

## REPORT TO THE WESTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

|                            |   |  |                             |
|----------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------|
| <b>Date of Meeting</b>     | <b>01.08.2012</b>   |  |                             |
| <b>Application Number</b>  | <b>W/12/00975/FUL</b>   |  |                             |
| <b>Site Address</b>        | <b>The Corsley Centre At The Old School Deep Lane Corsley Warminster Wiltshire</b>  |  |                             |
| <b>Proposal</b>            | <b>Erection of three temporary classrooms and toilet block, reinstatement of two existing temporary classrooms, reinstatement and erection of iron railings</b> |  |                             |
| <b>Applicant</b>           | <b>The Steiner School</b>   |  |                             |
| <b>Town/Parish Council</b> | <b>Corsley</b>  |  |                             |
| <b>Electoral Division</b>  | <b>Warminster Without</b>   | <b>Unitary Member:</b>   | <b>Fleur De Rhe-Philipe</b> |
| <b>Grid Ref</b>            | <b>382791 146728</b>  |  |                             |
| <b>Type of application</b> | <b>Full Plan</b>  |  |                             |
| <b>Case Officer</b>        | <b>Mr Mike Wilmott</b>  | 01225 770344 Ext 01380 734858<br>mike.wilmott@wiltshire.gov.uk |                             |

### Reason for the application being considered by Committee

Councillor Fleur de Rhe-Philipe has requested that this item be determined by Committee to consider the following issues:

- \* Environmental/highway impact
- \* Car parking

#### 1. Purpose of Report

To consider the above application and to recommend that temporary planning permission be granted

Neighbourhood Responses - 15 letters of objection and two of support have been received. Details of these are set out in the report below.

Parish Council Response - Corsley PC object to the proposal, for the reasons set out in the report:

#### 2. Report Summary

The main issues to consider are:

- \* Principle of the development
- \* Impact on the listed building
- \* Highway/parking issues

#### 3. Site Description

The site was formerly the Corsley Church of England Primary School, which closed in December 2007. More recently, the site has operated as a conference centre. (Corsley Conference Centre).

The former school building is listed (Grade II). It forms the main feature on the site. There are also two temporary classrooms on the site dating from its time as a primary school. The site also includes the former playing fields and part of the car park.

To the west of the site lies the existing pre-school 'Little Cuckoos', which has its own play area and the remainder of the car park.

#### **4. Relevant Planning History**

The site has an extensive planning history dating from its time as a primary school for small-scale developments relating to the facilitation of the use of the site as a primary school.

#### **5. Proposal**

The proposal seeks consent for the siting of three temporary classrooms and a mobile toilet block, as well as the retention of an existing two mobile classrooms currently on site. The consent would be for a period of two years from September 2012. This would facilitate the temporary use of the Corsley Conference Centre as a school for a period of two years whilst a permanent Steiner School Academy is constructed at Frome. (The use of the former Corsley School by the Steiner School does not require planning permission). The site will revert back to its previous use as a conference centre on expiry of the temporary permission.

The Steiner School Academy is a state-funded school approved for opening in September 2012 by the Department for Education. The school will be based in Frome, but construction on the identified site has been delayed by a delay in the earmarked site being made available for works to commence. A temporary site is therefore required and this former school has been identified as a possibility as it is less than 5 miles from the permanent school site.

The school would take upto 130 pupils during its occupation at Corsley. This would consist of pupils from reception (rising 5's) to Year 4 (rising 8's.) It is assumed that all 130 will arrive between the hours of 08:00 and 09:00, whilst 52 would depart between 13:00 - 14:00 and 78 would depart from 15:00 -16:00. The school would operate Monday- Friday during term times. It is envisaged by the school that 60% of pupils will be brought by bus from the permanent site in Frome and the remainder by car sharing.

#### **6. Planning Policy**

West Wiltshire District Plan - policy CF1 permits the development of land for schools, provided the proposals are acceptable and having regard to normal planning criteria, including scale, siting and highway issues.

Other more general policies are C31a on design and C38 on nuisance, whilst C1 is a countryside protection policy and C27 protects the setting of listed buildings.

The National Planning Policy Framework - paragraph 72 - sets out that the Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement and should give great weight to the need to create schools.

#### **7. Consultations**

Parish council

Corsley PC object to the proposal on the following grounds:

- a) that the traffic management plan submitted with the application dealt inadequately with the issues that would arise as a result of the increased volume of traffic;
- b) despite statements in the application, there is as yet no informal or informal agreement with the Parish Council about the use of car parking, access across the car park and use of the Old School Playing Field (leased to Corsley Parish Council by Wiltshire Council) by the Steiner Academy;
- c) that the erection of three temporary classrooms and a toilet block would represent over development given the limited available space could constitute a fire hazard;

## Wiltshire Highways

No objection

The Wiltshire Car Parking Strategy details the maximum parking standards for schools. In this instance the maximum requirement is 17 spaces. This comprises up to 14 spaces for staff and 3 for visitors. The parking available within the planning application red line is a total of 13 spaces (up to 6 car parking spaces could be provided within the (existing) Corsley Centre site boundary and another 7 can be achieved within the rest of the red line area).

