

Application Number

P/2017/0295

Site AddressWhite Rock Primary School
Davies Avenue
Paignton
TQ4 7AW**Case Officer**

Gary Crawford

Ward

Churston With Galmpton

Description

Prefabricated modular nursery accommodation.

Executive Summary/Key Outcomes

This application is for the erection of a prefabricated modular building to be used as nursery accommodation at White Rock Primary School, Davies Avenue, Paignton. The proposal is intended to improve on Early Years provision in the area, where there is a recognised need against current local and national trends.

National planning guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages local planning authorities to work positively and collaboratively with schools to help to meet their needs in providing sufficient choice of school places and places great importance on this issue. Policy SC3 (Education, skills and local labour) of the Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030 supports provision of new educational facilities in Torbay.

The key planning issue with this proposal is the impact of traffic and parking from the proposal on local roads, which is already perceived as a problem by local residents. The application is recommended for approval, subject to suitably worded conditions regarding an additional parking space on site, an allocated cycle space, staff shower and changing facilities, and the submission of a revised Travel Plan.

Recommendation

Subject to the receipt of additional information relating to ecological habitat, conditional approval delegated to the Executive Head of Business Services in order that the detailed wording of the conditions can be finalised.

Statutory Determination Period

8 weeks, the determination date was 18th May 2017. Due to the number of objections received, the application is being reported to committee.

Site Details

The site is the existing White Rock Primary School which has its main access and entrance off Davies Avenue. There is wooded area to the south of the main school building, adjacent to the rear boundaries of the properties in Steed Close, which

has a Tree Preservation Order as a designated woodland. The area of the site where the modular building would be located consists of scrubland, hardstanding and woodland.

Detailed Proposals

The application is for the erection of a prefabricated modular building to be used for Early Years nursery accommodation. The unit would be 16.7m in depth, 12.2m in width and 3.4m in height with a flat roof. The unit would feature a 4m deep canopy on its west elevation and a 1m deep canopy entrance on its east elevation. The proposed materials are white plastisol steel walls, steel doors, upvc windows and a timber framed canopy with polycarbonate roof covering. The modular building would also feature an enclosed play area to the west. It would be accessed via a separate footway from the main school grounds which would be bordered by a 2.4m high anti-climb fence on its northern side.

The proposed nursery would accommodate 26 full time equivalent (FTE) children and 4 members of staff. At present, White Rock Primary School has approximately 510 children on role with 20 full time teachers and 2 part time teaching staff alongside 3 full time and 44 part time ancillary staff. In the summer of 2016, a two phase expansion project (approved under planning application P/2014/0817) was completed which provided a seven classroom extension to the school to accommodate an additional 210 pupils. The expansion is to be undertaken over a 7 year period and the increase in the school role will be approximately 30 pupils per year. In addition to an increase in pupil numbers, the number of staff is expected to rise to approximately 80.

There are 23 car parking spaces on site for staff, including 1 disabled bay. In addition, there are 40 cycle spaces and 80 scooter spaces on site.

Part of the proposal involves the removal of a group of trees within the protected woodland to accommodate the building on the site. As these trees form part of a group of protected woodland, new planting is proposed to mitigate for the loss of trees.

Summary Of Consultation Responses

Strategic Transport: The Strategic Transport Officer advises that the proposal should have at least one on-site parking space for staff and ensure easy access to the covered cycle parking provision and proposed changing facilities in the main complex. The Strategic Transport Officer also advises that a Travel Plan should be submitted which sets out how a 30 % modal shift can be achieved, as required by Policy TA2 (Development access) of the Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030.

Arboricultural Officer: No objection to the proposed application subject to strict adherence to the supporting tree report and its methodologies for protection and planting.

Drainage Engineer: No objections providing the surface water drainage is constructed in accordance with the submitted design and drawings.

Senior Environmental Health Officer: No comment.

Summary Of Representations

Two letters of support and five representations of objection have been received. The issues raised by the objectors were:

- o Increase in traffic
- o Impact on parking in nearby roads
- o Impact on highway safety.

