

NORTON FITZWARREN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Erection of single storey two classroom block to east of main school building at Norton Fitzwarren Primary School, Blackdown View, Norton Fitzwarren

Location: NORTON FITZWARREN PRIMARY SCHOOL, BLACKDOWN VIEW,
NORTON FITZWARREN, TAUNTON, TA2 6RW

Grid Reference: 319723.126035 Full Planning Permission

Recommendation

Recommended decision: Conditional Approval

Recommended Conditions (if applicable)

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

(A3) DrNo H7330/200 Site & Location Plans
(A3) DrNo H7330/202 Block Plan as Proposed
(A3) DrNo H7330/203 Proposed Floor Plan, Elevations & Roof Plan
(A3) DrNo H7330/204 Elevations as Proposed
(A3) DrNo H7330/206 Car Parking as Proposed

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. Before development commences (including site clearance and any other preparatory works) a scheme for the protection of trees to be retained shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such a scheme shall include a plan showing the location of the protective fencing, and shall specify the type of protective fencing. Such fencing shall be erected prior to commencement of any other site operations and at least two working days notice shall be given to the Local Planning Authority that it has been erected. It shall be maintained and retained for the full duration of works or until such time as agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. No activities whatsoever shall take place within the protected areas without the prior written agreement of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the enhancement of the development by the retention of existing trees and natural features during the construction phase in accordance with Taunton Deane Core Strategy Policy DM1. In this instance a

pre development condition is justified to secure the protection of the natural vegetation during the construction phase.

4. With the exception of the trees shown to be removed on the approved plan, no tree shall be felled, lopped, topped, lifted, pruned or disturbed in any way without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the enhancement of the development by the retention of existing trees and natural features during the construction phase in accordance with Taunton Deane Core Strategy Policy DM1

5. Within three months of the occupation of the building hereby permitted the temporary classrooms E433 and E626 shall be removed from the site and the land restored and reinstated to its former condition.

Reason: To ensure adequate protection is afforded to the amenity of residential properties within the locality, in accordance with Policy DM1 of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy.

6.
 - (i) Replacement planting shall be carried out at the site, details of which shall have previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall include details of the species, siting and numbers to be planted.
 - (ii) The scheme shall be completely carried out within the first available planting season from the date of commencement of the development, or as otherwise extended with the agreement in writing of the Local Planning Authority.
 - (iii) For a period of five years after the completion of each landscaping scheme, the trees and shrubs shall be protected and maintained in a healthy weed free condition and any trees or shrubs that cease to grow shall be replaced by trees or shrubs of similar size and species, or the appropriate trees or shrubs as may be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development does not harm the character and appearance of the area in accordance with Policy DM1 of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy.

7. The area allocated for parking on the submitted plan shall be properly consolidated, surfaced, drained and marked out before the building(s) hereby permitted is first occupied and shall not be used other than for the parking of vehicles in connection with the school site.

Reason: To ensure that there is adequate space within the site for the parking of vehicles clear of the highway in accordance with retained Policy M4 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan.

Notes to Applicant

1. In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework the Council has worked in a positive and pro-active way with the applicant and has negotiated amendments to the application to enable the grant of planning permission.

Proposal

The application seeks planning permission for the construction of a single storey classroom block. The building will have a pitched roof with facing brick walls and roof tiles to match the existing school building and powder coated alloy frames to doors and windows. It will provide two classrooms and an SEN suite displaced from two Elliotts to be demolished, toilets, cloakrooms and storage space.

The building will replace Elliott Classrooms, E433 and E626 respectively. These buildings have come to the end of their economic life and were also subject to a separate planning permission which should have seen their removal by July 2013. On completion of the classroom block and the transfer of staff and pupils, the two Elliott units will be demolished and removed from site. Further permanent accommodation will be sought at a later date on the site of the Elliotts to accommodate an increase in pupil numbers from local housing developments however this will be the subject of a future planning application. This application seeks merely to provide accommodation for the pupils displaced by the removal of the two Elliotts.

Following negotiations the proposal includes the provision of 4 additional staff car parking spaces, 2 visitor spaces and a disabled parking space.

Seven small trees plus a sapling will be removed to accommodate the building. Compensatory planting will be provided.

Site Description

Norton Fitzwarren Primary School is a large brick and tile building built in 1987 with added extensions and 3 No. Elliott classrooms sited on the playground (two of them joined together to make one classroom unit). The site is a relatively steeply sloping site with a range of one and one and a half storey buildings built to reflect the levels of the site. There are also various mature trees within the site which screens the school from the adjacent residential properties along Blackdown View. To the west is the churchyard and the Grade II* listed All Saints Church. The site is otherwise surrounded by residential properties.

The application site is to the east of the main school building on a triangular piece of land which is used as an outdoor classroom/recreational area adjacent to the early Years Classroom, the school car park and overlooking the playground.

Relevant Planning History

25/12/0010 - Retention of temporary classroom E564. Consultation - No Objection.
25/14/0022/OB - Erection of extension to temporary classroom building.
Consultation - No objection.
25/15/0033- Erection of single storey extension. Conditionally approved November 2015.

Consultation Responses

NORTON FITZWARREN PARISH COUNCIL - The Parish Council objects to the application in its current form due to the issue that provision for on site parking for staff is not adequate and will add to the traffic problems already existing in Blackdown View, Dunkerton View and Taylor Close. Staff are at present parking all day on the nearby streets.

