

**DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

**COMMITTEE DATE: 2 April 2014**

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<b>APPLICATION REF. NO:</b>	14/00049/FUL
<b>STATUTORY DECISION DATE:</b>	18 March 2014
<b>WARD/PARISH:</b>	HAUGHTON WEST
<b>LOCATION:</b>	St Bede's Roman Catholic Primary School Kingsway
<b>DESCRIPTION:</b>	Erection of an extension to the reception class, relocation of covered play area to the south elevation, erection of an extension to provide 2 No class bases adjoining the north elevation and creation of 10No parking spaces within the curtilage of the school (amended and additional plans received 30 January 2014) (Travel Plan and Transport Statement received 07 March 2014 and 10 March 2014) (Additional Plan received 24 March 2014)
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	Mr George Firbank

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**APPLICATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION**

The application site is a school building with hard standing areas and playing fields. The existing school building is positioned in the east section of the site and it is a single storey building. The site is enclosed by fencing and well screened from the surrounding dwellings by mature hedging and trees.

The proposal involves the erection of a single storey extension on the east elevation to create an enlargement to the existing reception class which would cater for an increase in 15 pupils, the erection of a single storey extension to the north to create two further classrooms, which would then create an internal courtyard area, a small new build toilet block between the latter extension and the existing school building and the relocation of an external covered play area to on the east/south elevation. Some minor internal alterations would also be carried out. A 10 space car parking area is also to be provided within the site.

**PLANNING HISTORY**

The most recent entry is:-

12/00757/FUL In January 2013 planning permission was GRANTED for the erection of two disabled access ramps and handrails to the school playground

## PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND

### Darlington Core Strategy Development Plan 2011

CS2 – Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design

CS16 – Protecting Environmental Resources, Human Health and Safety

### Other Documents

Tees Valley Design Guide and Specification – Residential and Industrial Estates Development

## RESULTS OF CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY

Three letters of objection have been received and the following concerns have been raised

- *I wish to draw attention to the problem issues of parking within the estate by the parents dropping children off, these works will increase the problems and create even more bad feeling between home owners and parents. More class rooms means more children, more parents less parking and the roads just not big enough for them to double park as they already do as well as parking on corners, verges, and in junctions into the estate. This school should move not expand or lose some of its play area to parking. This has been an issue for many years and it hasn't improved at all*
- *The estate is very busy now with cars. The cars that come to the school don't seem to care where they park. May I point out that the parking spaces opposite our houses are for residents only.*
- *The volume of traffic going to the school has made Kingsway very dangerous. The path has been brought out making the road narrower by the bend near No 173 Kingsway which has made the bend dangerous as you are unable to see around it due to the parents parking on double yellow lines, drop kerbs, on the paths and blocking the way to the garages. The parents park on the junctions of both entrances to Kingsway and open car doors on the road side. They also drop children out of the cars making the traffic at a standstill. The parents park up early so they can get to the school as close as possible. They park where the residents park up by No 161 Kingsway and as we only have eight spaces for at least 17 houses. It's very distressing to find you are unable to park at home due to the parents cars as they have gone to school for the children. If there are any functions going on at the school after home time, it's made worse as we are overtaken by parent's cars. This estate due to the volume of traffic is not a nice place to live now and we are unable to sell the houses. The school needs to create a big car park for staff and parents*

Following the submission of the Transport Statement and Travel Plan, further comments have been made by two of the objectors:

- *Having read the transport notes it still leaves me worried that the issues have not been addressed regarding parking and travel in and out of the estate. It states that there are 63 parking spaces around the school but most of these are for the people who live on the estate and were put there 30 years plus ago for the houses which have no drives. At the times when children are being dropped off people are still in these parking bays which are allocated to their homes.*
- *One of my greatest issues is that the parking is incredibly unsafe. If there was a reason for the fire brigade to call into the estate they would not be able to make it in at picking up and dropping off times. Also the way the parents park is a disgrace, they park on corners, less than 250 feet from a corner and double park or on yellow lines. Children*

*walking between cars are unseen and in a vulnerable state as they are smaller than the cars. The staggered allocated leaving times is not working as parents arrive early just so they can be at the front gates. Some parents sit in the cars for nearly 30-40 mins just to be at the front. You need to visit the school at the peak times so you can get a really good idea of what is happening and how it affects all the people living on the estate.*

- *Parking spaces should be made in the grassed area of the school, the playing field is under used and a lot bigger than the school needs, this way if they had a drop off road children could be dropped off in safety and within the school grounds. It would also ease congestion. I hope you take the serious implications of access for the fire and rescue and ambulance access as these are my main concerns as well as the safety of children*
- *As you are adding an extension to the school, are you also looking into the road infrastructure around the Kingsway estate? The estate cannot cope with all the traffic at the moment adding an extension to the school means adding more cars. At present, we, the residents continue to have problems with school traffic at drop off and pick up times, in that residents drives are being blocked and roads too as parents stop as close as they can to the school gates and drop their children off. The roads on the estate are in a shocking state of repair with pot holes everywhere and all the road marking outside the school and residents drives are all worn away*