Relevant Planning History

P/2015/0217 Footway/Cyclepath, lighting and associated works; Approved 27.05.2015

P/2015/0212 Demolition of existing two storey classroom block on northern school elevation, Construction of a replacement two storey classroom block and ancillary works; Approved 14.05.2015

P/2014/1200 Non material amendment to P/2014/0817 to alter the fenestration, rearrange ventilation ducts and reduce the size of the brise soleil; Approved 19.12.2014

P/2014/0817 Construction of a two storey classroom block and dining room extension, together with the provision of a combined cycle/pedestrian path; Approved 23.10.2014

P/2014/0774 Relocation of single storey temporary classroom building; Approved 17.09.2014

P/2013/0920 Replace an existing temporary classroom with a new temporary classroom and associated drainage; Approved 21.11.2013

P/2008/0089 New swimming pool kitchenette, plant room and external store for sports equipment on land adjoining existing open air swimming pool; Approved 25.02.2008

P/2005/2140 Changing room block; Approved 17.01.2006

P/2003/0338 Extension to include new classrooms toilet and changing facilities; Approved 10.04.2003

Key Issues/Material Considerations

The key issues to consider in relation to this application are:

1. Principle of the development
2. Impact on Highways
3. Impact on trees
4. Design
5. Impact on Amenity
6. Drainage

1. Principle of the Development

Policy SS11 (Sustainable communities) of the Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030 states that proposals that regenerate or lead to the improvement of social, economic or environment conditions in Torbay will be supported in principle. Policy SS11 details further that development proposals will be assessed against 13 criterion which includes promoting social inclusion, and seeking to eliminate exclusion based on access to housing, health, education, recreation or other facilities. Policy SC3 (Education, skills and local labour) of the Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030 specifies that the Local Plan will support the improvement of existing and provision of new educational facilities to meet identified needs in Torbay. Policy SC3 notes further that this includes the expansion of schools to meet identified short to medium-term needs. Policy SC5 (Child poverty) of the Torbay Local Plan 2012 states that new development will be assessed for its contribution towards reducing child poverty, proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal. This includes the need to support investment in existing schools and make appropriate contributions, and improve equality of access to high quality education provision for all, including early-years education.

Furthermore, Paragraph 72 of the NPPF specifies:

"The Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should;

- o give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools; and
- o work with schools promoters to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted."

The proposed development would improve the provision of Early Years education in the area, where there is a recognised need against current local and national trends, by expanding an existing school. As such, it is deemed that the principle of the development would accord with Policies SS11, SC3 and SC5.

2. Impact on Highways

The current application proposes a nursery facility for 26 full time equivalent (FTE) children and 4 members of staff. Appendix F (Car parking requirements) to Policy TA3 (Parking requirements) of the Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030 sets out that for

pre-school and nursery developments, 1 parking space per 4 staff members and 1 cycle space per 4 staff. As the proposal does not include any additional parking spaces on the site, it is considered necessary that a condition is included with any permission which states that prior to the occupation of the proposed nursery, a dedicated parking space on the existing school site for the new nursery teacher shall be provided. Given that there are 40 existing cycle spaces on site, it is considered reasonable that a condition is included with any permission which specifies that one cycle space is allocated for the nursery in order to comply with Policy TA3. One of the proposed measures in the submitted Travel Plan details that the school should provide showers and changing facilities for staff who may cycle further distances by 2021. In light of this proposed measure and in order to encourage staff across the school site to travel to work by bike, it is deemed necessary that a condition is included with any permission which states that prior to the occupation of the proposed nursery, the school shall provide a shower and changing facilities for the use of staff within the existing building.

The key issues raised by local residents objecting to the application are the impact of additional traffic on local roads, increased parking in local roads and the impact on highway safety. It is noted that waiting restrictions between the hours of 8am - 9am and 3pm - 4pm Monday - Friday have been introduced in both Davies Avenue and Steed Close to prevent inappropriate on-street parking.

Furthermore, the previously approved planning application P/2014/0817 included a condition which stated that a travel plan shall be implemented in full prior to the first use of the approved classroom extension and the travel plan shall be formally reviewed by the school annually by the school and Local Planning Authority to ensure that the development incorporates sustainable development principles. An updated Travel Plan has been submitted with the current application which details that the following sustainable transport progress has been made:

- o Combined cycle/pedestrian path across playing fields was constructed in July 2016.
- o Provision of bikeability training and scooter training for pupils.
- o Provision of additional covered secure scooter and cycle spaces - there is a total of 80 scooter spaces and 40 cycle spaces on site.
- o Implementation of a walking bus which is run by members of staff.
- o A group of pupils have been appointed Junior Road Safety Officers and patrol outside the school, with a trained adult, to advise and model good road safety practice to pupils and their families.

