

Application Number

P/2012/1029

Site Address

Warberry C Of E Primary School
Cedars Road
Torquay
Devon
TQ1 1SB

Case Officer

Mr Scott Jones

Ward

Wellswood

Description

Formation of single storey four classroom extension with toilets and corridor

Executive Summary/Key Outcomes

The proposal seeks permission for a single-storey classroom extension that will provide four additional classrooms within an established primary school site.

The fundamental principle of extending over the footprint identified on what is currently an area of hard play is broadly considered acceptable. The school has sufficient outdoor play space elsewhere, notably to the North, and the recent permission P/2012/0778 provides suitable alternative hard play space.

The scale and design of the proposed extension is considered to sit comfortably within both the residential and wooded context, offering a clean modern interpretation of a Villa wing extension from the South, but appearing more recessive to the North, where it addresses the adjacent greenspace.

There are highway and arboricultural matters outstanding, however Officer's consider that there is scope for both of these matters to be resolved through the submission of further information and negotiation to reach an appropriate outcome.

Recommendation

Site Visit; Conditional Approval (conditions delegated to the Executive Head of Spatial Planning); Subject to (i) resolution of arboricultural matters to the satisfaction of the Authority's Arboriculture Team, (ii) resolution of highway and transportation matters, in regard to the likely implications of additional vehicular movements and the suitable mitigation thereof, being to the satisfaction of the Authority's Sustainable Transport Officer.

Site Details

This is a primary school site that sits to the North of Cedars Road, close to Warberry Copse. It currently holds a small cluster of one and two-storey

buildings set off a central access with limited parking to the front of the buildings. The setting of the buildings is of parking to the front with further areas of landscaping and hard play space. Associated outdoor play space is offered on playing fields sited to the North of a dissecting public footpath that runs along its northern border.

The surrounding area is largely residential in character and in terms of designation the site lies within the Warberries Conservation Area.

Detailed Proposals

A four classroom extension which is offered within a linear single-storey mono-pitched wing that is to be sited along the Northern border of the site.

In regard to physical detail the main body of the wing covers a footprint of approximately 31 metres in length by 11 metres in depth that offers four classrooms and a link corridor. This is supplemented by a recessed link to the existing building that is 6.5metres in length by 8 metres in depth. The elevations rise to an eaves level of 3.1 metres (from the ground level) off its northern aspect and 4.4 metres off its southern aspect, the difference being the result of a natural drop in ground level across the site towards the South. The mono-pitch element is set to a 17 degree pitch that rises a further 2.8 metres in height from the eaves.

In regard to materials the base elevation finish will be of white rendered masonry. Within the southern elevation this will remain the dominant wall finish, broken up by a linear run of aluminium windows framed within a 'box' detail. The northern elevation is clad with randomised wood effect planks at ground floor with render rising above towards the apex of the mono-pitch. The end elevation is again rendered with an external covered area protruding. The pitched element of the roof is to be finished in lead-coloured seamed aluminium, with flat elements finished with a grey membrane.

The scheme has developed through a bay-wide resource review that is seeking expansion to primary school numbers in order to respond to rising demand.

Summary Of Consultation Responses

English Heritage: The application should be determined in accordance with national and local advice, and on the basis of the Authority's specialist advice.

Conservation Officer: Recommends approval, the scheme responds positively to the comments offered by the Torbay Design Review Panel.

Arboricultural Officer: Further detail is required in order to provide a

recommendation.

South West Water: No objection to the application, foul and surface water drainage proposals as submitted have been agreed.

Drainage Department: Further to SWW's comments the drainage strategy is accepted. There is however no details of the system data used in the design, which would need to be submitted and approved. Surface water drainage system should be designed in order that no flooding to property is predicted for the critical 1:100 year design storm event (plus an allowance for climate change). Further detail should therefore be submitted before planning permission is granted.

Highway/Sustainable Transport Officers: No objection in principle, however the increase in staffing and pupil numbers will result in an impact upon the transport infrastructure if left unmitigated. Further information on the existing and proposed school staffing and pupil numbers, together with existing measures that are in place to encourage a modal shift away from car use and the proposed complementary measures that are expected to mitigate the additional pressures from such an expansion, should be provided for consideration.

Torbay Design Review Panel: The panel comments were broadly supportive of the project with minor suggestions in regard to:-

- reconsideration of the roof pitch
- over-sail roof beyond the gable end
- explore ramps between levels within landscape rather than in the gap behind the building
- consider using timber cladding on toilet block elevations

It is considered that the revised scheme has responded to these issues for the most part and that the scheme is acceptable in design terms.

Summary Of Representations

Five letters of representation have been received, a summary of the salient points are as follows:-

- overdevelopment of what is a small school site
- traffic associated with the site is already a problem locally and expansion to increase school numbers will only exacerbate the issues
- there already appears to be a high number of children attending the school from a wider area. Schools nearer to where there is true need should be expanded.

These letters are re-produced at Page T.201.