### **Consultee Responses**

The Council's Sustainable Transport Officer has raised no objections to the scheme

The Council's Environmental Health Officer (Pollution) has raised no objections to the scheme

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

The Council's Senior Arboricultural Officer has raised no objections to the proposal

Sport England has confirmed that the extensions would not be built on any playing fields. Sport England defines the land to the west of the School as playing field and therefore they do not need to comment on the application.

### **PLANNING ISSUES**

The main issues to be considered here are whether or not the proposal is acceptable in the following terms:

- Impact upon the Character and Visual Amenity of the Surrounding Area
- Residential Amenity
- Highway Matters
- Impact on Trees

### **Impact upon the Character and Visual Amenity of the Surrounding Area**

The proposed extensions are single storey structures and their design and scale are acceptable and they would be in keeping with the existing school building.

### **Residential Amenity**

The proposed extensions would not result in any residential amenity issues in terms of overlooking, loss of privacy or being overbearing when viewed from the neighbouring dwellings. The new car parking area would be screened by the existing fencing and hedging and it would be sufficient distance from the dwellings on the opposite side of the of the road to ensure there would be no significant amenity issues.

## Highway Matters

The main issue of concern to residents relates to the impact of the increase of pupils and staff upon the existing parking provision within the surrounding streets.

There are three pedestrian accesses into the application site and two vehicular accesses, one to the staff car park on the southern boundary and one to the service area on the north east boundary. There are ten car parking spaces for staff, with one marked for disabled use and there are two covered cycle parking pods for 40 cycle spaces and one covered scooter pod with space for 26 children's scooters.

The surrounding streets contain laybys with spaces perpendicular with the carriageways. These laybys would provide 63 parking spaces. The lay-bys are adopted bays and not allocated to the school so they are available for use by any vehicle and cannot be guaranteed as parking for school traffic as local residents etc can utilise these as overspill parking. The parking bays on Kingsway are utilised by parents of the school to a certain degree, although the parking needs and times of the parents will be different to that of a householder who would invariably park outside of school hours during the weekday i.e. after 5:00pm till before 8:30am, therefore the two uses should coexist acceptably.

The school has 210 school pupils and 26 nursery pupils (total 236), 11 full time teaching staff and 17 part time teaching staff. There are other members of staff such as cooks, cleaners etc.

The school gates open at 0840 for a school start at 0850. There are approximately 40 pupils that attend the Breakfast Club who arrive from 0800. The school finishes at 1500 for Reception pupils, at 1505 for Key Stage 1 pupils, at 1510 for Key Stage 2 pupils and at 1530 for Nursery pupils. The times are staggered to try and avoid a peak of cars picking up pupils at the same time.

Based on Police accident statistics over the previous 5 year period there has been one slight accident which involved vehicle damage on Kingsway in 2012, therefore there is not an existing accident problem associated with the school traffic. The Council's Capital Assets and School Place Planning Officer has confirmed that the Children's, Families and Learning Division has not received any complaints regarding the existing parking situation outside the school nor on the wider Kingsway estate at drop off and pick up times.

The proposed works are required as part of the Council's programme to provide for the increase in the number of pupils in the area. It is proposed to increase the number of pupils over a seven year period. From September 2014, the number of Reception pupils will be increased by 15. This will result in the total of 15 more pupils at the School for the academic year 2014 to 2015. Excluding the nursery, there are seven Years of pupils at the school and so those 15 reception pupils join the School each year resulting in a total of 105 additional pupils after seven years and beyond. The teaching staff would also increase as follows over the seven year period:

- Sept 2014 One teacher for Reception
- Sept 2015 One teacher for Year 1/Year 2 and probably one teaching assistant
- Sept 2017 One teacher for Year 3/Year 4
- Sept 2019 One teacher Year 5/Year 6

The Tees Valley Design Guide stipulates that a maximum of 0.8 car parking spaces should be provided per full time staff and 1 space per 3 part time staff on duty at any one time. Equating this to the numbers of existing staff 15 car parking spaces with an additional 5 visitor spaces would need to be provided within curtilage of the school. There are currently 10 car parking spaces provided including 1no. disabled bay, which based on current staffing levels, shows a shortfall in available parking within the school grounds.

A parking survey carried out as part of a Transport Statement showed that potentially 6+ cars parking in the lay-bys are assumed to be school staff, which would further back up the need for additional in curtilage parking for school staff based on existing staff numbers.

