

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

PLANS BOARD

16TH NOVEMBER 2011

LATE ITEM

Schedule 1 - Planning applications for determination by Board

**TWC/2011/0815 St Georges C of E Primary School, London Road, St
Georges, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 9LJ Erection of a new classroom block 2**

TWC/2011/0815 St Georges C of E Primary School, London Road, St Georges, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 9LJ

Erection of a new classroom block

APPLICANT

Telford & Wrekin Council

RECEIVED

30/09/2011

PARISH

St. Georges and Priorslee

WARD

St. Georges

OBJECTIONS RECEIVED: Yes

MAIN ISSUES: loss of playing field, character and appearance

THE PROPOSAL:

This is a Council application for the erection of one new permanent classroom block to replace the existing two timber demountable structures. The proposed building will be located at the rear of the main school building to provide three classrooms. The proposed building will be constructed of brickwork with a duo-pitch roof with concrete interlocking tiles and will include triple glazed windows.

The new building is proposed adjacent to the existing demountables and will be located closer to the main sports field on land that is currently grassed and which forms part of the periphery of the playing fields.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

St George's Church of England Primary School is located on Grove Street, off Stafford Street, the main approach road into St George's, in a predominantly residential area with residential development on all boundaries. The school site is partly screened by trees, hedging and fencing.

The application site comprises a traditional school premises originally built in the early 1960's with various extensions and demountables being added over time. The roofs are a combination of a flat and pitched roof construction. Pedestrian and vehicular access is off Grove Street. Car parking is to the northern boundary and a large sports field is located to the south of the school buildings.

PLANNING HISTORY:

W2004/0475 Siting of two demountable classroom units, creation of a new access road and erection of new fencing - Full Granted

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT:

National Planning Guidance

PPS 1 - Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS17 - Planning for Open Space, Sport & Recreation

Draft National Planning Policy Framework

Saved Wrekin Local Plan Policies

Policy UD2 - Design Criteria

LDF Core Strategy
Policy CS10 - Community Facilities
Policy CS15 - Urban Design

CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

A site notice and 69 direct neighbour letters publicised the application

A single letter of objection was received from 4, London Road concerned about possible increased traffic

St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council - Support

Drainage - Support subject to conditions: B33 – Foul & Surface Water

Geotechs - Add I17 Minerals Area and I20 Contaminated Land

Highways - No Objection

Sport England - Sport England have stated their intention to lodge a formal objection unless current issues with the application can be resolved. Their objection relates to the impact the proposed development will have on the potential of the playing field to be used for different sporting activities, now and in the future. Sport England would like to see a more suitable location for the proposed building; preferably where the existing demountables stand.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:

Policy UD2 provides guidance to assess whether or not proposals are of an appropriate design quality and relate positively to their context. It advises the Council to assess proposed development in relation to its scale, massing, form, density, orientation and layout, proportions, materials, landscape elements, access, parking and spatial quality. Moreover, policy CS15, amongst other issues, states that development will assist in creating and sustaining safe places, positively influencing the appearance of the local environment. National guidance contained in PPS1, asserts that development should be of high quality design, respond to local context and should reinforce local distinctiveness.

The proposed building will be located at the rear of the main school building; the design is sympathetic to the 'original' style of the building and includes matching brickwork detailing and a duo-pitched roof design to help give a uniform appearance across the site.

A permanent building will allow the removal of two demountable buildings which is considered an enhancement to the visual amenity of the area and the existing car parking arrangements are unaffected. This accords with policies UD2, CS15 and PPS1.

Policy CS10 inter alia, asserts that new community facilities or improvements to existing community facilities to meet the needs of local residents will be supported. The enhanced provision of these community facilities is therefore compliant with policy CS10.

PPG17 acknowledges that open spaces, sport and recreation all underpin people's quality of life. In advance of an assessment of need, local authorities should give very careful consideration to any planning applications involving development on playing fields, where a robust assessment of need in accordance with this guidance has not been undertaken, planning permission for such developments should not be allowed unless:

- i. the proposed development is ancillary to the use of the site as a playing field (e.g. new changing rooms) and does not adversely affect the quantity or quality of pitches and their use;
- ii. the proposed development only affects land which is incapable of forming a playing pitch (or part of one);
- iii. the playing fields that would be lost as a result of the proposed development would be replaced by a playing field or fields of equivalent or better quantity and quality and in a suitable location;
- iv. the proposed development is for an outdoor or indoor sports facility of sufficient benefit to the development of sport to outweigh the loss of the playing field.

Sport England also has guidance and criteria for considering applications against.

The proposed extension will result in the loss of a small part of the playing field however the agent has advised that the area does not form part of a useable pitch due to the topography of the site which is slightly sloping. Therefore, he considers that the loss will not be significant and adequate provision of external hard and soft pitches is retained.

However, Sport England have raised a statutory objection. They do not agree with the agent's view that the school's sports pitch facilities would not be adversely affected by the proposed extension. They consider the proposed development will have an impact on the potential of the playing field to be used for different sporting activities and will have a detrimental impact on the flexible use of the playing field to meet changing sporting needs, now and in the future.

Officers consider that the existing demountable structures have been sited with regard to the adjacent playing field whilst the proposed building has not. Whilst there may be a demonstrable need for additional school accommodation, they conclude that an appropriate, comprehensive scheme could consider the replacement of the demountable structures and deliver all the required provision in a far more efficient manner in terms of the impact on the playing field. The ultimate concern is that sporting use of the playing field is curtailed due to the proposed new building. The athletics track can be repositioned some 2.5m away from the proposed extension to give more room. However this has not overcome Sport England's objection.

In summary, Sport England continues to object to the application on the basis of potential damage to sporting activity at the site. With this in mind the proposed development in its current form is deemed contrary to PPG17.

Nevertheless, it is considered that the proposed development is an improvement to the facilities currently provided at the school; the proposed development is

sympathetic to the original style of the school and therefore will have on adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the school or the wider landscape.

With regards to the objection received by a neighbour, this application essentially relates to the replacement of three classrooms within demountable structures to three classrooms under one permanent structure and therefore it is unlikely that significant increase in traffic levels will occur.

If the Local Planning Authority is minded to grant planning permission despite Sport England's objections then the LPA must notify the Secretary of State. Officers consider that providing the concerns raised by Sport England, over the loss of the area of the playing field are satisfied and overcome, then it is recommended that delegated authority to the Head of Housing & Planning is given to grant planning permission subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION : Subject to Sport England withdrawing their objection with regards to the loss of an area of the sports pitch, delegated authority is given to the Head of Housing & Planning to **GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to the following conditions:

1. A04 Time limit
2. C38 Development in accordance with plans
3. B06 Samples of Materials
4. B33 Foul & Surface Water
I17 Minerals Area
I20 Contaminated Land

REASON FOR APPROVAL:

The proposed development is considered to be acceptable and will have a positive impact on the amenity of the school and no adverse impact on the character and appearance of the school or the surrounding area. There will be no adverse impact upon the car parking provision or the residential amenity, and no useable sports pitch is lost.