

**5c 3/13/0923/RP – Erection of Early Years Centre, including details of associated car parking, landscaping and drainage swale following outline permission 3/08/2054/OP at Clappers Lane, Watton at Stone, SG14 3QA for Hertfordshire County Council**

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**Date of Receipt:** 13.06.2013

**Type:** Reserved Matters – Major

**Parish:** WATTON-AT-STONE

**Ward:** WATTON-AT-STONE

**RECOMMENDATION:**

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

1. Three Year Time Limit (1T121)
2. Approved plans (2E10)
3. Samples of Materials (2E12)
4. Boundary Walls and Fences (2E07)
5. Hard surfacing (3V213)
6. Programme of archaeological work (2E02)
7. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations made within pages 21-25 of the Extended Phase 1 Ecological Survey, dated 20<sup>th</sup> May 2013, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

**Reason:** In the interests of the protection of reptiles, birds and bats and their habitats, in accordance with Policy ENV16 of the East Herts Local Plan, Second Review, April 2007.

8. Prior to the commencement of the development further details shall be submitted to demonstrate the shape, depth and gradient of the swale.

**Reason:** In the interests of the appearance of the development and to ensure adequate surface water drainage in accordance with Policies ENV1 and ENV21 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review, April 2007.

9. Hours of working - plant and machinery (6N05)

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### Directive:

1. Unsuspected contamination (33UC)

### Summary of Reasons for Decision

East Herts Council has considered the applicant's proposal in a positive and proactive manner with regard to the policies of the Development Plan (Minerals Local Plan, Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD 2012 and the 'saved' policies of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007; the National Planning Policy Framework and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2012 (as amended). The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies and the Outline planning permission granted under Ipa reference 3/08/2054/OP is that permission should be granted.

\_\_\_\_\_ (087613RP.NB)

### **1.0 Background:**

- 1.1 The application site is shown on the attached OS extract. The site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt to the west of the Category 1 Village of Watton at Stone.
- 1.2 Adjoining the site to the east is Watton at Stone Primary and Nursery School and to the west is a new residential development which is currently under construction.
- 1.3 The site is accessed off Clappers Lane which serves the new residential estate from Station Road. Adjoining the east and northern site boundaries are public footpaths.
- 1.4 The site currently comprises undeveloped grass land which is designated for open space and recreation, in accordance with Policy LRC1 of the Local Plan.
- 1.5 Outline planning permission was granted in December 2010 under Ipa reference 3/08/2054/OP for the residential development of the land to the west of the site together with a doctor's surgery and early years centre. The outline permission approved the principle of the development and the access, with all other matters remaining reserved.
- 1.6 This current application seeks approval of the reserved matters for the early years centre which relate to layout, scale, appearance and landscaping.

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- 1.7 The proposed early years centre would be sited within approximately 2 metres of the site's eastern boundary. The building would then extend 28 metres towards the west with a depth of 13.7 metres. The proposal is for a single storey building which would have a series of flat and mono-pitched roofs.
- 1.8 The southern elevation of the building would be largely glazed and would provide access into two external play areas.
- 1.9 Following concerns raised by County Highways and verbal feedback from the Council's Engineers, the applicant has revised the proposal to provide a drainage swale in place of 6 parking spaces on the site, as well as two water butts, permeable tarmac and paving to the car park areas. 9 parking spaces are now proposed to the front of the building, adjacent to its north western elevation and an additional larger area of parking is proposed further to the west where 32 spaces are proposed.
- 1.10 The public footpaths that adjoin the site would not be affected by the proposal, however, a gate is proposed to provide access into the site from the footpath to the north that connects with Glebe Close.

### **2.0 Site History:**

- 2.1 The relevant planning history for the site is as follows:
- 2.2 Outline planning permission was granted in 2010 under lpa reference 3/08/2054/OP for a residential development together with a doctor's surgery and early years centre.
- 2.3 Permission was granted for the reserved matters in respect of the residential development in August 2011 under lpa reference 3/11/0872/RP. This permission is currently being implemented.

### **3.0 Consultation Responses:**

- 3.1 Thames Water has commented that the principles of the drainage element of the application are acceptable and that the developer should continue to consult them in order to agree the detailed matters.
- 3.2 The Herts Biological Records Centre have commented that there would appear to be a medium population of slow worms at the site and that all of the recommendations made in pages 21-25 of the habitat survey are required to be carried out by condition.

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- 3.3 Natural England has commented that the proposal does not appear to fall within the scope of the consultations that they would comment on.
- 3.4 The Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust has commented that the site supports a population of slow worms, a protected species. They recommend that conditions are applied to ensure that the mitigation and enhancement recommendations set out in the ecological report are implemented in full. The landscape scheme proposes the planting of non-native species which should be avoided in favour of native species.
- 3.5 The Council's Environmental Health Department has recommended a condition in respect of unsuspected contamination.
- 3.6 The County Historic Environment Unit has commented that archaeological excavations of the adjacent housing site have revealed remains of regional and national importance. It is therefore recommended that a condition is imposed to require a programme of archaeological works to be secured for the application site.
- 3.7 The Council's Landscape Officer raises no objection to the proposal indicating that it will have no unacceptable adverse impact on significant trees.
- 3.8 County Highways raised some initial concerns that the amount of additional car parking would be excessive and would conflict with the aims of promoting sustainable travel.
- 3.9 Officers have reconsulted County Highways, the Council's Engineers and the school in respect of the revised plans that have been submitted. Their comments will be reported to Members in advance of the Committee meeting.

