

UPDATE REPORT:

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ITEM NO. 11

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 30 May 2018

Ward: Caversham

App No.: 180552/REG3

Address: The Heights Primary School, 82 Gosbrook Road, Caversham, Reading

Proposal: Extension to the existing planning approval ref 151283 until 31st August 2020. Erection of a new build 2 storey, 6 classroom modular unit on part of the St. Anne's School site, to allow the school to expand towards a capacity of 325 pupils on the temporary school site until 31st August 2020. Associated external works including the temporary annexation of a portion of the adjacent Westfield Road Recreation Ground for pupils' outdoor play area during school hours.

End date: 7/6/2018

RECOMMENDATION AMENDED TO:

Subject to the satisfactory completion of a s.106 legal agreement/unilateral undertaking (as appropriate), delegate to the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services (HPDRS) to GRANT planning permission by 7/6/2018. If the s.106 agreement is not completed by 7/6/2018, delegate to the HPDRS to REFUSE planning permission, unless the HPDRS indicates an extension of time.

Amended Heads of Terms as follows:

1. Parking management: a contribution of £6,000 towards a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) in the area to facilitate an extension of the controlled parking zone (CPZ) in Lower Caversham. Payment on commencement of the development and index-linked from the date of permission; and
2. Staff parking provision to be secured to allow staff to park in the extended CPZ, using temporary concessionary permits (to be applied for by the applicant); or
3. In the event of the failure to secure temporary concessionary permits in 2 above, the applicant to provide demonstration that off-street public parking has been secured for the duration of the use via a public or commercial car park in the vicinity of the application site.
4. No occupation of the school buildings until clauses 1 and 2/3 above have been satisfied.

Conditions update:

3. Contaminated land: remediation strategy to be submitted, unless confirmation of suitability received from the Council's Environmental Protection team
15. Cycle plan now approved
16. Flooding: add minimum floor levels
- 24 Hours of use of classrooms: propose up to five events at weekends per School year.

1. FLOODING UPDATE

- 1.1 The **Environment Agency** has not provided a response to the application. It is assumed that their Standing Advice would apply and their advice in relation to previous applications has been reviewed. It is considered appropriate for conditions to be attached in relation to minimum floor heights so as not to impede floodwater flows, and for the development to proceed in accordance with the submitted FRA, in order to accord with Policy CS35 (Flooding). Condition 16 should be adjusted to reflect this.

2. TRAFFIC AND PARKING

- 2.1 **RBC Transport Strategy** has reviewed updated information from the applicant on traffic modelling in the area and agrees that impact on junctions is suitable. However, at the time of writing of the main Agenda report, it was hoped that staff parking may continue to take place from the St. Anne's Church Hall car park, off South View Avenue, however, this option is no longer available.
- 2.2 Notwithstanding the School's efforts for sustainable journeying, Transport Strategy has agreed the required parking level for staff parking as 17 car parking spaces, which would ideally be provided on site, or otherwise as near as possible to the site.
- 2.3 The School will first seek to park staff cars nearby, but these are residential streets, where there are already issues with commuter parking occurring on those streets which are not already part of the CPZ. There is understood to be general support within the local area for an extension of the CPZ to allow control of the on-street parking and deter commuter parking, however, the making of the necessary Order would need to be funded and the development itself would contribute to parking pressures unacceptably if no strategy were to be put in place. Therefore the first part of the legal agreement would seek to extend the CPZ, subject to approval by the Council's Traffic Management Sub-Committee (TMSC). This is partly in recognition of the pressure which is being put on local streets as a result of the location of the School and members will recall that the £6,000 was an obligation which was 'put aside' to be called-in, as required and officers now consider that this is that time. It should be remembered that the extension of the CPZ would be permanent and should free up daytime parking space by removing unnecessary commuter parking.
- 2.4 The second part of the legal agreement is for the applicant to obtain temporary access to this freed-up space, for the remainder of the tie required for the School. The applicant is in the process of applying for 17 concessionary permits for teachers. These would be daytime/term-time only and only for the duration of the School's continued siting at the current site. However, the decision as to whether or not to grant these

concessionary permits does not rest with this Committee and the permits application will be reported to the Council's Traffic Management Sub-Committee (TMSC) on 16 June. In the event that the TMSC rejects the application for permits, then the third part of the agreement requires the applicant to secure 'season ticket' parking for staff and to have demonstrated this.

- 2.5 RBC Transport Strategy agrees with the above and officers consider that these updated arrangements are suitable in terms of meeting the relevant transport policies, which inter alia include CS4, CS24, CS20 and DM12 and the Council's Parking Standards. The latest cycle parking plan has been approved.

