

PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER:P07/2013

Type of approval sought	Full Planning Permission
Ward	HALESOWEN NORTH
Applicant	Director of Childrens Services
Location:	OLIVE HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL, SPRINGFIELD ROAD, HALESOWEN, HALESOWEN, WEST MIDLANDS, B62 8JZ
Proposal	EXTENSION TO CREATE CHILDRENS CENTRE AND DEMOLITION OF EXISTING CARETAKERS'S HOUSE
Recommendation Summary:	APPROVE SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

1. Olive Hill County Primary is a traditionally built school constructed in approximately the 1930's to 1940's, since then a number of small extensions and alterations have taken place around the school. The site does also contain a Nursery Unit within the school grounds.
2. For the most part this school is adjoined by established residential dwellings, which were constructed at a similar period to the school.
3. The western boundary is adjoined by open fields designated as Green Belt land, this area of steeply slopes down from the school boundary. A public right of way runs parallel with the eastern boundary, beyond which are residential properties.
4. A recently approved scheme to extend the school grounds on the west has now been constructed; this essentially replaced mobile classrooms that occupied this area. There is also a temporary double unit erected within the western corner of the grounds, which was required following the relocation of two classes from Holt Farm School.

PROPOSAL

5. The Directorate of Children's Services in conjunction with the Governments Sure Start programme are developing a number of Neighbourhood Children's Centres throughout the borough. The centres will provide integrated provision 0-7 year olds and will operate through existing schools.
6. The centres will provide support to parents, crèche facilities, nursing and reception stages together with a degree of wrap around, meaning centres will operate from 8.00am to 6.00pm. The new childrens centre will be provided as an extension to the existing nursery.
7. The new extension is shown to be located adjacent the existing nursery and main entrance on the site of Key Stage 1 playground, close to the vehicular/pedestrian access off Springfield Road. To operate the childrens centre, there will be internal changes carried out to complement the extension
8. The proposal is shown to measure approximately 34m wide by between 11m and 17m deep. The design would consist of a feature rendered curved building with mono-pitch roof, a canopy across the main front elevation and a flat roof brick built hall. The height would be between 4m and 6.2m across these elements.
9. A small extension is also proposed in the middle of the school, this would measure 7.4m wide by 5m deep and 2.9m high.
10. To facilitate the use of the building, the existing parking area will be extended from 22 to 31 car parking spaces Part of this provision would require the laying out of bays adjacent the northern boundary.
11. A cycle rack for securing 10 no. bicycles is shown to be situated adjacent the staff entrance.

12. Finally, a new tarmacadum playground and sport area would be laid out at the rear of the school, the playground area was reduced in size following concerns about nature conservation interests and residential amenity of nearby occupiers, the size is now shown to be 37m long by 18.9m wide.
13. A bat survey and Phase 1 habitat assessment have been submitted with the application.

HISTORY

APPLICATION No.	PROPOSAL	DECISION	DATE
P07/2081	Temporary change of use from residential (C3) to admin centre for children's centre (D1)	Approved with Conditions	18/12/2007
P07/0546	Installation of one double mobile unit.	Approved with Conditions	15/05/2007
P05/1869	Construction of new classroom block	Approved with Conditions	29/09/2005
P05/1481	Re-siting of existing mobile classroom and storage container	Approved with conditions	19/08/2005

14. Planning application P07/2081, sought the use of the existing school caretakers house for the children's centre for a temporary period of approximately 18 months, until the erection and completion of the extension of the school, upon which that dwelling would be demolished.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

15. Direct notification was carried out to all adjoining and adjacent premises as a result of which no letters of objection were received.

OTHER CONSULTATION

16. The Head of Public Protection: raises no objection subject to a condition.
The Group Engineer, Development: raises no objection subject to conditions.
Sport England: has withdrawn an earlier objection following the reduction of the playground size, a condition is recommended.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

17. Adopted UDP (2005)
- Policy DD1 – Urban Design
 - Policy DD4 – Development in Residential Areas
 - Policy DD6 – Access and Transport Infrastructure
 - Policy CS3 – Community Facilities
 - Policy SO1 – Green Belt
 - Policy NC5 – Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation
 - Policy NC6 – Wildlife Species
 - Policy LR5 – Playing Fields
18. Supplementary Planning Document
- Parking Standards and Travel Plans

ASSESSMENT

19. The key issues in determination of this application are the impact upon;
- the character and appearance of the area,
 - residential amenity of nearby occupiers
 - highway safety
 - the adjoining SLINC and Green Belt land

CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

20. The school will continue to utilise the private access off Springfield Road, with the demolition of the caretakers house a wider view of the school will be opened up. The feature-curved building would be the element closest to the access, this still maintaining a distance 18m from the public footpath.
21. The external design of the extension is modern and functional blending in well with the school building, with the use of contrasting materials such as coloured render and the aluminium profiled sheeting canopy adding a degree of articulation to help this element make a new focal point to the building.
22. Laying out the car park provides a more legible and spacious feel to the entrance. Where necessary block paving would be utilised to break up an otherwise large swathe of tarmac paving. Indicative landscaping has also been shown in this area. In all with the removal of the existing caretakers dwelling, this proposal offers the opportunity to improve the relationship of the school grounds and the public realm.
23. Compliant with Policies DD1 and DD4 it would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area.
24. Policy CS3 – Community Facilities is complied with as this development supports the provision of community facilities where they meet a recognised need, located within the community it serves, easily accessible by public transport and does not affect the character or amenity of the nearby area.
25. Sport England have commented that the amended plan includes a playground that can be used for sport and active recreation and also allows for a sprint athletics track to be marked out during summer months. Policy LR5 supports the use of multi-use areas promoting the dual use of school playing fields.

RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

26. Where the car park is being laid out, due consideration is given to the impact upon residential gardens that adjoin the northern boundary. Upon demolition of the existing caretakers house, No. 37 Springfield Road has been purchased to be used as a replacement. No's 39 and 41 are residential properties which back onto an area used at present as a playground. A good level of natural screen planting would be retained along this boundary, and where necessary, replaced. This ensures that the vehicles using this area would not impact these dwellings.
27. The extension is of single storey scale, obviously having windows at this level, therefore no loss of privacy or outlook would occur to residents in Springfield Road.
28. With the playground situated in part of an existing playing field, there was some concern with originally submitted plans that showed the playground going essentially up to the boundary of 59a Greenhill Road. Following the reduction of the playground area, which now would retain a distance of 19.5m and 25m to this property, the concern has been addressed. Although the playground would potentially bring closer background noise from children during break/lunchtimes, it must be noted that this area is already used for recreational purposes under teacher supervision, and therefore it is not considered that there would be an adverse impact upon residential amenities of nearby occupiers in accordance with Policy DD4 of the Adopted UDP.

HIGHWAYS AND PARKING

29. It is accepted that at present there is not sufficient off-street parking at this site due to the limited car park, therefore adequate parking provision for the new use must be provided such that this current situation is not compounded.
30. With the increase of parking bays from an existing 22 to an overall 31 spaces, with the provision of 3 disabled bays, there would be ample parking provision.

31. The GED has requested that cycle parking and shower facilities be provided. An amended plan indicates a lock-up rack for 10 cycles, and the applicant has confirmed that an existing disabled toilet with a shower can be used by cyclists. A condition requiring the submission of a travel plan is also requested.
32. On this basis it is considered that the increase in car parking provision with an improved layout complies with Policy DD6 of the Adopted UDP and the Parking Standards and Travel Plans SPD.

GREEN BELT AND SLINC IMPACT

33. As mentioned above, the western boundary of the school grounds are adjoined by land designated within the Green Belt. As a unique and precious asset to the borough it is important to assess whether any extension/alterations would materially affect the openness of the Green Belt. The new playground would be approximately 5m from the boundary, with an opportunity for a landscaping scheme to be implemented along the boundary, it is not considered that the openness of the Green Belt will be impinged upon, and therefore Policy S01 of the Adopted UDP is complied with.
34. There was some concern with the original plan that the creation of a much larger playground would have resulted in a significant loss of semi-natural vegetation on the western boundary comprising of trees, scrub and rough grassland, this being a necessary buffer to the adjacent SLINC.
35. The amendments show retention of a larger buffer zone, and a 5m strip to the west of the playground is shown, it is considered that this area could be further landscaped to mitigate for the loss of part of this buffer. A landscaping condition is required such that the mitigation is appropriately reviewed.
36. The bat survey and Phase I assessment are adequate for the proposal site. They have identified that bats forage and commute through, but do not roost in the development area. Other protected species are likely to be restricted to breeding

birds. Relevant conditions are attached to ensure the protection of wildlife species in accordance with Policies NC5 and NC6 of the Adopted UDP.

