

Agenda Item 91.

Development Management Ref No	No weeks on day of committee	Parish	Ward	Listed by:
163369	8/13	Woodley	Bulmershe and Whitegate	Major & Council's own application

Applicant Wokingham Borough Council
Location Beechwood Primary School, Ambleside Close **Postcode** RG5 4JJ
Proposal Full application for the proposed erection of 3 single storey classroom extensions, extension to existing staffroom, erection of new security fencing and gates, new pathways, access door and alteration to parking layout
Type Major
PS Category 006
Officer Pooja Kumar

FOR CONSIDERATION BY Planning Committee on 1st February 2017
REPORT PREPARED BY Head of Development Management and Regulatory Services

SUMMARY

The application site is within a major development location in the settlement of Woodley and to the east of Woodley precinct. The existing school is a 1950's single storey structure with timber clad panels and flat roof surrounded by parking to its north and playing field to the south.

The application is seeking full permission for 3 single storey infill extensions to provide additional classrooms, an extension to the existing staffroom, alterations to the parking layout, new security fencing and gates and, alterations to existing footpaths around the school building. The extensions would be located within the main building curtilage and on areas of existing hardstanding with only the staffroom extension on a grassed area.

The proposed development would facilitate the internal re-configuration of the school to provide new classrooms. Over a 7 year period the proposal would allow the school to increase pupil numbers from 315 to 420 and increase the number full time staff from 29 to 32 in line with the Council's Primary School Places Strategy approved by the Council's Executive on 28th January 2016.

With regards to other aspects, parking would be in accordance with the parking standards and no harmful impact on residential amenity would occur. There would be no harm in ecology terms and any impacts with regards to Environmental Health would be controlled through conditions. As such, the scheme is compliant with the development plan and is recommended for conditional approval.

PLANNING STATUS

- Major development location
- Groundwater zone
- Sand and gravel extraction
- Replacement Mineral Local Plan

RECOMMENDATION

That the committee authorise the GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following:

A. Conditions and informatives:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
Reason: In pursuance of s.91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by s.51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
2. This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings numbered '0001-R1; 0010-R1; 0100-R1; 0102-R1; 0110-R1; 0200-R1; 0205-R1; 0210-R1; Extended Phase 1 Ecological Survey Ref: R1529/a; Arboricultural Survey PJC ref: 3970/16-01; Transport Statement November 2016 and; Design & Access statement Ref: 2137-EA-00-00-DA-R1' received by the local planning authority on 1st December 2016. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.
Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.
3. Before the development hereby permitted is commenced, samples and details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building/s shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the so-approved details.
Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the building is satisfactory.
Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3
4. No development shall commence until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority. The plan should detail items such as phasing of construction, types of piling rig and earth moving machinery to be utilized, working hours, material and equipment delivery hours/plan, noise abatement, dust suppression and other measures proposed to mitigate the impact of construction operations. In addition the plan should make note of any temporary lighting that will be used during the construction phase of the development. The plan shall be implemented in full and retained until the development has been constructed. Any deviation from this Statement shall be first agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: To ensure disruption is minimised as much as possible during construction.
5. Prior to the commencement of the development there shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority a scheme of hard and soft landscaping, which shall specify species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted and details of the permeable hard landscaping to the extension of the vehicle parking.

Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building(s).

Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of the planting (or within a period of 5 years of the occupation of the buildings in the case of retained trees and shrubs) die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species or otherwise as approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure adequate planting in the interests of visual amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21 (and TB06 for garden development).

