

Application Number

P/2011/0641/R3

Site Address

Preston Primary School
Old Paignton Road
Torquay
Devon
TQ2 6UY

Case Officer

Mr John Burton

Ward

Cockington With Chelston

Description

Formation of new classroom block and reconfiguration of parking

Executive Summary/Key Outcomes

The Council seeks planning permission for the construction of a new classroom block (comprising 6 classrooms, a resource area, a meeting room and 'undercroft' storage area) on the site of an existing tarmac playground, together with a reconfigured driveway and parking areas at Preston Primary School. The additional classroom accommodation will provide educational facilities for children on the 'Autistic Spectrum of Disability' (A.S.D.) at both key stage levels 1 and 2. An existing octagonal classroom block will be demolished following construction of the new classroom block. Proposals include additional car parking, the loss of four small trees and replacement planting, the relocation of the playground facility, improved access into the site for fire engines, and a new retaining wall on the access driveway. The proposal is considered acceptable and will provide much needed new space and facilities for the school and the wider community.

Recommendation

Conditional approval - subject to the views of Sport England regarding the replacement of playground space, subject to the views of the Highway Authority regarding the access into the site in relation to the increase in parking provision and subject to confirmation from the Arboricultural Officer that the proposed landscaping and replacement tree planting is acceptable, and subject to no new representations being received during the consultation period.

Site Details

Existing Council Primary School, located off Old Paignton Road, running into the wooded slopes on the northern side of the former Hollicombe Gas Works area. The school and its access driveway runs parallel to the rears of properties fronting Roundham Road.

Detailed Proposals

The proposed development includes a number of key elements. Firstly, it is proposed to construct a new classroom block on the existing playground to the

south-west of the school curtilage. It will be a mainly three storey block providing accommodation for six new classrooms and containing an 'undercroft' storage area. This facility will be linked to the existing main school building by means of a new access corridor that will contain a separate meeting room and also double up as a resource area. This extension is proposed on the site of an existing tarmac playground area situated along the southern boundary of the school. This playground is set at a lower level than the adjoining school buildings and so the new corridor link will contain stairs and a lift to manage the difference in levels. for the upper and lower floor levels. At lower floor level, sliding doors will allow the resource area to open out to the adjoining playground. A covered canopy is to be formed along the north wall of the link to provide shelter to the playground. The materials proposed will blend in with those used on the main building, and will include facing brickwork on lower level walls, render finish to upper level walls, timber cladding to circulation areas (to reduce the scale of the new building), dark grey composite metal profiled roof cladding, polyester powder coated aluminium double glazed windows, and roof lights to maximise north light entry to classrooms.

Secondly, it is proposed to demolish the existing octagonal two-storey classroom block in the vicinity of the new build. It will be retained during the construction period to maintain the teaching accommodation, thus avoiding the need for temporary classrooms. The octagonal block will be demolished following completion of the proposed extension to allow the formation of improved playground facilities incorporating an external sheltered play area.

Thirdly, it is also proposed to widen the access driveway off Old Paignton Road. This will allow for a better parking arrangement whilst still maintaining a proper width for the drive so that fire engine access is improved, particularly to the playing field. The driveway widening scheme will require the removal of four small trees, but this will be mitigated through the interplanting of heavy standard replacement trees between the existing retained trees on the grass verge. It will also necessitate the construction of a retaining wall to retain the higher ground level along the eastern site boundary thus preventing disturbance to the gardens of residential properties on higher ground to the east. The wall will have a painted render finish.

Summary Of Consultation Responses

Sport England: Observations awaited, but unlikely to be negative so long as the proposed new play facilities is implemented to replace those lost. This can be guaranteed by the use of a condition.

Arboricultural Officer: Observations awaited.

Strategic Transportation (re - Green Travel Plan): Observations awaited.

Highways Officer: Observations awaited.

Summary Of Representations

None received as yet, however legal advice recommends that the proposal should be re-advertised to more accurately reflect all of the proposal. The new consultation period will run until 6th October.

Relevant Planning History

Pre-application enquiry made earlier this year for the current proposal received a favourable response.

Key Issues/Material Considerations

A number of options were considered to satisfy the brief of providing additional 'Autistic Spectrum of Disability' (ASD) classroom accommodation on the site. The option under consideration in this application was chosen on the grounds that it would minimise disruption to the school, could be achieved within the cost parameters, would enhance the existing playing field play area and outlook from the school, and would allow the existing octagonal class rooms to be retained during construction.

