

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

11th November 2015

Planning Application 2015/244/FUL

Demolition of existing two classroom educational building and erection of a new two storey six classroom building.

Astwood Bank First School , Church Road, Astwood Bank, Redditch, B96 6EH,

District: Astwood Bank

Applicant: Astwood Bank First School

Expiry Date: 6th October 2015

Ward: ASTWOOD BANK AND FECKENHAM

The author of this report is Nina Chana, Planning Officer (DM), who can be contacted on Tel: 01527 548241 Email: nina.chana@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk for more information.

Site Description

The site lies within Astwood Bank on Church Road, approximately 4 miles south of Redditch. To the south is Popes Lane, beyond which are residential dwellings. To the northern boundary lie the Vicarage and the Church Hall, adjacent to which is the Church of St Matthias and St George. The frontage of the school runs along Church Road and to the rear there is a dwelling and open fields.

Proposal Description

The proposal is for the demolition of a two classroom building and the construction of a two storey six classroom building. This building will consist of six classrooms. On the ground floor, there will be three classrooms and toilet facilities. The second floor will house three classrooms. The materials to be used externally will be similar to the Nurture room which is located to the north of the site. The proposed external finishing will be in timber cladding and white render. All the fenestration will utilise aluminium powder coated window sections in a dark grey colour and the wall coping will also be in grey aluminium.

This proposal will provide a total of 583 m² of gross internal floor area, with the ground floor split along existing lower ground and higher ground. The height difference between the split ground floor is 1.3m externally. The height of the proposed building from the existing lower ground is 6.5m with a parapet flat roof.

Relevant Policies :

Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3:

BRA01 Detailed Extent of Control of Development in the Green Belt

BRA08 Development at Astwood Bank

BBE11 Buildings of Local Interest

BBE13 Qualities of Good Design

PLANNING COMMITTEE

11th November 2015

Emerging Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4

Policy 2: Settlement Hierarchy

Policy 8: Green Belt

National Planning Policy Framework

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework

NPPG National Planning Practice Guidance

Relevant Planning History

2006/259/CPO	Consultation - Demolition Of Part Of Existing Hall And Erection Of A Single Storey Multi Purpose Hall Plus Ancillary Accommodation	n/a – County decision	16.06.2006
2011/042/CPO	Consultation - Proposed single storey rear extension to form new kitchen servery and store	n/a – County decision	21.03.2011
2012/194/FUL	Detached single storey classroom	Approved	21.11.2012
2014/293/FUL	Single storey extension to rear of the school to provide two additional classrooms and demolition of existing toilet block.	Approved	24.11.2014
1997/253/FUL	Installation Of Additional Single Mobile Classroom	Refused	04.09.1997
2000/481/CPO	Proposed Alterations And Extensions	n/a – County decision	01.12.2000

Consultations

Development Plans

- It is concerning that no regard has been given to the locally listed status of Astwood Bank First School in this Planning Application.
- This proposal may on balance be acceptable in terms of Green Belt policy in the NPPF and Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3 and 4 in terms of

PLANNING COMMITTEE

11th November 2015

demonstrating very special circumstances (subject to that being considered and determined by the case officer).

- However, as the proposal is not within the settlement boundary of Astwood Bank it fails to meet policies B(RA).8 of Local Plan No.4 and Policy 2 of Local Plan No.4, and therefore is not able to be supported from a Policy perspective.

Highway Network Control

Request for the travel plan submitted to be improved – can be controlled via the imposition of a condition

Conservation Adviser

Awaiting Comments

Public Consultation Response

No comments received

Assessment of Proposal

The school currently caters for pupils from ages 4 to 9 and is a two form entry, with approximately 280 pupils. The school currently has a need for basic teaching space, has identified the current facilities which require improvement, to bring spaces in line with government recommendations and maintain a high level of teaching. Currently classes are being taught in undersized, outdated spaces and other facilities such as toilets are in poor condition and require intensive improvement. In order to effectively educate the current number of pupils, Astwood Bank First School's basic teaching space must grow. The provision of a new teaching block would allow other spaces within the school to be refurbished and brought in line with space standards

The school site is on land which is both white land (at the frontage) and Green Belt (at the rear) as defined on the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3 Proposals Map. This designation remains the same in the emerging Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4.

The National Planning Policy Framework states that:

- a replacement building is acceptable in Green Belt, provided it is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.
- inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances
- when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

11th November 2015

The applicant has submitted a Very Special Circumstances Planning Statement. The very special circumstances cited include health and safety concerns, audits pointing to substandard classroom sizes, and future flexibility for teaching. These together do appear to be reasonable considerations which you can give consideration to in weighing up the requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The strength of the Very Special Circumstances would also outweigh the requirements of Policy B(RA).1 - Detailed Extent of and Control of Development in the Green Belt of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No 3.

Policy B(RA).8 Development at Astwood Bank states "Development within Astwood Bank will only be permitted where it is at an appropriate level to meet local needs for housing, employment and/or other community facilities and services. Such development will be restricted to

- i. Development within the settlement boundary as defined on the Proposals Map
- ii. The conversion or replacement of appropriate buildings within the defined settlement boundary"

The proposal does meet the Policy above in terms of it being a community facility; however, whilst the majority of the site is within Astwood Bank, the replacement building is not within the settlement boundary and therefore does not comply with the Policy.

Astwood Bank First School is a locally listed building. Regard must therefore be had to the impact of the proposal on the adjacent school building, and this advice has been sought from the conservation adviser, and further comments and assessment will be included in the Update report as necessary.

A Travel Plan has been submitted and the school are currently working with the County Council Travel Plan Officer to address their issues. This will be an ongoing process and the agreement and implementation of the travel plan can be controlled by a condition.

The footprint of the existing building is 165 square metres and the footprint of the proposed building will be 387 square metres. This is a substantial increase in the overall foot print. The height of the proposed building will be 6 metres with a flat roof. The proposal is therefore a larger, more modern style building than the one it is replacing and will be surrounded by buildings of a traditional design. Therefore, on balance, with all matters taken into consideration, it will sit comfortably in its proposed location and would be acceptable.

In conclusion, the proposal is not in compliance with the adopted and emerging policies, however taking into consideration the very special circumstances which have been presented, the proposal is therefore considered, on balance, to be acceptable in this case.

RECOMMENDATION:

That having regard to the development plan and to all other material

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

11th November 2015

considerations, planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

- 1) The proposal must be started within 3 years from the date of this notice.

Reason: To comply with National Legislation

- 2) The proposal shall be carried out as shown on the plans, schedules and other documents listed below;

Job No: 26951

Drawing numbers: (P) – 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07

Reason: To make sure the development is carried out exactly as shown on the plans, to ensure that it relates to the area in which it is being built and protects how that area looks, in order to comply with Policy B (BE).13 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No 3.

- 3) Within six months of the date of the decision notice, the applicant shall have submitted in writing a travel plan that promotes sustainable forms of access to the site to the Local Planning Authority. This plan thereafter will be implemented and updated in agreement with Worcestershire County Councils Travel plan co-ordinator.

Reason: To reduce vehicle movements and promote sustainable travel patterns.

Procedural matters

This application is being reported to the Planning Committee because the application is against policy, as such the application falls outside the scheme of delegation to Officers.