

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE DATE: 6 February 2008

Page

APPLICATION REF. NO:	07/01109/DC
STATUTORY DECISION DATE:	3 January 2008
WARD/PARISH:	HAUGHTON EAST
LOCATION:	Proposed Childrens Centre, Darlington Education Village, Salters Lane South, Darlington
DESCRIPTION:	Erection of childrens centre (amended and additional plans received 28 November 2007)
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. Approval is sought for the erection of a children's centre within the Haughton Education Village site to provide Surestart provision in order to expand the level of local teaching and learning services.

The proposed building would provide a Meeting / clinical room, a training room, play area and a central hub, together with storage areas and W.C's. It would be single storey and be situated within a grassed area to the front of the site adjacent to Salters Lane South. It would measure some 23.5m wide x 11.4m deep and would have a height of some 2.6m to eaves detail and 5.6m to the highest ridge level. A new access would be created within the site from the roundabout to the east of the new building. The scheme would incorporate the following features:

- Eleven parking spaces (including two disabled parking spaces);
- An enclosed recreational area;
- A canopy play area;
- Associated landscaping;
- External materials to include brickwork, rendered panels and a tiled pitched roof; feature cedar cladding and full height glazing to the entrance.

A Design and Access Statement has been submitted as required by the regulations.

PLANNING HISTORY

None

PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND

The following policies in the Borough of Darlington Local Plan 1997 are relevant:-

E29 - The Setting of New Development
R1 – Designing for All
R2 – Access for People with Disabilities
R25 - Provision of Community Facilities and Services
E3 – Protection of Open Land
E11 – Conservation of trees, woodlands and hedgerows
E12 – Trees and Development
E14 – Landscaping of Development

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY

No objections were received as a result of the neighbour notification exercise and site notice.

Northern Gas Networks has been consulted and has raised no objections to the proposed development.

Northumbrian Water has been consulted and has raised no objections to the proposed development.

Northern Electric has been consulted and has raised no objections to the proposed development.

Sport England has been consulted and has raised no objections to the proposed development.

Darlington Association on Disability has been consulted and has raised no objections to the proposed development.

The Building Control Officer has been consulted and has raised no objections to the proposed development.

The Council's Arboricultural Officer has been consulted and has raised no objections to the proposed development.

The Police Architectural Liaison Officer has been consulted and has made a number of comments, which have been passed to the agent.

The Council's Highways Officer has been consulted and has raised no objections to the proposed development.

The Council's Environmental Health Officer has been consulted and has raised no objections to the proposed development.

PLANNING ISSUES

The principal issues to be considered in the determination of this application are:

- Planning Policy
- Impact on residential amenity
- Design and impact on the visual amenities of the area
- Highway Issues
- Trees

- Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Planning Policy

Policy R25 (Provision of Community Facilities and Services) of the Borough of Darlington Local Plan permits community facilities, which includes educational facilities, where due regard is had to the need to safeguard residential amenity, the character and appearance of the surroundings, and highway safety. The reasoned justification reinforces this by emphasising that the Council is keen to ensure that the existing range of facilities is retained, and where appropriate, expanded.

The proposed development to provide increased facilities within this existing school site is considered to be acceptable in principle, subject to an assessment of the proposals in respect of detailed matters of development control, which are considered in the remaining sections of this report.

Impact on residential amenity

The proposal is effectively an addition to the existing educational facilities on the site, to provide accommodation under the Surestart scheme for children of primary school age. It would be contained within the existing education village site and would be positioned over 25m distance from the nearest existing residential properties to the west of the site. It is not considered that the proposal raises any significant issues in respect of its impact on the residential amenities of existing properties.

The Council's Environmental Health Officer has been consulted and has recommended that a planning condition be attached to any approval to secure submission and agreement of details of external lighting to the site to ensure that the level of light spillage can be assessed in terms of its impact on existing residential properties to the south and west of the site.

Design and impact on the visual amenities of the area

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005) sets out the key principles that should be applied in the determination of decisions on planning applications, in order to contribute to the delivery of sustainable development. The guidance places increased emphasis on the role of high quality and inclusive design in the achievement of the government's objectives.

In turn Policies E29 (The Setting of New Development) and Policy E3 (Protection of Open Land) of the Borough of Darlington Local Plan are relevant. Policy E29 (The Setting of New Development) requires new development to respect the character of its setting in terms of design, materials, landscaping and the protection of other features, such as gardens and open spaces which contribute to the character of the setting, and not to detract from the appearance of its surroundings.