6. No trees, shrubs or hedges within the site which are shown as being retained on the approved plans shall be felled, uprooted wilfully damaged or destroyed, cut back in any way or removed without previous written consent of the local planning authority; any trees, shrubs or hedges removed without consent or dying or being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within 5 years from the completion of the development hereby permitted shall be replaced with trees, shrubs or hedge plants of similar size and species unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that development is being carried out, of trees, shrubs and hedges growing within the site which are of amenity value to the area. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

7. a) No development or other operation shall commence on site until an Arboricultural Method Statement and Scheme of Works which provides for the retention and protection of trees, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent to the site in accordance with BS5837: 2012 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. No development or other operations shall take place except in complete accordance with the details as so-approved (hereinafter referred to as the Approved Scheme).

b) No operations shall commence on site in connection with development hereby approved (including any tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) until the tree protection works required by the Approved Scheme are in place on site.

c) No excavations for services, storage of materials or machinery, parking of vehicles, deposit or excavation of soil or rubble, lighting of fires or disposal of liquids shall take place within an area designated as being fenced off or otherwise protected in the Approved Scheme.

d) The fencing or other works which are part of the Approved Scheme shall not be moved or removed, temporarily or otherwise, until all works including external works have been completed and all equipment, machinery and surplus materials removed from the site, unless the prior approval in writing of the local planning authority has first been sought and obtained.

Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that the development is being carried out of trees shrubs or hedges growing within or adjacent to the site which are of amenity value to the area, and to allow for verification by the local planning authority that the necessary measures are in place before development and other works commence Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

8. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted details of secure and covered bicycle storage facilities for the occupants of [and visitors to] the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The cycle storage/ parking shall be implemented in accordance with such details as may be approved before occupation of the development hereby permitted, and shall be permanently retained in the approved form for the parking of bicycles and used for no other purpose.
Reason: In order to ensure that secure weather-proof bicycle parking facilities are provided so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 4 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.
9. No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a final Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Statement shall provide for:
- i) the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors,
 - ii) segregation of construction, deliveries and construction traffic from users of the site,
 - iii) storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development,
 - iv) the erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate,
 - v) wheel washing facilities,
 - vi) measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction,
 - vii) a scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works,
 - viii) requirements of wheel washing/street sweeping.
- Reason: In the interests of highway safety & convenience and neighbour amenities. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.*
10. Prior to occupation of the extensions hereby approved, a scheme for a minimum of one log pyramid for stag beetles shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The design of the scheme shall be in accordance with the design standards of People's Trust for Endangered Species fact sheet.
Reason: To provide wildlife enhancements in the course of the development for a local species of principal importance, as per NPPF.
11. Prior to commencement of development a Drainage Strategy Plan, indicating how the proposed extensions shall link into the existing drainage system shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The plan shall be implemented in full and any deviation from the plan shall be first approved in writing by the local planning authority.
Reason: To ensure that the development does not increase flood risk on or off site.
12. No part of any building(s) hereby permitted shall be occupied or used until the vehicle parking space has been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The vehicle parking space shall be permanently maintained and remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times.
Reason: To ensure adequate on-site parking provision in the interests of

highway safety, convenience and amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

13. Prior to the occupation of the extensions hereby approved an updated Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The travel plan shall include a programme of implementation and proposals to promote alternative forms of transport to and from the site, other than by the private car and provide for periodic review. The travel plan shall be fully implemented, maintained and reviewed as so-approved.

Reason: To encourage the use of all travel modes. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 4 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policy CP6.

Informatives

1. The applicant is reminded that this approval is granted subject to conditions which must be complied with prior to the development starting on site. Commencement of the development without complying with the pre-commencement requirements may be outside the terms of this permission and liable to enforcement action. The information required should be formally submitted to the Council for consideration with the relevant fee. Once the details have been approved in writing the development should be carried out only in accordance with those details. If this is not clear please contact the case officer to discuss.

2. The requisite Travel plan would need to comply with the latest national and local guidance:
 - 1) NPPF Section 4 (Sustainable Transport)
 - 2) The Essential Guide to Travel Planning (DfT, March 2008)
 - 3) Delivering Travel Plans Through the Planning Process (DfT, April 2009)
 - 4) A Guide on Travel Plans for Developers (DfT)
 - 5) Making Residential Travel Plans Work (DfT, June 2007) All accessible at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/travelplans/>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/improving-local-transport>Also:
WBC Transport Plan 3 and Active Travel Plan 2011 – 2026
WBC Workplace Travel Plan Guidance and Residential Travel Plan Guidance Documents, covering workplace travel plans and residential travel plans provide local guidance and are available on the Borough's website.

3. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received. This planning application has been the subject of positive and proactive discussions with the applicant in terms of:
- a pre-application process was undertaken by the applicant;
The decision to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF is considered to be a positive outcome of these discussions.

PLANNING HISTORY

The site has an extensive planning history relating to various extensions at the school and adjacent nursery. None of the history is relevant to the current application.

SUMMARY INFORMATION

Site Area	2.1 hectares
Existing Pupils	315
Proposed Pupils	420 (over a period of 7 years)
Existing Staff	29 Full-time and 25 Part-time
Existing Staff	32 Full-time and 26 Part-time
Existing parking spaces	28
Proposed parking spaces	32
Existing & Proposed Cycle spaces	40
Proposed Scooter spaces	35

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Thames Water	No comments received
WBC Biodiversity	No objection
WBC Drainage	No objection subject to conditions (5 & 11)
WBC Education	No objection
WBC Environmental Health	No objection subject to condition (4)
WBC Highways	No objection subject to conditions (8 & 9)
WBC Tree & Landscape	No objection subject to conditions (5, 6 & 7)
WBC Waste Services	No comments received

REPRESENTATIONS

Woodley Town Council: No objections

Local Members: No comments received

Neighbours: No comments received

APPLICANTS POINTS

- The extensions are only infill and minor in respect of their size and scale, with most alterations not visible from outside of the site
- The proposal would provide additional space within the school to create school spaces for local residents
- The proposal would not harm the residential amenities of neighbouring properties

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
Adopted Core Strategy DPD 2010	CP1	Sustainable Development
	CP2	Inclusive Communities
	CP3	General Principles for Development
	CP6	Managing Travel Demand
	CP7	Biodiversity
	CP9	Scale and Location of Development Proposals

Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	CC01	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	CC02	Development Limits
	CC03	Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
	CC06	Noise
	CC07	Parking
	CC09	Development and Flood Risk
	CC10	Sustainable Drainage
	TB21	Landscape Character
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)	BDG	Borough Design Guide

PLANNING ISSUES

Description of Development:

1. The scheme is for extensions at Beechwood Primary School to provide additional classrooms, a larger staffroom and associated works within the wider school complex with internal alterations to facilitate the increase of students by 105 over a 7 year period. The increase in student numbers would be 15 per school calendar between 2016 and 2022. The proposed extensions would allow for each year group to eventually have 2 classrooms.
2. The extensions would comprise of three single storey infill mono pitched extensions for create classrooms and corridors and a single storey mono pitched extension to the existing staffroom. There would be a new pathway along the northern side of the school which would have security fencing around it to allow safe and secure access for pupils. Due to the siting of the extensions, two existing sheds would need to be relocated to the site's eastern boundary.
3. Parking provision would be made within the existing area of parking. To the north western side of the car park there is an informal area of parking which would be tarmacked and extended over a ditch to provide 4 additional parking spaces.

Principle of Development:

4. The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
5. Paragraph 72 of the NPPF states that great importance should be attached to ensuring that sufficient choice of school places are available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. It also states that Local Planning Authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and should look to approve development that will widen choice in education. The NPPF states that weight should be given to the need to create, expand or alter schools.

6. The site is located within a major development location and within a settlement boundary and as such the development should be acceptable providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers and this is discussed below.
7. Given the national and local policy context, it is considered that the proposal would be acceptable subject to the assessment of other material considerations. These include no adverse impact on character of the area or setting of the listed building, the retention of suitable play space, and no adverse impacts on traffic, highways safety, neighbouring amenity, biodiversity, or sustainability.

