



# Planning Committee

Astwood Bank and Feckenham Ward

3 February 2009

**2008/395/FUL EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING SCHOOL AND HIGHWAY ALTERATIONS TO FORM NEW FOOTPATH  
TO FORM NEW FOOTPATH  
FECKENHAM C OF E FIRST SCHOOL, SCHOOL LANE, FECKENHAM  
APPLICANT: GOVERNORS OF FECKENHAM C OF E FIRST SCHOOL  
EXPIRY DATE: 24 FEBRUARY 2009**

## 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 replace the existing temporary double mobile classroom building with purpose designed new brick and tile single storey extensions to the school which will enable the school to cope with practical problems associated with lack of space which currently exist. Two new classrooms together with a new glazed corridor, and a separate smaller teaching area are proposed to the rear of the school where the temporary classroom currently exists. To the southern elevation (facing School Lane), a new head-teacher's office and new reception room are proposed, together with a re-modelled library, either side of what would be a new main entrance to the school (also facing onto School Lane). A new domestic technology area and disabled toilet extensions are proposed to the school's western elevation which faces towards the current hard-surfaced playground.

In addition, the proposals include a new pavement at the Swansbrook Lane / School Lane junction, immediately beyond the property 'Emanjay's' northern boundary. A yellow, hatched 'safe walking' route crossing School Lane would link the footpath with the main school site.

### **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](http://www.communities.gov.uk)  
[www.wmra.gov.uk](http://www.wmra.gov.uk)  
[www.worcestershire.gov.uk](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk)  
[www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk)

### ***National Planning Policy***

PPG 2 Green Belts  
PPG 13 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).14 Alterations and extensions  
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
08/345	Proposed re-siting of existing temporary classrooms and formation of new car park	Pending Determination	

## **Public Consultation Responses**

### Responses in favour

None

### Responses against

None

## **Consultation responses**

### ***County Highway Network Control***

No objections raised.

### ***Feckenham Parish Council***

Comments awaited

### ***Worcestershire County Council Public Rights of Way Officer***

Comments awaited

### ***Ramblers Association***

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 external alterations upon the character and appearance of the building and its surroundings and any potential impact upon highway safety.

### Principle of the development

The site is located within the Green Belt. However, the proposed extensions are not considered to be inappropriate, considering their scale and function. The benefits arising from the removal of the existing substantial temporary double mobile classroom with a permanent brick and tile extension solution are considered to outweigh any perceived harm to the Green Belt.

## Impact of extensions / alterations upon character and appearance of the building and its surroundings

Whilst not listed, the school is an attractive red brick building dating from the Victorian period. The structure exhibits many fine architectural features and therefore it is most important that the extensions respect and enhance this building which plays a vital role to the village community. All of the extensions proposed are considered to be of very high quality in terms of their design and appearance, and would enhance the character of the school, particularly at the rear, where the flat roofed double mobile classroom is currently sited.

The re-orientation of the classroom extensions to the rear is such that a large playground area can be created in this position, which in turn would lead to the playing field further to the East. The provision of a hard play area in this location is of considerable benefit to the school since pupils would then be able to be easily monitored by teachers from classrooms (all to the rear). At present, inadequate passive surveillance exists over the existing hard play area located between Swansbrook Lane and the main school.

## Highway Safety considerations

By granting consent for the proposed classrooms to the rear, the existing small car park (approximately 6 spaces) would be lost. A new car park (13 no. spaces) is to be created at the schools frontage, where the hard playground area currently exists. However, this proposed car park is not for consideration here, and is instead to be considered under another application (2008/345), to be presented at this Committee meeting. The pavement and 'safe walking route' proposal linking the pavement to the school has followed lengthy discussions between the school and the Highways Authority. The approval of this aspect would be of great benefit to pupils who walk to the school and will improve safety.

## Conclusion

It is considered that the proposals accord with relevant Policies of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan, in that the extensions would respect and enhance the character and appearance of the existing school building and that the new footpath proposal would enhance pedestrian safety. As such, Officers fully support this application.

## Recommendation

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

- 1) Development to commence within 3 years from date of consent.
- 2) Materials for walls and roofs to match existing.