Relevant Planning History

P/2012/0778	New hard play area, outdoor PE store and connecting access path – permitted
P/2004/1188	2 Storey Extension To Form Classrooms With Entrance, Lobbies, WC'S Lift And Plant Rooms (As revised by plan received 8/9/04) - permitted
P/1998/1196	Erection Of Extension To Form Classroom – permitted
P/1991/1204	Extension To Nursery, Addition To Provide School Office - permitted
P/1988/0420	Extension To School Building, Formation Of 2 Hard Play/ Parking Areas And Siting Of Mobile Classroom – permitted
P/1986/1439	Single Mobile Classroom - permitted

Key Issues/Material Considerations

The most directly relevant Local Plan Policy is that of CF10 *New schools and improved school facilities*. The policy provides for the improvement and expansion of existing school facilities providing the following four criteria are met:

- 1) The sites for new schools are well related to residential areas
- 2) School sites are of a sufficient size to accommodate the design and layout
- 3) Proposals have regard to the need to safeguard existing playing fields
- 4) Proposals can be accommodated without undue detriment to surrounding residential areas

Considering the context of the site and policy guidance the key issues in respect of this application are:

- 1) Design and Visual Impact
- 2) Layout and Land Use
- 3) Neighbour Amenity
- 4) Highway Implications
- 5) Arboricultural Implications

Each of these matters is addressed in turn below.

1. Design / Visual Impact

The proposed building is sited to the northern part of the site and the development area appears to sit as a natural extension to the existing cluster of buildings. Its location is considered to be a pragmatic solution given the site's

constraints.

The scale of the proposed block is considered appropriate when considering the bulk and massing of the existing school buildings and the extent of the plot that they sit in. The linear form is considered to be a successful solution as to how to offer the required classroom numbers within what is a narrow linear site with a varied topography. Its mono-pitched design maintains the low-lying character of the school and keeps the actual and perceived bulk to a minimum. The detailed finish is suitable when considering the wider character of the school, with white render and the metal seamed roof sitting as a modern contextual reference of the surrounding Villa form. The treatment of the northern elevation, where it introduces timber effect cladding, offers a more visually recessive finish that responds to its framing of and relationship to the adjacent playing fields and woodland. All matters considered the proposal is a positive solution that would sit comfortably within the site and wider context, thus conserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Warberry's Conservation Area inline with key design-based policy guidance.

2. Layout and Land Use

The proposal seeks to provide a classroom extension on an outside hard play area. Although the site of the school to the South of the adjacent public footpath is relatively constrained the school does also encompass a relatively extensive area of greenspace immediately adjacent to the North of the footpath. This is currently fully grassed and contains formal and informal sports play. This area offers high quality play space and there is a concurrent scheme that has now been approved to replace the area of hard play in this area and provide improved playing pitch provision. Given the concurrent improvement proposed in the quality of outdoor play space to the north, suitable mitigation is provided for that which is lost to make space for the new classrooms.

3. Neighbour Amenity

The siting of the proposed block is fairly central within the plot and hence there is some considerable distance to adjacent residences to the East and to the South. When considering the scale of the building in conjunction with the distance to adjacent residential plots, local amenity would remain unaffected, with no loss of privacy, light, or any feeling of an overbearing nature. Noise associated with the use is likely to be commensurate with the established use and hence the impact upon neighbours in this regard is likely to be diminimus.

4. Highway Matters

The scheme offers no alterations to access or parking and thus the key issue is whether the likely increase in staff and pupil numbers will affect highway safety and/or local occupants. An up to date green travel plan has been submitted with the application which highlights what is currently being done by the school to promote a modal shift towards more sustainable modes (walking, cycling etc). It does not however explore the implications of the proposal upon school numbers,

the likely affect of this upon the highway network / locality, and a strategy to mitigate this. As matters stand greater understanding of this is imperative and as such a positive recommendation would be subject to further information about the school's transportation strategy and appropriate mitigation for any transport impacts that arise from the proposed expansion.

5. Arboriculture

The site sits within a Conservation Area and hence all tree specimens are protected. The scheme has been accompanied by a tree survey and impact assessment that covers the site in question and the adjacent playing fields site. The proposal requires the removal of a small number of trees, however as matters stand they have not been categorised. Until their arboricultural value is known in order to offer understanding towards acceptability / levels of mitigation, the Council's Arboricultural Officer withholds comment. Further information will be provided at the committee meeting in this regard.

S106/CIL -

The expansion of the school facility may offer a requirement for planning contributions in respect to sustainable transport, relative to the new floor area. However, the Authority's Sustainable Transportation Officer has responded that in this case on-site mitigation is the preferred option to offset the likely impact.

Conclusions

The fundamental principle of expansion is considered acceptable as the site is considered to have the attributes to comfortably accept the scale of development whilst maintaining adequate outdoor play space.

The scale and design of the proposed wing sits comfortably within the locality and offers a clean-lined modern interpretation of a Villa extension, which also relates well to the verdant character to the North through the use of materials.

There appears scope to offer mitigation towards transport and tree impacts, this matter will be updated for Members at the committee meeting.

Relevant Policies

- BES Built environment strategy
- BE1 Design of new development
- BE5 Policy in conservation areas
- CFS Sustainable communities strategy
- CF10 New schools and improved school facilities
- TS Land use transportation strategy
- T1 Development accessibility
- T2 Transport hierarchy
- T26 Access from development on to the highways

- LS Landscape strategy
- L9 Planting and retention of trees