3. CONSULTATIONS UPDATE

- 3.1 **Berkshire Archaeology** has not responded to the details regarding foundations for the fencing, as a precaution a condition is recommended for these details to be submitted to comply with Policy CS33.
- 3.2 **Caversham and District Residents' Association (CADRA)** hopes that when the temporary school leaves the site there will be conditions in place to ensure that the park is reinstated to its original condition. We would also seek a commitment to replanting three trees to replace those that that would be lost as a result of this proposal, and which currently screen Elizabeth House. *Noted and these matters covered in the main Agenda report. Leisure and Recreation satisfied that no park trees are affected by the proposal*
- 3.3 **Matt Rodda MP (Reading East)** believes the application is completely out of keeping with the park. In summary he considers that:
- The fencing off of part of the park will affect the residents' enjoyment of it
 - Sweeping views across the park will be interrupted by the fence
 - The fence is a semi-permanent structure and concerned for the length of time it may remain
 - Advises that Christchurch Meadows is unsuitable, being across a busy road and is overused
- 3.4 Yesterday, an email was sent to all members of the Committee by the **Friends of Westfield Park**, a community group recently formed in response to the latest extension application from The Heights Primary School. Officers consider that all the points therein are either covered in the main Agenda report or this update report or are otherwise not relevant material considerations to the assessment of this planning application.

4. FURTHER OBJECTIONS RECEIVED

4.1 The following section addresses further issues in objections, where not covered in the main Agenda report. The current number of objections to the scheme received is 315.

Concern	<i>Officer response</i>
Concern for parents' cars idling and air pollution levels in Caversham showing that levels are currently above national limits. Reading Borough Council has a duty to review this data and act upon it for the well-being of the residents of the area.	<i>This is a matter which would be controllable under the Environmental Protection Act and not planning.</i>
Traffic to the school has increased. This is intolerable and unacceptable when the travel to school distances are comparatively short. No attempt has been made within this planning application to formalise parking arrangements for The Heights families and there are opportunities in car parks nearby. A high proportion of parents drive pupils to school and this is not acceptable.	<i>School travel plan is updated and is accepted. Travel data is accepted.</i>
Object to the knocking down of the wall and the making of the hardstanding area.	<i>The main Agenda report explains that these are reversible actions and conditions can require this.</i>
Disagrees with the statement in the School's Frequently Asked Questions sheet that 20% of the park is affected	<i>The main agenda report explains the effect on the park.</i>
This area also crosses the path which I believe is a public right of way and is widely used by pedestrians and cyclists.	<i>This is not a public right of way and RBC Parks and Recreation does not object to the temporary effect of the fenced off area on this pathway.</i>
Does not believe that another two years will be enough; what if the permanent site is not delivered?	<i>Each application must be considered on its individual merits.</i>
The application suggests that the site is very possibly going to continue to be used as an educational establishment after The Heights have moved. Concerned that if the park is annexed off this will remain in place and green space would be lost permanently.	<i>The main Agenda report explains that the D1 use would continue, but to be clear, this would only extend to the 82 Gosbrook Road site.</i>
Believes there are alternatives to the	<i>Application has been assessed on its</i>

submitted plans and there should be consultation on these.	<i>merits and it is not necessary for a range of alternatives to be analysed.</i>
Use Christchurch Meadows instead	<i>Applicant advises that Christchurch Meadows is already being used for P.E. lessons for older pupils, but a minimum area of school playground is still required for the school.</i>
Height of fence at 1.2 metres will attract antisocial behaviour and vandalism and be overbearing.	<i>Height will not obstruct surveillance. Bow-top metal fence should be resistant to vandalism.</i>
Annexed area offers no shade or natural areas for play.	<i>Area considered suitable for a playground by the LEA (applicant).</i>
Annexed area would require more maintenance and therefore cost, which is not accounted for.	<i>Maintenance liability is not a material consideration although RBC Parks and Recreation will control any additional temporary surfacing arrangements, as may be required.</i>
Westfield Park should be designated as a 'Local Green Space', as advised in the National Planning Policy Framework.	<i>The emerging local plan designates this as local green space, but little weight can be afforded to this document in development control decisions on planning applications at this time. The present designations in the adopted LDF documents must apply.</i>
Concerned that work was carried out to chop down trees and undergrowth in St Anne's playing field during the nesting season, which is contrary to ecologist advice and irresponsible behaviour.	<i>The clearance works carried out were not development and therefore not capable of control. HELEN D, anything else?</i>
Application consideration should be deferred for reasons of non-provision of staff parking/management plan	<i>Covered elsewhere in this update report.</i>
Application consideration should be deferred for reasons of the ownership boundaries of St Anne's playing field	<i>St. Anne's is owned by the Council. CHECK!</i>
Application consideration should be deferred due to considerations over site access routes for building work	<i>Covered elsewhere in this update report.</i>
Application consideration should be deferred for reasons of paperwork trail subject to a FOI request relating to Area 8 of the park which was privately funded by The Heights Parents Association and secured a community use agreement without public consultation or notification. This area should be considered within the	<i>Covered elsewhere and not related to the consideration of the planning application.</i>

