

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE DATE: 1 July 2009

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APPLICATION REF. NO: 09/00228/DC

STATUTORY DECISION DATE: 10 June 2009

WARD/PARISH: FAVERDALE

LOCATION: Alderman Leach Primary School, Alderman
Leach Drive, Darlington DL2 2GF

DESCRIPTION: Erection of single storey extension to form
additional classrooms

APPLICANT: Director Of Corporate Services

APPLICATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

This is a full application under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992.

Alderman Leach Primary School is of a single storey brick construction and was opened in 2004. The School is located within the West Park area and some of the surrounding land is yet to be developed. The site is bounded to the west by residential properties and to the south and east by public open space. The site is directly bounded by Alderman Leach Drive to the north which provides vehicular access to the site.

Planning permission is sought for the erection of a single storey extension to the west of the existing school building. This is on an existing grassed area. The proposed extension would be approximately 27m in width and 16m in length. The extension is proposed as having a pitched roof over that would be approximately 5m in height to the top of a hipped roof. A flat roof is proposed over a small area of the extension that would be adjacent to the existing school building.

The extension would provide 4 main additional classrooms as well as some additional smaller learning spaces and toilet facilities. The School has identified a shortfall in pupil accommodation and resource space and has a requirement for an additional 56m² (approx) of teaching space that could also be used for after school activities.

The official capacity of the School is currently 315. The actual number of pupils currently registered at the School is 341, which requires the use of temporary classrooms to accommodate the additional pupils. The demand for places has been forecast to rise further, which requires that the official capacity be increased from 315 up to 420 (effective from 6th Sept 2010).

In terms of after school use, it is expected that some use is made of the new 'conference' facility made from the proposed double classroom. The School are looking at possibilities of running training sessions in this location. Current after school activity will continue though may be relocated from current locations to the new block. The existing use of the School's Multi Use Games Area is also likely to be increased although this does not relate to the planning application currently being considered.

PLANNING HISTORY

Planning permission was granted in December 2003 for the erection of a new 315 pupil primary school and 26 place nursery (Ref: 03/00774/DC).

Planning permission was granted on 29 August 2008 for the siting and installation of two single storey temporary modular buildings, comprising classroom area with separate cloaks and toilet facilities (Ref: 08/00496). This was to provide accommodation for 50-60 children and the permission was conditional that the structure be removed by August 2010.

PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND

The following policies of the Borough of Darlington Local Plan 1997 are relevant to the application:

E2 – Development Limits
E3 – Protection of Open Land
E29 – The Setting of New Development
E46 – Safety and Security
H15 – The Amenity of Residential Areas
R1 – Design for All
R2 – Access for People with Disabilities
R4 – Open Space Provision
R9 – Protection of Playing Pitches
R25 – Provision for Community Facilities and Services
T24 – Servicing Requirements for New Development

Policy 3 (Locally Important Open Space) of the Council's Open Space Strategy is also relevant.

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY

Occupiers of neighbouring properties have been consulted on the proposal and a site notice has been displayed. No objections have been received.

Planning Policy made the following comments:

The site is identified as a MUGA in the Council's adopted Open Space Strategy. Policy E3 of the Local Plan covers all open land and although the development does not result in the loss of the MUGA itself, it does encroach onto the margins of the sports facility, which may have an impact on its safe use and operation. Subject to approval from Sport England and the satisfaction of the school, the proposal is broadly acceptable in policy terms.

The Highways Officer raised no objections to the proposal but advised that secure cycle parking would be required. The Highways Officer also advised that additional vehicular parking will not be required as the existing provision is considered adequate.

The Environmental Health Officer advised that a previous site investigation (prior to the school being built) did not reveal any significant made ground, contamination or landfill gas affecting the site. The Environmental Health Officer did, however, recommend that an informative be included as a sealed damp proof membrane and sealed service entry points would need to be agreed with the Building Control Section. This is because the site is within 50m of the boundary of a former tip.

Archdeacon Newton Parish Council made no comments on the application.