Education:

8. The proposal to expand Beechwood Primary School was agreed by the Council's Executive on 28th January 2016 to be part of the Council's Primary School Places Strategy. The purpose of the Primary Strategy is to ensure there are sufficient primary school places to meet need in identified priority areas. For the Woodley area the strategy concluded that 60 additional places per year were required, 30 of which would be provided at Beechwood Primary School and 30 at Highwood Primary School. As such, WBC Education raise no objection to the proposal.

Character of the Area:

9. The existing building is a single storey flat roof building, uniformly faced with curtain walling and timber clad panels, typical of 1950's schools. The area to the north of the building is the main car park with a single vehicle entry point and two pedestrian accesses, to the south and east lay the playgrounds and playing fields. The wider area comprises of Woodley precinct to the north and west and residential dwellings to the east and south. The site has an abundance of mature trees both around the buildings and car park, but also around the site's boundaries. Some of the trees around the main school building will be removed to facilitate the development.
10. The extensions would be of an appropriate size and scale in relation to the main school building. The extensions would infill areas within the main school complex and would not extend significantly away from the original building (please refer to drawing no. 0010-R1 Proposed Site Plan). The roof of the extensions would be flat, sloping rooves with heights between 4 and 5.5 metres, providing a more interesting roof scape for the school building without resulting in detriment to the same.
11. A new addition to the roof scape of the school building would be ventilation stacks proposed on both the new and original classrooms. The ventilation stacks project above the roof line of the building by 0.8 metres and would be of a colour which coordinates with the external finishes of the proposed extensions, and thus would not result in any harm to the appearance of the school from neighbouring properties.

12. In respect of character and appearance the proposed extensions and alterations would relate to the existing use and would not result in any harm or detriment. The size and scale of the extensions would be reflective of the original building and would not project significantly away from the original footprint of the building. Although it is noted that the proposed materials would be different to those of the original building, a condition requiring the submission of samples of materials has been included above (3) to ensure their acceptability.
13. In addition the external alterations to the footpaths and parking would not harm the character of the school site. The proposal would require the loss of a Category C1 Cherry Tree to facilitate the staff room extension and the removal of a Category B1 Norway Maple tree to facilitate on classroom extension. WBC Trees and Landscape officer has raised no objection to this due to the applicant proposing to plant two replacement trees of suitable species and sizes. Moreover, the majority of the trees around the sites boundary would be retained to ensure that the same level of screening is available for residential neighbours and therefore in respect of character and appearance the proposal would not result in any harm.
14. The extensions and alterations are modest additions to the school and would not be out of character nor result in any harm to the appearance of the site. Although the extensions would be finished with alternative materials and colours this would not detract from the character of the school site and it is considered that the proposal would accord with policy CP3 of the Core Strategy.

Residential Amenities:

15. The closest residential properties that could potentially be impacted are those located to the east of the site along Ambleside Close and Arundel Road. The proposed extensions would not result in any harm in respect of overlooking, loss of light and overbearing due to the siting of the extensions within the main school building which would be located 25 metres from the nearest residential property in Ambleside Close and 45 metres away from the nearest residential property in Arundel Road..
16. As a result of the proposed increase in the number of students over the years it is considered that the increase in noise from children playing in the grounds of the school would not be significant to the extent to warrant a refusal on this basis. The increase would be limited and the Council's Environmental Health officers have raised no objections to the proposal on this basis. As such the proposed development would accord with policy CP3 of the Core Strategy in respect of neighbour amenity.

Access and Movement:

17. **Traffic Generation:** The proposal would increase the number of students and staff; however the proposed level of increase is limited and would not have an adverse impact on the highway network.
18. **Highway Safety and Access:** There is an existing vehicular access onto site from Ambleside Close which would be used by construction vehicles. A

framework construction method statement has been provided; however the document should include details such as the segregation of construction, delivery and construction traffic from users of the site and whether or not wheel washing/street sweeping would be required. The submitted document should be updated and re-submitted as required by condition (9).