The additional teaching staff would result in the need for a further 4no. car parking spaces along with a provision of 2no. widened disabled bays. In total the in curtilage car parking provision should be a maximum of 26 no. spaces including 2no widened disabled bays to cover the existing and proposed staffing levels and free up additional on carriageway space for the expected numbers of parents associated with the expansion.

Following discussions with Officers, 10 no. staff parking bays will be provided off the existing service yard to the north of the school and it is considered that, on balance, this provision is acceptable and can be supported by Officers. There is very limited space within the school site to accommodate 15no bays without impacting upon playing fields, trees and other outdoor play areas and also funding for the scheme is insufficient to provide the maximum amount of provision.

The parking surveys demonstrated that the bays were not fully utilised during pick up/drop off periods, which was evident from Officer site visits and therefore there is some spare capacity to mitigate the traffic from additional pupil intakes. As the school pupil number increase the reliance on these lay-bys would become ever more important therefore the additional staff car parking that will be provided within the curtilage of the school will help to keep the laybys free as much as practicable.

A Travel Plan for the school shows a reduction in car use in the last year and that the school has been involved in a number of initiatives. The results show that around 45% of pupils travel to school by car with a further 3.4% sharing a car journey. Based on an additional 105 pupils by the end of the expansion plans, this would equate to potentially around 50 additional car trips on the highway network during school peak times as a worst case. The freeing up of the parking spaces and lay-bys off the highway by staff will help with the potential 50% increase car trips.

It is understood that the school currently engages with parents with regard to the usage of safe parking spaces and lay bys and the results are promising, showing a reduction in car trips. The school would also continue to engage with the Council on updating the Travel Plan and working with parents and pupils on promoting sustainable transport and participating in the annual travel to school surveys.

The Travel Plan results show that the cycle stands and pods are used by around 10% of pupils, therefore sufficient space would already be provided to accommodate the additional pupil numbers.

The Council (subject to necessary consultation and agreement) propose to increase the parking restrictions around Kingsway and onto the Thompson Street East junction which should help to

control dangerous parking activity associated with school pick up/drop off times and this should also help to facilitate free movement of vehicles around the estate roads and junctions onto Thompson Street East.

Having considered all the relevant material planning considerations, there are no highway objections to the proposed development.

### **Impact upon Trees**

The creation of the new car parking area may result in the removal of two trees to the east of the entrance. These trees are a Birch and an Ash tree and the Council's Senior Arboricultural Officer would have no objection to their removal.

It would be necessary to protect the existing trees during the construction phase of the development and a suitable condition would be imposed.

### **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 extensions are considered acceptable in design terms and they would not raise any residential amenity issues. Additional staff parking spaces have been provided within the site and these spaces along with the existing spaces within the vicinity of the school are considered sufficient to cater for the potential increases in staff and pupils over the seven year period. No trees worthy of a tree preservation order would be affected by the proposal.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS**

1. A3 – Implementation Limit
2. B4 – Details of Materials (Samples)
3. The School Travel Plan entitled “2014 St Bede’s RC VA Primary School – School Travel Plan” shall be fully implemented and updated, when required.  
REASON: In order to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport
4. The development hereby approved (including demolition work), shall include a scheme to protect the existing trees to be retained. The scheme 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 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:

- i. The raising or lowering of levels in relation to the existing ground levels;
- ii. Cutting of roots, digging of trenches or removal of soil;
- iii. Erection of temporary buildings, roads or carrying out of any engineering operations;
- iv. Lighting of fires;
- v. 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.

5. The precise details of the ten staff parking spaces shown on Drawing Number AL(0) 01A Rev A shall be submitted to an approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include number and location of the parking bays and the use of Autotracks to demonstrate that service vehicles can utilize the service area and are not compromised by the additional parked cars. The parking bays shall be implemented concurrently with the extensions hereby approved unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority and shall thereafter be retained.

REASON: To ensure that adequate staff parking is provided within the curtilage of the school in the interests of highway safety

6. Prior to the commencement of the development, a Construction Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The Plan shall include the proposed hours of deliveries and construction, a Dust Action Plan, methods for controlling noise and vibration during the construction phase, construction traffic routes, warning signage, and methods for wheel washing. The development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved Plan

REASON: In the interest of highway safety and residential amenity

7. B5 – Detailed Drawings (Accordance with Plan)

**THE FOLLOWING POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS WERE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT WHEN ARRIVING AT THIS DECISION:**

**Darlington Core Strategy Development Plan 2011**

CS2 – Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design

CS16 – Protecting Environmental Resources, Human Health and Safety

**Other Documents**

Tees Valley Design Guide and Specification – Residential and Industrial Estates Development