In terms of increased traffic and parking in the surrounding roads from parents dropping off their children at the proposed nursery, as the proposed nursery would be open from 7.30am - 6pm, it is likely that parents/guardians would drop off/pick up their children over a staggered period of time rather than during peak times (8am - 9am and 3pm - 4pm). It is considered that the highways impacts from the proposed nursery can be further mitigated by the implementation of a suitable

Travel Plan. It is deemed necessary that a condition is included with any permission which states that prior to the occupation of the proposed nursery, a revised Travel Plan shall be submitted to and improved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The revised Travel Plan should include SMART targets (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound) and deliver a reduction in the number of staff and parents/guardians travelling to the nursery by 30%, over the first five years of the Travel Plan.

Therefore, given the existing waiting restrictions in Davies Avenue and Steed Close, and subject to suitably worded conditions regarding an additional parking space on site, an allocated cycle space, staff shower and changing facilities, and the submission of a revised Travel Plan, the proposal is considered to be acceptable with regards to its impact on the highway.

3. Impact on trees

Part of the proposal involves the removal of a group of trees within the protected woodland to the south of the application site to accommodate the proposed modular building on the site. The submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment has identified that the group of trees to be removed to facilitate the proposal are of low value and contain trees that are suppressed, poorly formed, structurally poor and collapsed. The trees to be removed are located on the northern edge of the protected woodland so there are no significant public views of the trees. As the trees to be removed form part of a group of protected woodland, new planting is proposed to mitigate the loss of trees. The Council's Arboricultural Officer has no objections to the proposal subject to strict adherence to the supporting tree report and its methodologies for protection and planting.

The application site is located within the greater horseshoe bat sustenance zone of the South Hams Special Area of Conservation (SAC). An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey which was submitted for application P/2014/0817 at White Rock Primary School identified that the tree lines on the site provided suitable foraging and commuting habitats for bats. The council has requested the submission of an update on the previous habitat survey with regards to the impact of the proposed development on bats. These details will be reported at Development Management Committee (DMC).

4. Design

The proposed modular building would be situated in a relatively secluded position within the school site and would be located between an existing two storey building and an area of woodland. Whilst the design of the proposed building would be functional, given that the building is unlikely to be particularly visible within the public realm, the design of the building is deemed appropriate. Furthermore, the building would improve the provision of Early Years education in the area. As such, the design and layout of the building is considered to be acceptable and it would not have any significantly harmful impacts on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Given the existing 2.4m high anti-climb fencing around the

perimeter of the site, the addition of further 2.4m high fencing adjacent to the new footway is deemed acceptable.

5. Impact on Amenity

Given the distance of the proposed modular building to the nearest residential properties (approximately 25 metres to the south east) and the existence of the woodland area in between, it is considered that there will be no material loss of amenity to the occupiers of these properties. For the same reason, it is not considered that the proposal would result in a loss of privacy to the occupiers of these properties.

6. Drainage

Detailed information has been submitted with regards to surface water drainage from the proposed development which is deemed to be acceptable by the Council's Drainage Engineer. As such, a condition will be included with any permission which states that the drainage should be constructed in accordance with the submitted drainage details.

S106/CIL

N/A

Statement on Human Rights and Equalities Issues

Human Rights Act - The development has been assessed against the provisions of the Human Rights Act, and in particular Article 1 of the First Protocol and Article 8 of the Act itself. This Act gives further effect to the rights included in the European Convention on Human Rights. In arriving at this recommendation, due regard has been given to the applicant's reasonable development rights and expectations which have been balanced and weighed against the wider community interests, as expressed through third party interests / the Development Plan and Central Government Guidance.

Equalities Act - No issue

Conclusions

Subject to the imposition of conditions and the submission of further information relating to ecological habitat, the proposals accord with the provisions of the Local Plan and are recommended for approval.

Condition(s)/Reason(s)

01. The proposed works shall be undertaken in strict adherence to the supporting tree report and its methodologies for protection and planting.
02. The new tree planting shall accord with the submitted tree report and if any trees die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development, they shall be

replaced with a tree of a similar size and species.

03. Prior to the occupation of the proposed nursery, a dedicated parking space on the existing school site for the new nursery teacher shall be provided.
04. Prior to the occupation of the proposed nursery, a dedicated cycle space within the existing cycle shelters on site shall be allocated for nursery staff only.
05. Prior to the occupation of the proposed nursery, the school shall provide a shower and changing facilities for the use of staff.
06. Prior to the occupation of the proposed nursery, a revised Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Travel Plan shall be implemented in full and shall be formally reviewed by the school annually in liaison with the Local Planning Authority.
07. Surface water drainage shall be provided in accordance with the submitted drainage details.

Relevant Policies

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