19. **Parking:** The proposal would result in the increase of 4 car parking spaces for 3 full time and 1 part time staff is in line with the Borough Standards and therefore acceptable. The formalising of the existing gravel parking area is also welcomed. As such the proposal accords with policy CC07 of the MDD Local Plan.
20. **Cycle:** There was no information provided on the number of cycle spaces for staff or their location. In addition, no details of visitor cycle spaces have been provided within the application. The School has confirmed that it is their intention to provide 10 cycle spaces for staff in line with the Borough's standards and additional visitor spaces would also be provided. A condition (8) to request the submission of cycle parking has been included above to ensure the proposal accords with policy CC07 of the MDD Local Plan.
21. **Sustainability:** The site is already well served by public transport and is within suitable distance to rail and road links and as such, no objection is raised.
22. **Travel Plan:** There is an existing Travel Plan for the school, which the School and the Borough are currently in the process of updating for September 2017. The Travel Plan would monitor the number of cycle spaces as well as vehicle spaces which is considered acceptable. A condition requiring the submission of the updated Travel Plan is attached in the suggested conditions (12).

Flooding and Drainage:

23. The submitted design & access statement identifies that the site currently drains via soakaways and the proposed extension areas are largely on existing paved area. Therefore the areas of impermeable surfacing would not be harmfully increased as a result of the proposed extensions. The plans indicate that the proposed car park extension would be tarmacked; however it is considered that a permeable material could be used instead to ensure no increase of surface water flooding within or outside of the site. As such details of hard landscaping have been requested by condition (5) in addition to a condition requiring the submission of a Drainage Strategy Plan (11). The car park extension would be over the existing ditch in the north-west corner of the site however this will not have any implication on flood risk and drainage.

Landscape and Trees:

24. The proposed development would sit within an established school. Views into the school are restricted due to the heavy screening around the site's boundaries, which will remain unchanged as a result of the proposal and therefore the public perception of the character of the school will remain unaltered.
25. The extensions will result in the loss of three trees (two category B trees and one category C tree), two of which are proposed to be replaced. WBC Trees and Landscape officer has advised that two replacement trees are sufficient in this

instance and that the replacement trees should be of an appropriate scale and species details of which need to be submitted (5).

26. To the North West corner of the site an extension to the car park is proposed. This area comprises of a number of mature trees which provide screening to the front area of the school and Ambleside Nursery. Although the trees are unlikely to be adversely affect from the car park extension the a condition requiring a survey of these trees, including any necessary protection measures or re-planting has been suggested by WBC Landscape & Trees officer (7).

27. A condition requiring the retention of trees is required in line with MDD Local Plan policy CC03 (6). Subject to condition 5-7 it is considered that the proposed development would accord with policy CP3 of the Core Strategy and policies CC03 and TB21 of the MDD Local Plan.

Environmental Health

28. Due to the location of the site within a residential area, the Council's Environmental Health officers have advised that a Construction management plan should be submitted to ensure that the development does not harm residential amenities during the construction phase. As such a condition (4) has been attached requiring the submission of Construction Management Plan.

Ecology:

29. An Ecology Report has been submitted with the application and concludes that due to the dominance of hard standing and buildings the site is of low ecological value. The Ecology Officer has considered this report and raises no objection to the application. The officer has advised the applicant to consider wildlife enhancements for Stag Beetles, this has been secured by condition (10). As such the proposed development is considered to accord with policy CP7 of the Core Strategy and policy TB23 of the MDD Local Plan.

Community Infrastructure Levy:

30. As the proposal is for the construction of extensions at a school, it would not be CIL liable development.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development is considered acceptable in principle and of an appropriate size, scale and design to accord with local plan policies. The proposed staggered increase of student and staff numbers is considered acceptable in this location. Subject to conditions, no harmful impacts would occur with regards to highways, drainage, contamination or trees. As such, the proposal is considered to accord with local and national planning policy and is therefore recommended for approval.

CONTACT DETAILS

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