Sport England commented that the encroachment of the proposed extension onto the playing field would be of a relatively minor scale and that, in any case, the land occupies a shallow embankment between the playing field proper the school building. Sport England raised no objections to the proposal provided that a condition is included securing a community use agreement.

PLANNING ISSUES

The main planning issues to be determined in consideration of this application are planning Policy, visual amenity and residential amenity.

Planning Policy

Local Plan Policy E2 (Development Limit) states that new development will be permitted within the Development Limits.

The application site is within the West Park area which has been comprehensively redeveloped since the Borough of Darlington Local Plan 1997 was adopted. The previous allocation (Policy E17 – Landscape Improvement) does not, therefore, apply to the application.

Policy E3 (Protection of Open Land) is relevant to the application as it is proposed as being constructed on an existing grassed area. This Policy states *inter alia* that permission will not be granted for development which harms the visual relief, character and openness afforded by open space or the provision of sport facilities.

The setting of the proposed extension, next to the existing school building and well within its grounds, is such that the proposal would not harm the openness provided by the open space. There is a close-boarded perimeter fence surrounding the school site and, therefore, its grounds do not contribute significantly to visual relief. Moreover there is an extensive area of open space to the south of the site which provides visual relief and enhances the character of the area .

The proposed extension would be constructed on a grassed area between the west elevation and the Junior Football Pitch. The area where the extension would be constructed is not therefore used for formal recreation purposes.

The school has relatively extensive grounds including playing pitches, a multi use games area and other hard and soft surface playing areas. The proposed extension, by virtue of its size and siting, would not harm the provision of sports facilities.

Policy E29 (The Setting of New Development) of the Local Plan ensures that new development will respect the character of its setting in terms of siting, design, materials and landscape.

Policy H15 (The Amenity of Residential Areas) presumes against the establishment, enlargement or material intensification of non-residential uses that would harm the amenities of surrounding residential areas and the quiet enjoyment of dwelling houses and gardens.

Visual Amenity

The proposal is in accordance with Policy E29 as the extension would be in keeping with the design of the School building and would not harm its character or setting. The proposed extension would also not be a prominent feature in the area.

Residential Amenity

The site of the proposed extension would be located over 100m from the nearest residential properties. The proposed extension would not be as high as the existing School building and, due to its single storey design, would not be highly visible. Due to its size and the distances involved, the proposal would not result in any significant detrimental impacts in terms of light, outlook or overlooking in relation to neighboring residential properties.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect

CONCLUSION

The proposed extension would be located within the development limits and would not be harmful to the existing area of open space (the School grounds). The proposed extension would be in keeping with the design of the existing building and would not raise any significant issues with regard to residential amenity.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT PURSUANT TO REGULATION 3 OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING GENERAL REGULATIONS PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. A3 Implementation Limit (3 years)
2. B4 Details of Materials (Samples)
3. B5 Detailed Drawings (Accordance with Plan)
4. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, details of secure covered parking for cycle stands shall be submitted to and approved by the Local

Planning Authority. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved details.

Reason – To ensure that adequate cycle parking provision is provided in accordance with adopted and emerging planning and transport policy which promotes access by alternative transport modes.

5. Prior to the commencement of the development a Community Use Scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Scheme shall include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-school users/non-members, management responsibilities and include a mechanism for review. The approved Scheme shall be implemented upon completion of the development.

Reason – To comply with the requirements of Sport England.

Suggested summary of reasons for granting planning permission

The proposed development is considered acceptable and will not cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal has no significant impacts in terms of residential amenity. The proposal does not adversely impact on highway safety. No issues are raised in relation to crime prevention. The proposal is considered acceptable in light of the following Policies of the Borough of Darlington Local Plan 1997:

E2 – Development Limits

E3 – Protection of Open Land

E29 – The Setting of New Development

H15 – The Amenity of Residential Areas

R2 – Access for People with Disabilities

R25 – Provision for Community Facilities and Services

T24 – Servicing Requirements for New Development

INFORMATIVES

The site is within 50m of the boundary of a former tip. A sealed damp proof membrane and sealed service entry points are likely to be required in relation to the Building Regulations. The Building Control Section can be contacted on Tel. 01325 388600.