beyond the boundary.
3. The proposed hall is to be located to the east of the school's existing car park on an area of playing field. A number of trees exist on the boundary between the car park and playing field. Various large trees are situated on the opposite side of Corsham Road.
4. The existing school is a Victorian building with more modern brick built extensions on the northern side. The original building is located on the site's southern boundary next to the church. The proposed classroom extension is to be sited to the rear (east) of the original school building.
5. Location and site plans are attached at **Appendices 1 and 2**.

Proposal

6. Planning permission is being sought for the erection of a new hall, four classroom extension and associated ancillary works, temporary relocation of two existing joined mobile classrooms and temporary siting of double mobile classroom.
7. The proposed hall would measure a maximum of 23.1 metres in length, 19.3 metres in width (including covered patio) and 6.2 metres to the ridge. Eaves level on the roadside elevation is at 2.4 metres. Accommodation within the hall complex comprises the main hall, kitchen, store, toilets, a vestibule and a boiler room.
8. The proposed classroom extension measures 28.7 metres in length, 22.85 metres in width and 6.7 metres to the top of each ridge. Eaves height is at 2.9 metres. The main accommodation within the extension is classrooms to cater for the need arising from the removal of temporary units. The building also contains toilets, plant and storage areas.

Planning History

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

W/07/09014 - Replacement of 3 timber windows to west elevation. Replace existing rotten vertical sash windows with aluminium powder coated windows to match existing arrangement, with side opening lights
Approved 11 July 2007

W/06/09028 - Retention of single mobile without toilets
Permitted 29 January 2007

W/05/09013 - Retention of single mobile with toilets
Permitted 4 August 2005

Various permissions over 5 years old relating to the site's ongoing educational use.

Planning Policies

10. The following policies are considered relevant to this planning application:

- Policies CF1, C31a, C32 and R2, of the West Wiltshire Local Plan (WWLP).

11. The relevant planning policies are set out in the attached **Appendix 3**.

Consultation

12. **Local Member, Mr. T.P. Chivers** – no comments received.

13. **West Wiltshire District Council** – no objections to revised scheme, subject to arboricultural method statement to safeguard trees on site.

14. **Melksham Without Parish Council** – satisfied with revised design. However, concerns remain on the grounds that insufficient parking is available to serve the proposed hall. Construction works should take place in school holidays and movement of construction traffic should be restricted during the school's drop off and pick up times.

15. **Environment Agency** – no objection to revised scheme incorporating flood alleviation, subject to imposition of conditions securing its implementation and details of surface water drainage.

16. **English Heritage** – the application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance and on the basis of your specialist conservation advice.

17. **Wiltshire Archaeology Service** – no objection, subject to a condition securing scheme of archaeological investigation.

18. **Countryside Section** – no objection to revised plans, subject to note covering bat mitigation (netting over eaves).

19. **Local Highway Authority** – no objection.

20. Copies of the consultation responses referred to above are available for inspection in the **Members' Room**.

Publicity

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

Planning Considerations

22. The planning application must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

23. The main issues to be considered with regard to this application are:

- Provision of educational facilities/need
- Design and Impact on Listed Building
- Ecology
- Flood Risk
- Impact on amenity and other material considerations

Provision of educational facilities/need

24. Supporting documents submitted with the application detail the requirement for the new building at the school, together with the activities that would be undertaken within the hall. The proposal would allow the school to fulfil its responsibilities under the National Curriculum. The hall would have the added benefits of allowing a full school assembly and worship to take place. The school's existing hall will be converted into additional staff and administration facilities.
25. The pupil numbers at the school are forecast to remain similar to present levels. It is considered that the provision of a purpose-built classroom extension would lead to much improved facilities and allow the school to fulfil its responsibilities under the National Curriculum into the future. The existing mobile units are to be removed following completion of the replacement classroom extension.
26. An objection has been received from the Parish Council raising concerns over the increase in traffic as a result of the new extension and hall building. Whilst the objection mentioned the school advertising available places, the documentation provided in support of the application shows only modest changes to forecast numbers for the next two years. Furthermore, the Local Highway Authority has raised no objection to the development in terms of highway safety. It is therefore considered unreasonable to sustain an objection to the scheme on the grounds of highway safety or increased traffic.
27. Policy CF1 of the West Wiltshire Local Plan states that development proposals for schools will be permitted provided proposals are acceptable having regard to scale, siting, design, access, highways, parking provision, residential amenities and other local environmental considerations.
28. In the event that the school hall is used for community activities out of school hours the existing car park has in excess of 20 spaces, which exceeds the maximum recommended parking standard set out in the West Wiltshire Local Plan. It is considered that these spaces would be sufficient to serve the hall out of school hours.
29. The proposal is considered to accord with the requirements of Policy CF1 of the West Wiltshire Local Plan.

