

5F 3/10/1285/FP - Single storey side extension, provision of three canopies and ramp at St. Andrews Primary School, Tower Hill, Much Hadham, SG10 6DL for St. Andrews Primary School

Date of Receipt: 23.07.2010

Type: Full – Minor

Parish: MUCH HADHAM

Ward: MUCH HADHAM

RECOMMENDATION

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

1. Three year time limit (1T12)
2. Matching Materials (2E13)
3. Materials of construction for ramp (2E113)
delete 'building' and replace with 'ramp'.

Directives

1. Other Legislation (01OL)

Summary of Reasons for Decision

The proposal has been considered with regard to the policies of the Development Plan (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 GBC3, ENV1, BH1, BH6 and particular Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies and the limited harm to the character, appearance or openness of this rural area is that permission should be granted.

_____ (128510FP.FM)

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The application site is shown on the attached OS extract.
- 1.2 St. Andrews Primary School is divided into two separate buildings. The first, older building is located within the Category I Village of Much Hadham, is Grade II Listed and fronts onto the back edge of the pavement. Sited 15metres to the east of this building is the second, newer school building which is set approximately 3metres lower than the older school building. It is located outside of the Category 1 Village of

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Much Hadham and as such is located within the Rural Area beyond the Metropolitan Green Belt. The whole site comprises an area of approximately 2 acres and is sited within the Much Hadham Conservation Area. The building is part single, part two storey and the site benefits from a large curtilage with tennis/netball courts.

- 1.3 This application proposes the erection of a single storey extension and a canopy to the north of the building. It is also proposed to erect a glazed canopy along the eastern elevation of the building and a canopy with a new bay window in the west elevation. The three open canopies will provide additional outside teaching and soft play areas. The proposal also involves the construction of a ramp, providing disabled access between the two school buildings.
- 1.4 The proposed single storey side extension would reach a maximum height of 4metres with a flat roof, would have an approximate floor area of 43m² and would provide additional internal space for the nursery and reception classrooms. To the west of the extension it is proposed to erect a canopy, 2.9metres in height, projecting 7.8metres from the northern elevation of the building. This would be used as a soft play area. It is also proposed to erect a second canopy on the western elevation of the building which would reach a maximum height of 2.8metres with a flat roof, would have a floor area of 64m² and would be used as an additional outside teaching area. The third open canopy would be sited along the eastern elevation of the building and would have a glazed mono-pitched roof, projecting 2.8metres from the existing building line.
- 1.5 The proposal also involves the construction of a ramp between the two school buildings to provide disabled access - the only existing access between the school sites is by way of several sets of steep steps. Currently, land levels slope steeply down from Tower Hill to Oudle Lane and the school building within this application is sited approximately 3metres below the original school building. The proposed ramp would form a backwards 'S' shape.
- 1.6 It should be noted that due to the age of the building (built after 1947), it is not curtilage listed. The proposals therefore do not require listed building consent.

2.0 Site History

- 2.1 In 1968 within LPA reference 3/68/1314/FP, planning permission was granted for the construction of a new school building to provide five additional classrooms for St. Andrews Primary School.

3.0 Consultation Responses

3.1 The Council's Conservation Officer recommends approval of the application and has commented that the proposal would not have a harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and would preserve the historic setting of the adjacent Grade II Listed building.

4.0 Parish Council Representations

4.1 Much Hadham Parish Council raised no objections to this proposal.

5.0 Other Representations

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

5.2 No letters of representation have been received.

6.0 Policy

6.1 The relevant Local Plan policies in these applications include the following:-

GBC3	Appropriate Development in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt
ENV1	Design and Environmental Quality
BH1	Areas of Archaeological Significance
BH6	New Developments in Conservation Areas

In addition to the above it is considered that Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment forms a material consideration in the determination of these applications.

7.0 Considerations

7.1 The main considerations in this instance are the impact of the proposal on the character, appearance and openness of the rural area; the impact upon the character and appearance of the existing building; the impact of the proposal upon the historic setting of the adjacent Grade II Listed Building; the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the impact on the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers.

Principle of Development

- 7.2 As outlined earlier in this report, the proposed single storey extension, ramp and canopies are proposed to be sited outside of the Category 1 Village boundary and within the Rural Area beyond the Metropolitan Green Belt wherein inappropriate development will not be permitted. Policy GBC3 lists development which is classed as appropriate; however this does not include extensions to existing schools. Special circumstances must therefore be demonstrated that clearly outweigh the harm caused by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm.
- 7.3 In this case the applicant has outlined within the design and access statement that the proposed extension and open canopies will improve the learning experience for pupils and teachers at the school; will create a securer environment for the pupils and will create much needed additional classroom accommodation. Officers also note that the proposal will allow improved disabled access with the provision of an access ramp for disabled people.
- 7.4 The proposed extension and canopies to the school building increase the footprint marginally and will have a limited impact upon the Rural Area. Therefore, on the basis of the information submitted and in particular the need for accommodation as outlined above, Officers consider that special circumstances exist to outweigh Rural Area policy in this instance.

Scale and design

- 7.5 Taking into account the modest size and scale of the proposal, the appropriate siting of the extension and the canopies and, taking into account the size of the existing school building, Officers consider that the development will not result in a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the existing building and would not lead to a major increase in the developed proportion of the site. In terms of design it is considered that the proposals are of a high standard of design and complement the existing building.
- 7.6 Although the proposed single storey extension and the canopies to the north and east elevations will be partly visible from Oudle Lane, taking into account that the canopy sited nearest to Oudle Lane would retain some 70metres to the highway, and the size, scale and design of the proposal, it is considered that the proposed extension would not appear unduly prominent within the surrounding street scene or impact upon the openness and rural character of the Rural Area beyond the Metropolitan Green Belt. Officers also note that due to the differences in levels, the

proposed extension, ramp and canopies will not be visible from Tower Hill.

The impact of the proposal on the setting of the adjacent Listed Building and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

- 7.7 With regards to the impact of the proposal on the setting of the adjacent Grade II Listed Building and the character and appearance of the Much Hadham Conservation Area, the Council's Conservation Officer has raised no objections to the proposal. Taking the above considerations into account, it is considered that the proposed extension, ramp and canopies would preserve the setting of the adjacent Grade II Listed building to the west of the site and would not have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the Much Hadham Conservation Area. The proposal therefore accords with Policy BH6 of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment.

The impact on the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers

- 7.8 Turning to the impact upon neighbour amenity, the proposed development is sited some distance from nearby residential properties and therefore the proposal would not result in any impact on the occupiers of such properties.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 Having regard to the above, it is considered that the proposed development would not be detrimental to the openness or rural character of the surrounding Rural Area; the character and appearance of the existing building or the Conservation Area; the amenities of neighbouring property or the historic setting of the adjacent Grade II listed building.
- 8.2 It is therefore considered that there are special circumstances in this case to allow permission to be granted contrary to Policy GBC3 of the East Herts Local Plan and it is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the conditions which are outlined at the head of the report.