planning application so the area annexed for use by The Heights can be considered in its entirety and therefore more accurately.	
Fence will lessen value of open space. Open space value set out in CABE documents and Council's own Open Spaces Strategy	<i>Minor effect on function and openness of park, as explained in main Agenda report.</i>
Schools are supposed to unite local communities, however The Heights' tenancy in Lower Caversham has put a huge stress on many of the local people	<i>Noted that the school has been on the temporary site and now proposes to take in land beyond the former nursery school site.</i>
Why should we lose public green space for a private school?	<i>This is a state school.</i>
On weekends the park on the opposite side of Gosbrook Road is taken up with football with cars parked all over the footpath outside Elizabeth House.	<i>Not connected to this planning application.</i>
The whole situation is unfortunate but is the result of poor and misguided governmental decisions. Local communities must not be penalised for poor national government decisions.	<i>The application is being considered on its individual planning merits. The public benefit of this school is set out in the main Agenda report.</i>

5. OTHER MATTERS

- 5.1 The applicant has advised that whilst the proposed school hours condition is usually suitable, it would preclude them from running other activities, e.g. school fetes, on various dates throughout the year. Officers are conscious of the disturbance that such events may cause and propose a similar condition to that used for other new schools in residential locations. Condition 24 hours of use of classrooms, now proposes up to five events at weekends per School year.
- 5.2 The applicant has supplied a remediation strategy for dealing with the results of the contaminated land report, but a response from the EP team is not available at the time of writing, therefore a pre-commencement condition is still required. Condition 3 requires this.
- 5.3 For completeness, the previous update report to application 151823 is appended to this update report.
- 5.4 The site location plan was missing from the main Agenda report, it is supplied below.

Case Officer: **Richard Eatough**

Site Location Plan is E03620-A-PL-1010



UPDATE REPORT:

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES READING BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 9 SEPTEMBER 2015	ITEM NO. 11
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Ward: Caversham
App No.: 151283
Address: 82 Gosbrook Road, Caversham, Reading
Proposal: Construction of a first floor classroom extension over existing single-storey classrooms to form enlarged temporary school, for an extended temporary period until 31 August 2018.

RECOMMENDATION (AMENDED):

Delegate to the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services to **GRANT** planning permission, subject to the satisfactory completion of a Deed of Variation S.106 legal agreement to link this permission to planning permission 140940 to (continue to) secure a deposit of £6,000 towards (a) Traffic Regulation Order(s) in the area.

If the S.106 agreement is not completed by 29 September 2015, delegate to the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services to refuse planning permission.

Additional conditions:

-Submission of details of further crown lifting to trees at the north of the site, if such is required to site the additional first floor accommodation.

-Submission of timetable for arborists' supervision during the construction works.

-Tree protection as set out in CMS. Arborist to approve final positioning and specification of tree protection measures.

1. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

1.1 Officers confirm that no objections have been from CADRA, the GLOBE Group or Emmer Green Residents' Association and no further letters of objection have been received.

2. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY RESPONSE

2.1 The Environment Agency has confirmed that they have no objections to the application and that the conditions previously recommended by the EA need to be carried forward with this proposal. The EA also confirms that the assessment has been made given the temporary nature of the proposal.

2.2 Officers note the EA's comments and advise that the conditions in the main agenda report are suitable.

3. TREES

- 3.1 The main report identifies a number of outstanding matter with regard to tree works and queries from the Council's Tree Officer. In response to each, officers can confirm the following:
- 3.2 There was a concern that Tree T16 (the off-site Oak, within the parking area to Elizabeth House) needed crown-lifting, if that had not been carried out previously. The applicant has now confirmed that lifting indeed took place in 2014, to allow the original modular units to be brought to the site. This confirmation is acceptable.
- 3.3 The Tree Officer requested confirmation that her advice for 25% reduction in tree canopies to trees T10 and T11 (at the north of the site) which was supplied in 2014, was in fact carried out. Again, the applicant has confirmed that this was the case and this is considered by the applicant to also be sufficient to accommodate the new storey. However, at the time of writing, this has not been confirmed by the Council's tree officer and therefore an additional condition for further crown-lifting (if advised by a arborist) is recommended.
- 3.4 The Tree Officer advised that Arboriculturist supervision should be included, via a timetable to be provided. This has not been prepared in time for this report and the applicant is content for this to be dealt with via condition.
- 3.5 The tree report should show that it is the arboriculturalist who should sign off the tree protection fencing, not the Local Planning Authority. This can be covered in a restrictive condition.
- 3.6 The applicant confirms that all tree protection to trees off-site are set out within the CMS as previously submitted and this include both trunk protection and matting to spread lorry weight and this is acceptable.
- 3.7 With the above conditions, the application complies with Policy CS38. The other tree conditions remain.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The application is continued to be recommended to you for approval.
- 4.2 The two missing reports were missed off the main agenda in error, they are attached here for members' information.

**APPENDICES: committee report and update report, planning permission 140940
(THESE NOT ATTACHED)**

-ENDS-