Design and Impact on Listed Building

30. The starting point for the exercise of listed building control is the statutory requirement on local planning authorities to *'have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'* (Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).
31. Sections 16 and 66 of the Act require authorities considering applications for planning permission or listed building consent for works that affect a listed building to have special regard to certain matters, including the desirability of preserving the setting of the building. The setting is often an essential part of the building's character, especially if a garden or grounds have been laid out to complement its design or function.
32. Also relevant are the requirements of PPG15 Historic Environment 1994.

Hall

33. The design of the hall has taken its design cues from the more modern additions to the school building. It is considered that this reflects the context of the school at the north of the site. It presents the school with a functional design that enables an efficient use of internal space to allow teaching of the PE National Curriculum and assemblies to take place. It is not considered the proposed design would have a detrimental impact on the character of the area or the listed building located near the site.

Classroom extension

34. The originally proposed classroom extension was considered to be unacceptable due to its design and its close proximity to the Grade II* listed church. The design also failed to reflect the character of the original Victorian school building and was considered contrary to Policy C31a which states that new proposals will be required to respect or enhance townscape and landscape features and views, existing patterns of movement, permeability and activity, the quality of architecture of surrounding buildings and historic layout and spatial characteristics.
35. Furthermore, the Policy also relates to proposals on prominent or sensitive sites. These will be required to pay particular attention to proportion, composition, form, massing and scales, utilise high quality materials, finishes and details, integrate landscaping into the design as appropriate, minimise the visual impact of roads, vehicles and parking areas.
36. As a result of the concerns over the compatibility of the design, revised plans were received showing a more sympathetically designed extension. The revisions include the addition of a double gable roof structure and more appropriate materials. In this regard, West Wiltshire District Council's Conservation Officer withdrew the objection to the scheme on receipt of the amended plans, subject to a condition requiring samples for prior approval.
37. The revised design is considered to be in keeping with the existing school and to be appropriate adjacent to an important listed building, in accordance with Policy C31a. The design has followed the form of the original school building and as such is not considered to have a detrimental impact upon the character or setting of the adjacent Grade II* listed church. It is also considered that the addition of a permanent building in the form proposed will enhance the setting of the church compared with the current temporary classrooms and portakabin. Therefore the proposal is considered to meet the guidance contained within PPG15 with regard to preserving the setting of the listed church.

Ecology

38. An ecological appraisal submitted with the application identified the site as being of little interest to bats, although there could be potential for solitary bats to roost opportunistically. Whilst a condition is not considered necessary on the basis of both the survey findings and County Ecologist's views, it is considered appropriate to make the applicant aware of how to deal with bats should they be discovered at any time during works on site. A note can be added to the decision notice.
39. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with advice contained within PPS9 on protected species.

Flood Risk

40. The school site is located in flood zones 2 and 3 as identified by the Environment Agency. In accordance with guidance contained within PPS25 the applicant commissioned a Flood Risk Assessment that was undertaken by Cole Easdon Consultants. The initial finding, submitted with the application, identified the direction of flow across the site and determined that the development would not result in a material exacerbation of flood risk at this point and as such no compensatory storage was required.
41. The Environment Agency initially raised an objection to the scheme on the basis that there were no compensatory storage areas to compensate for the fact that the school hall removed a volume of functional flood plain. In consultation with the Environment Agency the flood risk scheme was revised and it was determined that a modest area of storage would be required. This is indicated on Drawing 2545/505 Rev. B (1 in 100 year Fluvial Floodplain Extent and Compensatory Storage Proposal) as being to the site's boundary with the brook to the east. This would also necessitate the relocation of the existing amenity bund to the north of the playing field, also indicated on the drawing.
42. As a result of the amendments to the Flood Risk Assessment, and the addition to the proposals, the Environment Agency subsequently removed its objection to the scheme, subject to conditions requiring the submission of details for surface water drainage and excavation of the flood storage area.
43. In terms of securing the compensatory storage area, whilst it is not shown on the site location plan, the area identified for both the storage area and relocated amenity bund are within land under the control of the applicant. It is therefore considered reasonable to secure the works by condition to allow the works to proceed without compromising the sites ability to act as a flood storage area in accordance with advice contained within PPS25.