CONCLUSION

37. It is considered that the proposal is complimentary to the existing school in terms of scale, design and detailing ensuring positive integration with the school building. The proposal would not adversely affect the design of the school or the character of the surrounding area, and would not impact the residential amenities of nearby residential properties or highway safety. With appropriate conditions, it is considered that no adverse impact upon the Green Belt and SLINC will occur. Therefore the proposal complies with Policies DD1 – Urban Design, DD4 – Development in Residential Areas, DD6 – Access and Transport Infrastructure, CS3 – Community Facilities, Policy NC5 – Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation, NC6 – Wildlife Species and LR5 – Playing Fields of the Adopted UDP (2005), and Supplementary Planning Document - Parking Standards and Travel Plans.

RECOMMENDATION

38. It is recommended that this application be approved subject to the following conditions;

REASON FOR GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION

It is considered that the proposal is complementary to the existing school in terms of scale, design and detailing ensuring positive integration with the school building. The proposal would not adversely affect the design of the school or the character of the surrounding area, and would not impact the residential amenities of nearby residential properties or highway safety. With appropriate conditions, it is considered that no adverse impact upon the Green Belt and SLINC would occur. Therefore the proposal complies with Policies DD1 – Urban Design, DD4 – Development in Residential Areas, DD6 – Access and Transport Infrastructure, CS3 – Community Facilities, Policy NC5 – Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation, NC6 – Wildlife Species and LR5 – Playing Fields of the Adopted

UDP (2005), and Supplementary Planning Document - Parking Standards and Travel Plans.

INFORMATIVE

For the avoidance of doubt, this permission relates to drawings numbered AMPH 289: A001, A002, A004, A210 A211 and A300, and shall be implemented in strict accordance with these plans unless otherwise agreed in writing with the LPA.

Conditions and/or reasons:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
2. Development shall not begin until details of the type, texture and colour of materials to be used in the external elevations have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority.
3. Development shall not begin until a comprehensive written site investigation strategy (in a form to be agreed by the local planning authority), has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. Such a strategy shall facilitate the identification of methane & carbon dioxide. Where the investigations identify the presence of methane and/or carbon dioxide the development shall not begin until a scheme to protect the development from the effects of such gases has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. Such a scheme shall: include provisions for validation monitoring & sampling; be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is first occupied; and be retained throughout the lifetime of the development.
4. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until a Travel Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, including details of a Travel Plan Co-ordinator, Staff Travel Survey, Car Parking Management, Walking and Cycling initiatives, Publicity and Marketing, Set targets and monitoring and to join Company Travel Wise in Dudley together with a timetable for the implementation of each such element. The Travel Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the details approved by the local planning authority and remain operational for the life of the development.
5. The extension hereby approved, shall not be occupied until the area shown for car parking on the plan attached hereto has been graded, levelled, surfaced, drained and marked out, and that area shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles.
6. Notwithstanding the plans submitted, prior to commencement of development, details of secure cycle parking will be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. Prior to first use the cycle and shower facilities will be provided in accordance with the approved details and will be retained for no other purpose for the life of the development.
7. Prior to the commencement of development, details of the landscaping scheme for the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall take into account appropriate improvements for nature

conservation and include a timetable for the implementation of the works and their ongoing maintenance, and shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

8. The playing field adjacent to the development, as shown on drawing A211, shall not be used for access, storage of vehicles, equipment or materials or in any other manner in connection with the carrying out of the development hereby permitted.
9. No works should commence, or continue, if the most recent protected species survey and assessment is over 12 months old. These surveys and assessments must be of, or above, the standard detailed within the Nature Conservation SPD. They must include the whole of the site and be carried out by an experienced and qualified ecological consultant and integrated into a site mitigation plan. All of these must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council before any works commence (or continue). All works must be carried out in accordance to the approved plan.
10. A plan detailing suitable provision and location of 5 bat bricks, 5 bat tiles and an appropriate variety of 10 woodcrete bird boxes incorporated into the buildings on site will be submitted and approved in writing by the Council before any works proceed. All works must be carried out in accordance to the approved plan.
11. If protected species are found during any stage of the development all works must stop immediately and Natural England, the project's ecologist and the Council's Nature Conservation Officer must be contacted immediately. Works should not recommence until relevant licences have been obtained and written permission is granted by Natural England and the Council.
12. Any outside lighting should be close to the ground and directed downwards. It should be activated by a timed sensor with a low movement sensitivity, so as not to be triggered by wildlife. A plan detailing outside lighting will be submitted and approved in writing by the Council before any works proceed. All works must be carried out in accordance to the approved plan.
13. The demolition of the buildings and the clearance of trees and other vegetation should avoid the bird nesting season (February - August inclusive) unless a breeding bird assessment (with recommendations) is carried out by a trained ecologist within 7 days of the works commencing. This should be submitted in writing and approved by the Council before works begin. All works must be carried out in accordance to the approved assessment's recommendations.