Policy E3 (Protection of Open Land) presumes against development on existing open land that will cause material net harm on the visual relief afforded by open space system as a whole, the character and appearance of the locality, its continuity and any formal or informal recreation afforded by the site.

The proposal is contained within an existing open area at the front of the site adjacent to Salters Lane South. It is bounded to the south by existing semi-mature trees. The loss of this modest area of open land is not considered to raise significant issues in respect of the visual amenities of

the site and the surrounding area. The scheme incorporates retention of significant trees and landscaping and is unlikely to impact significantly on the visual amenities of the area.

The proposed building is considered to be of an acceptable, scale, design and appearance and relates satisfactorily to existing buildings on the site. Given its single storey nature, it is unlikely to have a significant impact on the visual amenities of the street scene. Overall, it is considered that the building is acceptable in terms of design and impact on the visual amenities of the locality.

Overall, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in respect of its impact on the visual amenities of the locality.

Highway Issues

The Council's Highways Officer expressed some initial concerns in respect of the location of the pedestrian access to the front of the site as this is close to the main vehicular access to the school site and would be likely to encourage parking at what it considered an unsafe location.

However, the agent has confirmed that the entrance path and gates would only be in use once the education village gates had been secured and locked on an evening and that any drop-offs would be via the Education village roundabout adjacent to the new car park.

Further to minor amendments in respect of the location of the access, the Council's Highways Officer raises no objections to the proposed development. A planning condition has been recommended to secure submission and agreement of details of dropped crossings / tactile paving to the new access road.

Trees

There are a number of trees within the site. Three trees to the front of the site are considered to be of significant amenity value and have recently been made the subject of a Tree Preservation Order. The Council's Arboricultural Officer has raised no objections to the proposed development, however he has recommended that a planning condition be attached to any approval to secure satisfactory tree protection measures during site clearance and construction to ensure that the trees and their roots are not harmed by the development.

SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

The proposed development has 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. The proposed development does not give rise to crime and disorder issues.

CONCLUSION

The application is related to an existing educational site. The design and layout of the development is considered acceptable and the development will not give rise to conditions prejudicial to amenity or highway safety. The application raises no crime prevention issues. The development accords with the relevant policy in the adopted development plan set out below.

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 (Three Years)
- 2) B4 Details of Materials (Samples)
- 3) B5 Detailed Drawings (Accordance with Plan)
- 4) E2 Landscaping (Submission)
- 5) E5 Boundary Treatment Submission
- 6) Prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved, highway works shall be carried out to provide dropped crossings/ actile paving to the new access road in accordance with details to be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development.

REASON – In the interests of highway safety and to improve facilities for pedestrians.

- 7) Prior to the commencement of the development hereby-approved details shall be submitted of a scheme to protect the existing trees shown on the submitted plans to be retained. The submitted details shall comprise generally the specification laid down within BS 5837 and shall include fencing of at least 2.3m high, consisting of a scaffolding frame braced to resist impacts, supporting either chain link or chestnut paling to dissuade encroachment. The agreed scheme of protection shall be in place not less than seven days before the commencement of any clearance operations and the Local Planning Authority shall be given notice of the completion of the protection works prior to the commencement of clearance works to allow an inspection of the measurements to ensure their compliance with the approved scheme of protection. Notwithstanding the above approved specification, none of the following activities shall take place within the segregated protection zones in the area of the trees:
 - a. The raising or lowering of levels in relation to the existing ground levels;
 - b. Cutting of roots, digging of trenches or removal of soil;
 - c. Erection of temporary buildings, roads or carrying out of any engineering operations;
 - d. Lighting of fires;
 - e. Driving of vehicles or storage of materials and equipment.

REASON - In the interests of the visual amenities of the area and to safeguard the well being of trees within the site.

- 8) Precise details of external lighting shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development and the development shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with any approval given.

REASON – To protect the amenities of nearby residents and in the interests of public safety.

SUGGESTED SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR GRANTING PLANNING PERMISSION

The application site is located in an area of existing commercial and employment related use or in an area allocated for such a use in the development plan. The design and layout of the development is considered acceptable and the development will not give rise to conditions prejudicial to amenity or highway safety. The proposed development accords with the relevant policy in the adopted development plan set out below:

- E29 - The Setting of New Development
- R1 – Designing for All
- R2 – Access for People with Disabilities
- R25 - Provision of Community Facilities and Services
- E3 – Protection of Open Land
- E11 – Conservation of trees, woodlands and hedgerows
- E12 – Trees and Development
- E14 – Landscaping of Development