Impact on Amenity and Other Material Considerations

44. The proposed classroom extension is located to the rear of the existing school building, away from the nearest residential properties. Whilst the extension will have glimpse views from Corsham Road, it is not considered these are harmful to the character of the area or that they would have a direct detrimental impact on neighbouring occupiers' amenities.

45. The new school hall is located to the north of the main school building, adjacent to the school's existing car park. A number of young trees are planted along the boundary fence adjoining the car park. Policy C32 of the West Wiltshire Local Plan indicates that proposals for development should make provision for landscaping, including protection of existing trees and also the provision of new planting. The application indicates that a number of these trees will need to be removed and relocated to provide access to the hall. The trees in this location are considered to provide some degree of cover from Corsham Road and properties beyond. It is considered necessary to address how the trees will be replaced in order to safeguard the existing landscape screen on the site. It is therefore considered that a landscaping condition is appropriate to secure details of works to safeguard the existing landscaping to accord with Policy C32 of the West Wiltshire Local Plan.
46. The District Council's Arboriculturist indicated in revised comments that two trees located in close proximity to the position of proposed temporary mobiles are in variable condition and require attention to ensure they are safe. It is considered that this can be secured through an arboricultural method statement in a wider landscaping scheme related to the hall. A condition can be added in this respect to a grant of planning permission.
47. The Parish Council has also raised concerns over the movement of construction traffic during school term time and school hours. This issue can be addressed by a condition requesting that a management plan for the location of the construction compounds and the movement of site construction traffic be submitted for approval prior to any development commencing on site.

Conclusion and Recommended Reasons for Granting Planning Permission

48. The supporting statement confirms that there is an educational need for the erection of a new school hall for the fulfilment of the P.E. National Curriculum. The hall would have the added benefit of providing a space for whole school assemblies.
49. The proposed hall and classroom extension have 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 character of the area. The proposal is also considered to preserve the setting of the nearby listed building.
50. 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. It is considered sufficient parking provision is available at the site and there are no highway safety issues to indicate permission should be refused.

Recommendation

51. That planning permission be granted for the above reasons and 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. Unless required by conditions attached to this permission, the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted Drawing Numbers:

0823/05 Revision E - Site Block Plan, Extension and Hall Siting
0823/04 Revision C - Proposed Extension Elevations
0823/03 Revision C - Proposed Extension Ground Floor Plan
0823/07 - Section A-A Through Mound
0802/03 Revision B - As proposed New Hall Plans and Elevations

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the submitted details.

3. No works 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. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To preserve the setting of the nearby listed building and in the interest of amenity.

4. No works shall be undertaken on site until a landscaping scheme indicating areas of new, translocated or existing planting has been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. Such scheme, once approved, shall be implemented in the first available planting season of the approved timetable. Any plants, trees or shrubs that die, become diseased or are otherwise removed within five years, shall be replaced with a species of similar size, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the County Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to safeguard the amenities of the area.

5. No works shall be undertaken on site until a scheme for protection and works to trees to be retained has been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. Protection shall be to the relevant British Standard (BS5837). The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To ensure continuity of amenity provided by the existing trees.

6. The temporary mobile classrooms hereby permitted shall be fully removed and the land restored to its former grassed condition in the first available planting season following the occupation of the classroom extension hereby approved.

Reason: The County Planning Authority would not be prepared to grant permission for the retention of mobile classrooms on a permanent basis in the locations proposed and to preserve the floodplain with no impediments to flood flow to ensure flood risk is not increased.

7. No development hereby approved shall be commenced until a management scheme for the provision of surface water drainage works has been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. Such scheme shall identify the phasing of the development and the drainage works that will be provided at each of these stages. The drainage works shall be completed in accordance with the details and timetable agreed.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding by ensuring the provision of a satisfactory means of surface water disposal during each phase of the development.

8. Finished floor levels for the proposed buildings should be set no lower than 43.43 metres above Ordnance Datum (N), as shown in Drawing 2545/505.

Reason: To protect the development from flooding.

9. The compensatory flood storage area as detailed on Drawing 2545/505 shall be provided prior to the commencement of development on site.

Reason: To protect the development and surrounding areas from flooding.

10. No development shall take place until a Management Plan for the movement and control of site construction traffic has been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The plan shall set out how traffic visiting the site will access the site, turn, park and unload during the period of construction. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plan.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

11. 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. Development shall be in accordance with the approved scheme.

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