



Planning Committee

Astwood Bank and Feckenham Ward

3 February 2009

2008/345/FUL RE-SITING OF EXISTING TEMPORARY CLASSROOMS AND FORMATION OF NEW CAR PARK AND ACCESS POINTS FECKENHAM C OF E FIRST SCHOOL, SCHOOL LANE, FECKENHAM APPLICANT: GOVERNORS OF FECKENHAM C OF E FIRST SCHOOL EXPIRY DATE:- 23 DECEMBER 2008

Site Description

(See additional papers for Site Plan)

The school is located approximately 0.5 miles to the North-East of the Feckenham Village Centre. The School and grounds are accessed via Swansbrook Lane to the West. To the North of the School lies Foxley Farm, and to the South, at the corner of School Lane / Swansbrook Lane lies a single detached dwelling 'Emanjays'. The Victorian brick and tile main school building is situated between a large hardstanding playground which faces on to Swansbrook Lane (to the West), and a double temporary classroom building and small car park area to the East. A grassed playing field which is used for football and sports day activities lies further to the East, the entrance to which is off the car park. This site is situated within the Green Belt.

Proposal description

This proposal is to re-position an existing temporary double mobile classroom building which is located to the rear of the school site. The structure has a dark green, textured finish. In addition, it is proposed to create a new 13 no. space car parking area to the front of the site (facing Swansbrook Lane), which is currently occupied by a hard play area (playground), reducing the size of the hard play area by approximately 50 per cent.

Relevant key policies

All planning applications must be considered in terms of the planning policy framework and all other relevant material considerations (as set out in the legislative framework). The planning policies noted below can be found on the following websites:

www.communities.gov.uk

www.wmra.gov.uk

www.worcestershire.gov.uk

www.redditchbc.gov.uk

National Planning Policy

PPG2 Green Belts
PPG13 Transport

Regional Spatial Strategy

QE3 Creating a high quality built environment for all
UR4 Social Infrastructure
T7 Car Parking Standards and Management

Worcestershire County Structure Plan

T4 Car Parking
D39 Control of Development in the Green Belt

Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3

B(RA).1 Detailed extent of and control of development in the Green Belt
B(BE).13 Qualities of Good Design
B(BE).22 Temporary Buildings and Uses
C(T).1 Access to and within development
C(T).12 Parking standards (Appendix H)

Relevant site planning history

96/085	Provision of a double mobile classroom (2 years)	Approved	2 April 1996
98/105	Retention of double mobile classroom (2 years)	Approved	23 April 1998
00/353	Retention of double mobile classroom (3 years)	Approved	30 Aug 2000
08/395	Extensions to existing school and highway alterations to form new footpath	Pending determination	

Public Consultation Responses

Responses in favour

None

Responses against

One letter received raising concerns summarised below:

- * Lack of appropriate consultation and agreement with neighbours prior to the submission of the application.

- * In order for the 'walking train' system to work, the continued use of the Barrett's of Feckenham car park is essential. As Barrett's is currently in receivership, the future use of their car park is out of the school's control.
- * General Highway Safety concerns given close proximity of the proposed vehicular entrance to the car park and the junction of School Lane with Swansbrook Lane.
- * Regrettable that there are no plans to replant trees / greenery when trees are proposed to be removed.

Consultation responses

County Highway Network Control

No objections raised. Recommends that conditions relating to access, turning and parking at the site be applied to any planning permission granted

Feckenham Parish Council

No objections

Procedural Matters

This application falls for determination by Redditch Borough Council, as the Governors of the school are the applicant in this case. Members will be aware that in most cases, planning applications at County maintained schools are determined by Worcestershire County Council.

Assessment of proposal

The key issues for consideration in this case are the principle of the development; the impact of the proposals upon the character of the area and the potential impact of the proposals upon highway safety.

Principle of the development

The value of temporary buildings, structures and uses is recognised by the Borough Council. However, the quality, appearance, durability and suitability of the buildings are usually inferior, and while this may be justified on economic grounds in the short term, it is not acceptable in the longer term. It is for these reasons that the imposition of a time-limit for the approval of temporary buildings is justified.

Whilst temporary classrooms continue to be widely utilised throughout the Borough, they are regarded as an unsatisfactory solution to school expansion from both a visual and practical point of view.

The reasoned justification for Policy B(BE).22 of the Local Plan (Temporary Buildings and Uses) stresses that the Council will continue to encourage

the construction of purpose built accommodation. Members should be aware that a separate application (2008/395) which is to be presented at this Committee meeting does indeed demonstrate the School's commitment to a long term solution to the need to provide classroom accommodation at the school, and this would be implemented in the future subject to the availability of suitable funding.

Impact of the proposals upon the character of the area

This proposal would rotate the existing double mobile classroom building anti-clockwise, 90 degrees in such a way that the two classrooms would be positioned in approximately the same position as shown on the proposed plan submitted with the purpose built extensions application (2008/395). By rotating the classroom in this way, space would be 'freed up' to the rear of the school, allowing this area to be used as a hard play area, enabling passive surveillance of this area from school classrooms. The existing hard play area to the front of the school does not benefit from adequate passive surveillance.

Several benefits would arise by granting consent for the re-siting of this temporary classroom building, including creating easier access (via a gate) to the school playing field further to the East; the 'rotated' building which would be located towards the northern boundary would be less conspicuous in appearance than at present; teachers would be able to monitor pupil activity from the classrooms during school breaks. The re-siting of the classroom in this way enables other works including the re-siting of the hard play area, and the creation of a new car park to take place.

Highway Safety

The existing small car park (6 spaces) to the rear would be lost as a result of re-siting the building.

However, a new car park (13 no. spaces) is to be created at the school's frontage, where the playground area currently exists. The increased provision of car parking spaces, including the layout proposed is acceptable to County Highways and your officers, as are the proposed separate access / egress points which would relieve current problems with congestion which occur at the existing car park, during drop off / picking up times.

Other issues

A small number of existing trees would need to be removed to accommodate both the re-sited classroom building, and the car park to the front. These are however, small, ornamental trees and do not contribute significantly to the visual amenities of the area. Scope for new planting in what would be the grassed corners of the proposed new car park to the front, does however exist, and as such, your Officers would recommend the

inclusion of a landscaping condition should members be minded to approve the application.

Conclusion

It is considered, given that a purpose built accommodation application has recently been submitted at the site, that it would be reasonable in the circumstances to grant consent for the re-siting of this temporary building for a maximum of two years, but that the building be permanently removed from the site after this period, in accordance with Policy B(BE).22 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan.

Recommendation

That having regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, planning permission be GRANTED subject to conditions and informatives as summarised below:

- 1) Classroom building to be permanently removed from the site within 2 years from date of the grant of this consent.
- 2) H13 – Access turning and Parking.
- 3) Soft landscaping scheme to be submitted for the prior written approval of the LPA.
- 4) Soft landscaping scheme to be implemented in accordance with details agreed.
- 5) Commence car park within 3 years.

Informatives

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| 1. Highway Note 1 | No mud on the Highway. |
| 2. Highway Note 4 | Private Apparatus within the Highway. |
| 3. Highway Note 5 | Alteration of highway to provide new or amend vehicle crossover. |