School travel plans seek to minimise vehicle trips and parking required by staff and pupils. Additional information has supplied since the Steiner Academy school travel plan submitted with the planning application was written and is summarised below:

- Staff hired have confirmed their travel arrangements as: 1 will live locally in Corsley; 2 will be cycling; at least 4 will be on the coaches; and all the rest are car sharing.
- Through a Travel Plan approach we will both engage in the management and can pro-actively change things should issues arise. Parking can be managed sufficiently through a travel plan; we are happy for an on going travel plan that monitors the situation to be a condition of the consent.
- There is public parking next to the church although I understand that this would be treated as accommodating perhaps visitors only.

I am satisfied that the number of staff car sharing will require between 5 and 7 car parking spaces and together with the 3 visitor spaces required this leaves 3-5 spaces to accommodate any additional parking need arising (e.g. pupils being dropped off by car – the visitor spaces may also be available for this purpose).

From the information contained in the transport statement and school travel plan submitted with the planning application, additional information supplied by RPS regarding bus transport and further discussions with the author of the travel plan and transport statement, I am satisfied that sufficient parking to support the proposal is contained within the red line area. The school has a travel plan that sets out clearly timescales for implementation, monitoring and review and the school will be providing information to Wiltshire Council for approval and review (by the School Travel Plan Officer).

In view of the above I have no highway objection to raise.

Environment Agency - no objection

## **8. Publicity**

The application was advertised by a site notice; press notice and neighbour notification. Expiry date: 13th July 2012

Objections have been received from 14 people, including parents of the Pre- School that operates adjacent to the site.

Summary of points raised:

- Existing parking facilities at the school/pre-school site are not adequate ;
- The volume of traffic that would be generated would be unacceptable on the narrow country lanes that lead to the site;
- The proposed development is too large for the site
- The proposal will have an adverse impact on the adjacent pre-school.

Two local residents have written to support the proposal.

## **9. Planning Considerations**

### 9.1 Principle of Development

The Government have made it clear that they wish local planning authorities to take a positive approach to the provision of new schools. In this case, planning permission is not required for the

school to operate, as the building was previously used as a school and its subsequent use as a conference centre is in the same use class. The site has playing fields available and the new portable buildings are located within the existing curtilage of the building. In these circumstances, the requirement for planning permission centres on the additional portable buildings that are needed. As the request is for a temporary period only and is based on existing infrastructure used until a few years ago for educational purposes, it is not considered that there are any objections to the principle of the use, particularly as there is no adverse impact on the appearance of the countryside.

### 9.2 Impact on the listed building

The proposals do not involve any alterations or extensions to the listed building, so the only issue to consider is the impact on the setting of the listed building from the siting of the portable buildings. These are at the rear and side of the building. As they are temporary, any minor impact on the setting of the building will similarly be for a short period only and will not adversely affect the setting of the building on anything other than a short term basis.

### 9.3 Highway issues

This has been the area where detailed discussions have taken place between the applicant and the Council's highway officers, as set out above. The bus operator that the applicant has engaged used to run the school buses when the primary school was in operation, so is familiar with the site and its approach roads. Adequate parking for staff is available, and there is additional off-street parking adjacent for dropping off, shared with the pre-school.

Whilst there will clearly be times (particularly early am) when the area around the school and play school will be busy, it is not considered that this will be at such a scale that would justify refusing permission on highway safety grounds.

**Recommendation:        Permission**

### **For the following reason(s):**

**The proposed development is supported by both the policies of the West Wiltshire District Plan (CF1) and the National Planning Policy Framework. As the proposal is for a temporary use only, it is considered that the limited envisaged impacts on both the highway network and the setting of the listed building will be short-term in duration and are consequently acceptable for this limited period.**

### **Subject to the following condition(s):**

- 1     When the site ceases to be occupied by The Steiner School; or by the end of September 2014, whichever shall first occur, the use hereby permitted shall cease and the temporary buildings brought on to the premises by the applicants in connection with the use shall be removed.

REASON: The permission has been sought for a temporary period only and the envisaged limited impacts are acceptable for this limited time period. Granting permission for this temporary proposal accords with the guidance issued by the Government in relation to supporting new schools.

- 2     The proposed fencing shall be powder coated black.

REASON: To protect the setting of the listed building.

- 3     The development shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained within the Steiner Academy Travel Plan for the site and the monitoring and review procedures contained therein shall be adhered to in accordance with the timings contained within the Plan.

REASON: In the interests of road safety.

4 This permission relates to the following plans: J8/04020; AL(00)01 D; AL(00) 02B; 03B; 04B; 05B; 06C; 07C; 08F; 09C; 10C; 11C; 12; 13.

REASON: To define the approved plans.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Appendices:</b>  |  |
| <b>Background Documents<br/>Used in the Preparation of<br/>this Report:</b> |  |