

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE DATE: 29 July 2009

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APPLICATION REF. NO:	09/00340/DC
STATUTORY DECISION DATE:	18 August 2009
WARD/PARISH:	HEIGHINGTON & CONISCLIFFE
LOCATION:	High Coniscliffe Primary School, Ulnaby Lane, High Coniscliffe
DESCRIPTION:	Construction of playground extension, with seating area, canopy, log roll fencing and entrance ramp
APPLICANT:	Director of Corporate Services

APPLICATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site contains the school building, a tarmac play area, a car park and a playing field. There are a number of trees within the grounds. There are residential properties to the south of the school and agricultural fields to the north, east and west.

This is an application submitted under Regulation 3 of Town and Country Planning Regulations 1992 for an extension and alterations to the existing playground area and the erection of a disabled access ramp into the main school building.

PLANNING HISTORY

There are previous planning permissions for extensions to the main school buildings but none are considered relevant to the context of this application.

PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND

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

E2 – Development Limits
E8 – Area of High Landscape Value
E12 – Trees and Development
E29 – The Setting of New Development
E46 – Safety and Security
E48 – Noise Generating Development
H15 – The Amenity of Residential Areas

R1 – Design for All
R2 – Access for People with Disabilities
R25 – Provision of Community Facilities

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY

No objections have been received from residents at the time of completing this report. Any further objections will be brought to the attention of Members at the Committee

Heighington Parish Council

The formal response from the Heighington Parish Council will be mentioned verbally at the Planning Committee.

Sport England

The formal response from the Sport England will be mentioned verbally at the Planning Committee.

PLANNING ISSUES

The existing playground lies to the south of the main school building, and measures 446sqm. A path from the playground leads to a small seating area. The proposal would extend the playground to the east by a further 94sqm and it would be located in the area currently occupied by the existing seating area. A new seating area would be created on the western end of the extended playground. The playground extension would be constructed from tarmac and edging pavers to match the existing. The new semi circular seating area would be enclosed by log roll fencing and contains a central canopy.

An existing ramp to the playground would be extended and improved by the erection of log roll fencing. The refurbishment works would be completed by some landscaping.

The disabled access ramp would be constructed from brick to match the existing school building with metal handrails and guard rail.

The main issues to be considered in this application are:

- Visual Amenity
- Residential Amenity
- Disabled Access
- Highway Matters
- Trees

Visual Amenity

The materials for the playground extension would match those used for the existing play area. The replacement seating area, with its log fence surround is a more attractive feature than the existing seating area, which is enclosed by a red brick wall. A small area of additional landscaping would be planted and none of the existing trees would be removed. The ramp entrance would be constructed from materials to match the existing school building.

It is considered that the proposed works are appropriate within school grounds.

The proposed development would accord with Policies E8, E12 and H29 of the Local Plan.

Residential Amenity

The existing playground is located between the main school building and the dwellings to the South on West Close and Lawsons Court. The boundary between the site and the rear of the neighbouring dwellings consist of wire mesh and concrete post fencing and hedgerows.

In visual terms the new seating area would not have an adverse impact in terms of visual amenity, outlook or loss of privacy. It is not envisaged that the enlargement of the existing playground would significantly increase any existing noise levels currently created by the school children using the area.

The development would accord with Policies H15, E46 and E48 of the Plan.

Disabled Access

The design of the entrance ramp would comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act and therefore it would also accord with policies R1 and R2 of the Local Plan.

Highway Matters

The Council's Highways Engineer has raised no objections to the proposed development.

Impact on Trees

There are a number of trees on the edge of the existing playground and seating areas, which are not covered by a preservation order. The trees are in reasonable form and condition. The application indicates that no trees would be removed but it has not been accompanied by a Arboricultural Implications Assessment, a Arboricultural Method Statement or a Tree Protection Plan. A suitable condition can be imposed to secure the submission of these documents. The Council's Senior Arboricultural Officer, has requested the imposition of planning conditions relating to protective fencing and construction methods for the areas close to the trees.

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 alterations to the existing playground do not raise any adverse impacts in terms of visual amenity, residential amenity or highway safety matters. The proposed development would accord with the following policies within the Borough of Darlington Local Plan 1997:

- E2 – Development Limits
- E8 – Area of High Landscape Value
- E12 – Trees and Development
- E29 – The Setting of New Development
- E46 – Safety and Security
- E48 – Noise Generating Development
- H15 – The Amenity of Residential Areas

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RECOMMENDATION

PROVIDED NO OBJECTIONS ARE RECEIVED FROM SPORT ENGLAND OR HEIGHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL, PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO REGULATION 3 OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING GENERAL REGULATIONS 1992 AND SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

- A3
- Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved (including demolition work), an Arboricultural Implications Assessment, a Arboricultural Method Statement and a Tree Protection Plan shall be submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority to protect the existing trees. 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, supported by a weldmesh wired to the uprights and horizontals to dissuade encroachment. The agreed scheme of protection shall be in place before the commencement of any work, including demolition operations. The Local Planning Authority shall be given notice of the completion of the protection works prior to the commencement of any work to allow an inspection of the measurements to ensure 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:
 - The raising or lowering of levels in relation to the existing ground levels;
 - Cutting of roots, digging of trenches or removal of soil;
 - Erection of temporary buildings, roads or carrying out of any engineering operations;
 - Lighting of fires;
 - Driving of vehicles or storage of materials and equipment.
 - REASON - To ensure that a maximum level of protection in order to safeguard the well being of the trees on the site and in the interests of the visual amenities of the area.
- B5

SUGGESTED SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR GRANTING PLANNING PERMISSION

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