

APPLICATION NO.	P14/V1858/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	20.8.2014
PARISH	WATCHFIELD
WARD MEMBER(S)	Simon Howell Elaine Ware
APPLICANT	Faringdon Academy of Schools
SITE	Watchfield Primary School North Street Watchfield, SN6 8SD
PROPOSAL	Erection of a detached building to provide 4 classroom extension. External works to provide new multi use games Area, alterations to pedestrian access and additional parking facilities.
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	424683/190242
OFFICER	Holly Bates

SUMMARY

- The application is to erect a new detached building providing four new classrooms to accommodate 120 new pupils and to construct a new Multi Use Games Area.
- The application is referred to committee due to an objection from the parish council.
- The main issues are:
 - impact of loss of playing fields
 - impact on character of area
 - impact on neighbour amenity
 - impact on highway
- The application is recommended for approval

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Watchfield Primary School occupies a site of approximately 1.3 ha towards the centre of village and to the east of the main village centre. The site contains mainly single storey school buildings with playing fields to the north and is accessed via North Street to the south of the site. Residential properties are situated to the south and west of the site; allotments are situated to the east and a cemetery adjoining St Thomas Church, a listed building, is located to the north of the site. A site plan is **attached** at appendix 1.

1.2 The site is not located within a conservation area or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and is not located within flood zones 2 or 3. The site is washed over by the local landscape designation of the Lowland Vale.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a detached building to provide a four classroom extension to the school and to construct a new Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), along with alterations to pedestrian access and additional parking facilities. The application plans are **attached** at appendix 2.

- 2.2 The proposed detached single storey building would contain four new classrooms which would provide for 120 additional pupils and allow the school to accommodate two forms of entry. The building would have a floor area of approximately 500 square metres and would be single storey, with an eaves height of 2.7m and a ridge height of 6.2m. It would be constructed from brickwork and tiles to match the existing school buildings and the windows and doors would be white aluminium to also match the existing buildings.
- 2.3 The proposed all-weather MUGA would be located to the north of the proposed new building, within the north-east corner of the site. It would measure 37m by 18.5m and would be enclosed by 2.43m high anti-climb ball stop fencing coloured green. The MUGA would have a type 4 polymeric surface and would provide facilities for football, basketball and general sport, training and play.
- 2.4 A new pedestrian pathway would be created along the western boundary of the proposed building connecting the proposal to the existing school complex and providing safe access through the site. Three additional parking spaces would also be provided on the site; and a new buggy/cycle shelter and bin storage area would also be created.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 3.1 **Watchfield Parish Council** – Objects to the application. The full response can be seen at appendix 3.

Sport England – No objections

Leisure Department (Vale of White Horse DC) – No objections

Health & Housing - Env. Protection Team – No objections

Drainage Engineer (Vale of White Horse District Council) – No objections, subject to conditions

Forestry Team (Vale of White Horse) – No objections, subject to conditions.

Highways Liaison Officer (Oxfordshire County Council) – Response to be updated at committee meeting.

No neighbour representations have been received.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 [P03/V1095/CC](#) - Other Outcome (31/07/2003)

Erection of a four class new extension and glazed link. Four classrooms/resource area stores, corridors, small group area and wc facilities.

- [P01/V1168/CC](#) - Approved (13/09/2001)

Erection of a single storey pitched roof extension to enhance main school entrance and provide reception office and a single storey flat roof extension to provide library, headteacher's office and additional staff room accommodation.

- [P00/V1685/CC](#) - Approved (11/01/2001)

Widening of existing road to 5.5m and construction of 1.5m wide footpath and lay-by.

[P00/V0578/CC](#) - Other Outcome (11/05/2000)

Erection of three, two classroom prefabricated buildings for a temporary period of 5 years and additional car parking.

[P00/V0499/CC](#) - Other Outcome (11/05/2000)

Construction of a single storey nursery unit, additional car parking and landscaping

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 policies;

CF2 - Provision of New Community Services and Facilities

DC1 - Design

DC5 - Access

DC6 - Landscaping

DC9 - The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses

L1 - Playing Space

NE9 - The Lowland Vale

5.2 National Planning Policy Framework 2012

5.3 National Planning Practice Guidance 2014

5.4 Residential Design Guide 2009

5.5 Sport England's Playing Field Policy: "A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England."

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The main issues in determining this application are considered to be: i) the principle of expanding the school and impact of the loss of some of the playing fields ii) the impact of the proposal on the character of the area; iii) the impact of the proposal on the amenity of neighbouring properties and vi) parking and highway safety issues.