Principle and Planning Policy -

The principle is acceptable because there is significant room at the school, the new classroom block is proposed in an area furthest away from residential properties and existing landscaping will not be adversely affected. The proposal is in accord with policy CF1 which supports new school and community facilities; and CF10 which supports improved school facilities. The proposal accords with policies BES, BE1 and BE2 which seek improvements to the environment and landscape. Although the proposals will affect trees and hence policy L9 (planting and retention of trees) will be relevant, the mitigating measures proposed are more than sufficient to make the scheme acceptable in this regard.

Closing the gap -

Preston Primary School is sited within a catchment area with a rising population. The proposed classrooms will be a valuable resource for Preston Primary School and the wider community. The additional classroom accommodation will enable the school to provide education for children on the autistic spectrum of disability at both key stage levels 1 and 2. This will provide children with special needs continuity in their primary education, and avoid the need to move children to another specialist school at key stage 2 level.

A meeting room is to be incorporated for local groups to extend the use of the school by the wider community out of school hours.

Climate change -

Roof lights are proposed to maximise use of natural light.

Environmental Enhancement -

The site for the proposed classroom building is currently a tarmaced playground and therefore the new building will not reduce the 'green site area' occupied by the existing landscape, trees or wildlife habitat.

The proposed building is placed well away from the entrance onto Old Paignton Road, and is shown tucked into the south-eastern corner of the site. Although there is a footpath that runs to the south of the school past the area proposed for development, the site is screened by trees and at a higher level than the footpath. The design and appearance of the proposed extension matches the existing school buildings, which would help to assimilate the new build into the site. The building would not be very visible from many public places and so would not have a material impact upon visual amenity.

The further views of the Arboricultural Officer have been sought particularly in respect of the screening of the new classroom block from across the valley, for example from Cockington Lane or Hollicombe Lane . The small trees shown to be lost on the entrance driveway are mitigated by new planting. This is as agreed with the Council's Arboricultural Officer during his consideration of the pre-application enquiry. The further views of the Arboricultural Officer will be reported to Members at their meeting.

Accessibility -

The proposal will be compliant with Part M of the Building Regulations. A lift is to be installed to cater for the classrooms at varying floor levels. A disabled toilet facility is provided.

There are no specific requirements within the Saved Adopted Torbay Local Plan for parking provision at primary schools. However, the provision of 1 space for every two members of staff is in accordance with other similar proposals. The Highway Officer has been asked for his comments.

A School Travel Health Check (S.T.H.C.) has been prepared by the Council for the school in order to encourage sustainable travel to school. This shows that there is a need for the school to reduce the number of pupils being driven to and from school, and increase the distance pupils are prepared to walk or cycle to school. This should be the purpose of a Green Travel Plan (G.T.P.) and the prepared S.T.H.C. is useful in informing the G.T.P. A G.T.P. will still need to be prepared and this will be ensured by condition.

S106/CIL -

There are sufficient community gains from this proposal to offset any costs that may arise, and so a planning obligation under s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act will not be required.

Conclusions

The proposal will provide a significant number of benefits to both staff and pupils,

specifically autistic pupils who might otherwise have to find alternative schooling at key stage 2. The proposal is well designed, provides covered play space, parking space and enhanced access arrangements. The proposal will have no adverse material impact upon trees, the landscape or residential amenity.

As this report explains, this application has been re-advertised following legal advice, so that it more accurately reflects the proposed development. The new consultation period will expire after Members consideration of the proposal. If any representations are received after the Committee date and these raise new issues not considered by Members, then the matter will be brought back to Members. Otherwise the application should be delegated to the Executive Head Spatial Planning to issue in accordance with members instructions.

Condition(s)/Reason(s)

01. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development) whichever is the sooner, or at such other time as agreed by the Local Planning Authority in writing, and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason In the interests of the amenities of the area, and to accord with policies L9, BE1 and BE2 of the Saved Adopted Torbay Local Plan.

02. Prior to the first use of the new classroom block and the ancillary facilities hereby approved, a comprehensive staff and pupil Green Travel Plan shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The use of the development, hereby approved, shall thereafter accord with the provisions of the approved Travel Plan.

Reason: In order to ensure that the development complies with policies TS, T1, T2, T3, T7, T25, T26 and T27 of the saved adopted Torbay Local Plan (1995-2011).

Relevant Policies

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