

3/10/0792/FP – Installation of free standing modular classroom unit at Sacred Heart RC JMI School, Broadmeads, Ware, SG12 9HY for The Board of Governors, Sacred Heart RC JMI School.

Date of Receipt: 30.04.2010

Type: Full - Minor

Parish: WARE

Ward: WARE - CHADWELL

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:-

1. Three year time limit (1T12)
2. Materials of Construction (2E11)
3. The development hereby permitted shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved flood risk assessment (Barker Associates, 3rd June 2010 4025.207/002CC), and finished floor levels shall be set no lower than 34.3m above Ordnance Datum (AOD).

Reason: To reduce the risk of flooding to the development and future occupiers in accordance with policy ENV19 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

Directive:

1. Other legislation (01OL)

Summary of Reasons for Decision

The proposal has been considered with regard to the policies of the Development Plan (East of England Plan May 2008, Hertfordshire County Structure Plan, Minerals Local Plan, Waste Local Plan and the 'saved' policies of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007), and in particular policies SD2, GBC1, TR2, TR7, ENV1, ENV14, ENV19 and LRC1. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies, and other material considerations, is that permission should be granted.

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 The site comprises a primary school set within a site area of some 920m² and located at the end of Broadmeads in the Metropolitan Green Belt. The site is bordered to the east by the Broadmeads residential development, the River Lea to the north, the railway line to the south, and Kings Meads nature reserve to the west. The site is surrounded by mature trees, and the playing fields are designated as open space under policy LRC1. The application site is shown on the attached OS extract.
- 1.2 The existing main building is a single storey flat roof construction of 1970s appearance with a playground located to the west and playing fields beyond. There is an existing modular classroom located to the west of the main building. The new modular unit is proposed to the north of this existing unit, thereby enclosing the playground.
- 1.3 The application has been referred to Committee for determination as the proposed modular classroom constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

2.0 Site History

3/07/0482/FP	Car park and cloakroom and security fencing improvements	Approved with Conditions 01-May-2007
3/05/1315/FP	Covered learning area for reception class	Approved with Conditions 15-Aug-2005
3/05/1220/FN	Renewal of permission for relocatable classrooms	Approved with Conditions 08-Aug-2005
3/01/1055/FP	New playground extension	Approved with Conditions 01-Aug-2001
3/99/0627/FP	New classroom extension	Approved with Conditions 16-Jun-1999

3.0 Consultation Responses

- 3.1 The Environment Agency advise that the development will only be acceptable subject to a condition that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved flood risk assessment, and that the finished floor levels are set no lower than 34.3m above Ordnance Datum (AOD).

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3.2 Sport England originally objected to the proposal on the grounds of insufficient information on playing fields. Further information has since been provided on the location of playing pitches, and these concerns have been addressed.

4.0 Town Council Representations

4.1 Ware Town Council have no objection to the development.

5.0 Other Representations

5.1 The applications have been advertised by way of press notice, site notice and neighbour notification.

5.2 At the time of writing this report, no letters of representation have been received.

6.0 Policy

6.1 The relevant saved Local Plan policies in this application include the following:

SD2	Settlement Hierarchy
GBC1	Appropriate Development in the Green Belt
TR2	Access to New Developments
TR7	Car Parking – Standards
ENV1	Design and Environmental Quality
ENV14	Local Sites
ENV19	Development in Areas Liable to Flood
LRC1	Sport and Recreation Facilities

6.2 In addition to the above it is considered that Planning Policy Statement 1, (Delivering Sustainable Development), Planning Policy Guidance 2 (Green Belts), and Planning Policy Statement 25 (Development and Flood Risk) are considerations within this application.

7.0 Considerations

Principle of Development

7.1 The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt wherein inappropriate development will not be permitted. Policy GBC1 lists developments which are classed as appropriate; however this does not include extensions to existing schools. Very special circumstances must therefore be demonstrated that clearly outweigh the harm caused by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm.

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- 7.2 In this case the new building is required to accommodate increasing pupil numbers and to provide DDA compliant facilities. The unit will include a new classroom, store and DDA toilet with an access ramp to the entrance. Currently the school has insufficient teaching space for the number of pupils required by Government guidelines (as specified in the Department of Children, Schools and Families Building Bulletin 99: Briefing Framework for Primary School Projects). The proposed new unit would bring the school up to standard, and the intention is then to construct an extension to the school in the future to replace temporary structures.
- 7.3 The unit is approximately half the size of the existing relocatable structure, and will have limited impact on the Green Belt. The building will be positioned such that it will not materially extend beyond the existing buildings, and also encloses the playground. Therefore, on the basis of the information submitted, Officers consider that very special circumstances exist to outweigh Green Belt policy.

Scale and Design

- 7.4 The modular classroom is proposed to measure 10m in length by 7m in width with a mono-pitched roof to a height of 3.4m. The building is proposed to be finished in cedar cladding with a flat roof formed of rubber membrane. Overall this scale and design is considered to be acceptable with the use of cedar cladding improving the appearance of the building compared to the existing double mobile unit.

Open Space

- 7.5 The proposed development will result in the loss of approximately 70m² of designated recreation space, which is protected under policy LRC1. Sport England originally objected to the application on the grounds of insufficient information on formal playing pitches. Amended drawings have since been submitted which confirm that the development will not impact on the layout of the existing playing pitches. Sport England have since removed their objection and the proposal is considered to comply with policy LRC1.

Flood Risk

- 7.6 The site lies within Floodzone 2 and a full Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted. The Environment Agency have no objection to the proposed development subject to a condition to restrict finished floor levels. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with policy ENV19 of the Local Plan.

Other Matters

- 7.7 No harm will arise to neighbouring amenity given the distance to

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neighbouring properties.

7.8 Further, no harm would be expected to the Kings Mead Wildlife Site due to its distance over 90m to the west.

8.0 Conclusion

8.1 Overall, although the development cannot be considered as appropriate development in the Green Belt, Officers consider that very special circumstances exist to outweigh this policy objection. The school does not currently have sufficient teaching space as required under Government guidance. The proposed unit will bring the school up to this standard, and is considered to be acceptable in scale and design and will have limited wider impact on the Green Belt.

8.2 The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to the conditions set out above.