6.2 Principle

The principle of extending the school is considered to be acceptable. Both the NPPF and local plan policies are supportive of providing essential infrastructure to support towns and villages. The NPPF, at paragraph 72, states that local planning authorities should "give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools". Watchfield is experiencing significant housing growth and this application would provide an additional 120 school places allowing the school to expand to become a two form entry school. The school itself is located within the main built up area of Watchfield, in a sustainable location and complies with the requirements of local plan policy CF2. The principle of expanding the school is therefore supported.

6.3 The proposed classroom building and MUGA would extend onto part of the existing playing fields for the school and as such Sport England has been consulted on the proposal as a statutory consultee. Sport England generally oppose development on playing fields unless one of five exceptions applies and in this case, the application proposal fulfils two of these exceptions and is therefore deemed acceptable.

6.4 The proposed building and three additional car parking spaces would fulfil the circumstances described in exception E3 of Sport England's playing fields policy:

"The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming, or forming part of, a playing pitch, and does not result in the loss of or inability to make use of any playing

pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins), a reduction in the size of playing areas of any playing pitch or the loss of any other sporting/ancillary facilities on the site.”

- 6.5 The proposed MUGA would be located on an area capable of forming part of a playing pitch. However, it is sited so that the playing field would be able to continue to accommodate a natural grass football pitch, a rounders pitch and a running track. The proposed MUGA would also provide facilities for football, basketball, general sports and recreational training and play. As such, the provision of the MUGA would fulfil the circumstances described in exception E5 of Sport England’s playing fields policy:

“The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field or playing fields.”

- 6.6 As such, the replacement provision of the MUGA is considered sufficient to outweigh the loss of part of the playing field and therefore complies with Sport England’s playing field policy, Vale of White Horse Local Plan policy L1 and the National Planning Policy Framework, specifically at paragraph 74.
- 6.7 The development in the form proposed is not considered to be harmful to the character of the locality. The proposed new classroom building would be single storey in height, in keeping with the other buildings within the school grounds. It would be constructed of materials matching the other school buildings and would be seen within the context of the school grounds, not appearing prominent or out of place. The MUGA would be enclosed by 2.4m high fencing which would be coloured green to reduce its visual impact, and it would not be floodlit. As such the proposal is not considered to harm the visual amenity of the area.

6.8 **Neighbour amenity**

The proposed building and MUGA would be located along the eastern boundary of the site alongside existing allotment land. The development would be about 75m from the neighbouring properties to the west of the site. The proposed building, with the MUGA behind, would also be located about 50m away from the neighbouring properties to the south. Given the distance between the proposed development and the neighbouring properties, it is not considered that these properties would be adversely affected by noise from activities in these areas. As such the proposal is not considered to have a harmful impact on the amenities of the neighbouring properties.

6.9 **Highway Safety**

A Transport Assessment has been provided with the application. It details measures that improve safety in the vicinity of the school, measures that reduce congestion around the school and measures that proposed sustainable travel. The school travel plan will also be updated and implemented, and full details of this are to be conditioned. The local highways authority were involved in pre-application discussions prior to the submission of the application and have advised on required conditions, but have not as yet submitted a written consultation response to the application. The response will be reported to the committee meeting.

6.10 **Other considerations**

A tree would be lost as part of the proposal and the forestry officer considers that its loss could readily be mitigated within a landscape scheme that accommodates some additional tree planting, which can be conditioned. It is also considered reasonable and necessary to condition that the works are carried out in accordance with the submitted tree protection plan to ensure the long term protection of the retained trees.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 The principle of the proposed development is considered acceptable, sufficient provision is provided to mitigate the loss of part of the playing fields, it will not harm the visual amenity of the area, the amenities of neighbouring properties or highway safety. The proposal, therefore, complies with the provisions of the development plan, in particular policies DC1, DC5, DC6, DC9, DC13, DC14, CF2 and L1. The development is also considered to comply with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

That planning permission is granted, subject to the following conditions:

1 : Commencement 3 years – full planning permission

2 : List of approved plans

3 : Submission of material details

4 : Submission of surface water and foul drainage details

5 : Landscaping – submission

6 : Landscaping – implementation

7 : Submission of an amended travel plan to include servicing

8 : Submission of a Construction Traffic Management Plan

9 : Submission of details of cycle provision

10 : Car parking provision in line with approved plan

11 : Works to be carried out in accordance with submitted tree survey

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