#### **4.0 Parish Council Representations:**

- 4.1 Watton at Stone Parish Council support the application.

#### **5.0 Other Representations:**

- 5.1 The application has been advertised by way of press notice, site notice and neighbour notification.
- 5.2 One letter of representation has been received which comments that there is an overdose of redbrick within the adjacent residential site and therefore white cladding should be considered to break this up.

**6.0 Policy:**

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

GBC1	Green Belt
SD1	Making Development More Sustainable
LRC1	Sport and Recreation Facilities
TR7	Car Parking- Standards
ENV1	Design and Environmental Quality
ENV2	Landscaping
ENV16	Protected Species
ENV18	Water Environment
ENV21	Surface Water Drainage
ENV24	Noise Generating Development
BH1	Archaeology and New Development
BH2	Archaeological Evaluations and Assessments
BH3	Archaeological Conditions and Agreements

6.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also of relevance to the application.

**7.0 Considerations:**

7.1 As outlined earlier in this report the principle of the development and the access into the site has already been agreed with the outline planning permission. It is therefore the outstanding reserved matters which relate to layout, scale, appearance and landscaping that form the principle considerations of this application. Other matters that form part of the consideration of these detailed issues include parking, neighbour amenity and the impact upon protected species.

**Layout**

7.2 The layout of the site has been largely dictated by the needs of the early years centre to create secure play areas, adequate access points and a good level of parking.

7.3 The proposed building is set back from the west boundary of the site at a sufficient distance to ensure that the design, form and use of the building would not conflict with that of the new residential properties that adjoin this boundary.

7.4 The proposed layout for the early years centre is considered to be acceptable and would not conflict with the existing layouts to the

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neighbouring sites or be detrimental to the character and appearance of the surrounding area as a whole.

#### Scale

- 7.5 The proposed building is of a relatively modest size and scale. The mono-pitched roof design and elevational treatment breaks up the mass of the building, ensuring that it appears of a scale that is appropriate to its use and to the character of the surrounding area.
- 7.6 The scale of the building is considered to be acceptable and would sit comfortably between the school to the east and the neighbouring residential properties to the north and west.

#### Appearance

- 7.7 The building design is fragmented which adds interest to its elevations. The overall building design offers a contemporary interpretation of and a sympathetic addition to the adjacent Primary School.
- 7.8 The proposal is for the building to be finished in brickwork. The comments received from the neighbouring occupier in respect of the amount of red brickwork that has been used within the adjacent residential site is noted. Officers have recommended a condition to require the submission of samples of materials to ensure that the materials proposed are appropriate for the site.
- 7.9 Officers consider the overall design and appearance of the early years centre to be acceptable, in accordance with the aims of Policy ENV1.

#### Landscaping

- 7.10 A landscape scheme has been submitted in support of the application. Three trees are proposed to be removed at the site, 1 Alder and 2 Ash trees. All of these trees are classed as grade B. A number of replacement trees, hedges and small scale planting is proposed which will mitigate against the loss of these trees and will suitably screen the development.
- 7.11 The proposed landscaping is considered to be acceptable in accordance with Policy ENV2.

#### Parking

- 7.12 The initial concerns raised by County Highways in respect of the over

provision of parking within the site has been considered and discussed with the applicant. A reduction of 6 spaces has been made at the site to enable a swale to be created. The applicant has also confirmed that the main purpose of the early years centre is to accommodate existing services that the school provides. Therefore the parking spaces proposed would provide for existing visitors to the school site that currently cause some congestion within the surrounding residential streets. The applicant does not anticipate that the parking provision made would result in any significant increases in the number of visitors travelling to the site by private vehicles.

- 7.13 Officers consider the parking provision made to be acceptable.

#### Neighbour Amenity

- 7.14 The proposed building would be sited some 30 metres away from neighbouring residential properties. This distance together with the modest size and scale of the building would be sufficient to ensure that the development would not have an unacceptable impact upon the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.
- 7.15 The main car park for the early years centre is sited adjacent to a vehicular access serving the new neighbouring residential properties to the west and as such would not result in an unacceptable level of noise and disturbance to these neighbours. The smaller car park to the north would be set back by approximately 20 metres from the neighbouring dwellings.
- 7.16 Officers consider that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact upon neighbour amenity.

#### Protected Species

- 7.17 Having regard to the comments received from the Herts Biological Records Centre and other relevant consultees, Officers consider that it is reasonable and necessary to impose a condition to require the recommendations within the ecological report to be carried out in order to protect the various species within the site and in particular slow worms, which are a protected species.

### **5.0 Conclusion:**

- 5.1 Having considered the details of the proposal, Officers consider the proposed layout, scale, appearance and landscaping to be acceptable.

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- 5.2 It is therefore considered that the development complies with the relevant policies of the Local Plan and the NPPF and it is recommended that planning permission be granted.