We would also like to draw attention to the Traffic and Highways statement. The Parish Council disagrees with the statement that the additional traffic will be light. We would request that a Traffic Management Plan is submitted and that the application is resubmitted with adequate on site staff parking provision.

SCC - NOW HISTORIC ENV SERVICE(AS NOT PART OF SCC 2015) - No archaeological implications to the proposal therefore no objections on archaeological grounds.

LANDSCAPE - The proposal involves the felling of seven trees. However there are already many trees in the vicinity so the building will be screened from the roads. I consider there is some scope for a small amount of replacement planting.

SCC - TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT GROUP - Recommend standing advice.

Representations Received

One letter has been received supporting the application so that the temporary classrooms can be demolished. The writer's children attend the school and have found the temporary classrooms cold in winter, hot in summer and damp. The writer considers the Elliotts are a failing teaching environment as well as being an eyesore.

Three letters of representation have been received all raising concerns/objections based on the existing parking situation at the school and the fear that this will worsen as a result of the development. It is stated that the surrounding residential streets (Blackdown View, Taylor Close and Dunkerton Rise) are used by both parents collecting and dropping off children and by staff who park there all day preventing residents parking and accessing their drives. The roads are thus congested and it is causing a considerable safety hazard. With increasing pupil numbers and additional classrooms the objectors believe it will bring additional traffic and further safety hazards. As staff park in the roads it makes it harder for parents to drop off children, so some parents take risks when parking. Emergency vehicles are also restricted getting through the area. Blackdown View is blocked morning and afternoon and the existing speed bumps do nothing to slow traffic.

The Ward Councillor whilst welcoming the replacement of old Elliott classrooms and

recognising that additional school places will be needed in the village with further homes to be built, objects to the application on the grounds of inadequate car parking for staff and visitors and the impact this causes on the residents. The Councillor asks that consideration is given to the amenity of residents as the application fails to acknowledge the impact of the school on the neighbourhood. The Councillor also questions the Design and Access Statement for its accuracy and considers it inadequate. A detailed analysis of staff/visitor numbers to the school is requested to examine the current traffic movements generated by the school and a proper management plan is requested to be in place before any further development is allowed.

Planning Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development plan for Taunton Deane comprises the Taunton Deane Core Strategy (2012), saved policies of the Taunton Deane Local Plan (2004), the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan (2008), Somerset Minerals Local Plan (2015), and Somerset Waste Core Strategy (2013).

Relevant policies of the development plan are listed below. Policies from emerging plans are also listed; these are a material consideration.

DM1 - TD CORE STRATEGY - GENERAL REQUIREMENTS,
CP8 - CP 8 ENVIRONMENT,

Local finance considerations

There are no financial issues relevant with this application.

Determining issues and considerations

The existing site is a well established school site and the proposed new single storey building will be positioned on a triangular plot of land to the side of the main school building. The new building has been designed and will be constructed to replicate and match the rest of the school. The classroom block will incorporate gable features and fenestration that reflect that of the main school building, whilst use of brown brick and tiles is also in keeping. The internal layout is largely dictated by the shape of the plot, and the proposal accommodates the change in ground levels with the use of retaining walls.

The new block will be set back some distance from the public highway and screened to the closest residential properties along Blackdown View by a row of mature trees which also screen the car park. Although the loss of some trees is regrettable these are sited within the school site and compensatory tree planting will be carried out elsewhere. It is considered the remaining trees would screen the building

sufficiently. The landscape officer raises no objection on the basis of the additional planting. The trees remaining should be adequately protected during the construction to protect their long term health and thus it has been conditioned accordingly. Any further works to the remaining trees should be carried out sensitively and approved before the works are undertaken.

The objections relate to the current parking situation at this school. The County Highways Authority advised that Standing Advice should be taken into account in the processing of the application.

A travel plan was submitted in support of the application and the school recognises the problems which have been experienced. In the long term the Governors wish to create two new footpath entrances at the western and eastern ends of the school frontage. This would not only avoid crowding through the existing main entrance but will separate children from the car park entrance. The developers of the new housing to the east and south of the school have already laid two pedestrian crossings over the B3227 to enable children to safely get onto the footpath on the 'school' side of Blackdown View. These initiatives should help encourage future parents and pupils to walk or cycle to school rather than drive.

Somerset County Council's parking strategy 2013 sets out the parking requirement for primary schools. Half a space is required per full time equivalent member of staff and two visitor spaces which given the school has the equivalent of 31 full time staff equates to the need for 16 spaces + 2 visitors. The school currently has 12 parking spaces so is clearly deficient in parking.

Although the construction of the classroom block will not result in either the loss of any existing parking nor will it generate any additional traffic movements, recognising the parking shortfall and concerns from residents, six additional parking spaces are to be provided (4 for staff and 2 visitors) and also 1 disabled parking space close to the school entrance. This satisfactorily meets the parking requirements for a primary school as set out in the County Council's Parking Strategy. The school car park is well screened by mature trees and thus this additional parking as an extension of the existing car park will have no further impact on the visual amenities of the surrounding area.

Conclusion

As the proposed development will replace teaching accommodation which is in a poor state of repair and should only have been on site until permanent accommodation could be provided, the principle of the development is welcomed. The building is of a design, scale and in materials to match the main school building and will have minimal impact on the surrounding area. Although the development will not give rise to any additional traffic movements the provision of additional parking spaces is encouraged as the school will now meet the required parking standards. For these reasons it is recommended that planning permission should be granted.

In preparing this report the planning officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Contact Officer: Mrs K Wray