

COMMITTEE REPORT

Date: 9 September 2010 **Ward:** Strensall
Team: East Area **Parish:** Strensall With Towthorpe
Parish Council

Reference: 10/01192/GRG3
Application at: Robert Wilkinson Primary School West End Strensall York YO32
5UH
For: Replacement of existing parking area to rear of school with new
parking area to front of school served by new access road from
Haxby Moor Road, and with associated landscaping works and
tree planting
By: Mr Richard Ludlow
Application Type: General Regulations (Reg3)
Target Date: 12 August 2010
Recommendation: Approve

1.0 PROPOSAL

1.1 SITE

The application relates to an area of land within an existing primary school site within the village of Strensall. The site is on the corner of West End and Haxby Moor Road. It comprises the school buildings, with playgrounds to the front and rear of the school and a sports field and multi-use games area (MUGA) to the rear. The remaining land within the site is largely grassed with trees and planting. Access to the site is via West End at the front for pedestrians and Haxby Moor Road at the side for staff and visitor cars, leading to an unmarked vehicle parking area on the land to the west of the school, playground and MUGA. The school site falls outside the Strensall Conservation Area (no. 23). It lies outside Flood Zone 3 (high probability), though part of the site falls within flood zone 2 (medium probability). The site has boundary hedging and trees adjacent to the boundary though within the site.

1.2 PROPOSAL

The application proposes the construction of a vehicle parking area on an area of land at the front of the school building and in the southern corner of the school site. It would provide parking for 34 vehicles with 3 of these being for disabled users. A new access of double width to allow vehicles to pass is proposed from Haxby Moor Road, approximately 55m south of the existing vehicle entrance. The parking area would have a tarmac access road and disabled parking bays with porous surface parking bays due to the proximity of these to the existing trees on site. There are 22 trees within the site, five of which would be removed as part of the development with two more proposed to have two low branches removed. The surface of the existing parking area further to the west would be removed, re-soiled and seeded.

A Design, Access and Sustainability statement has been submitted to support the application. This gives background about need, the proposed design, access and safety and sustainability issues. The proposal would allow the problems with the existing car park area to be addressed - these are: that it has been identified as a potential health and safety hazard with no barriers to the children's play area and no lighting and it has a plastic mesh surface which has sunk and results in staff parking on the road when muddy. The grassed area where the car park is proposed currently has no activity use for the school and is well-screened.

1.3 HISTORY

Various applications have been submitted for the school. An application for the replacement car park was submitted in 2009, but withdrawn due to lack of suitable plans and information.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Development Plan Allocation:

City Boundary GMS Constraints: York City Boundary 0001

DC Area Teams GMS Constraints: East Area (2) 0005

Schools GMS Constraints: Robert Wilkinson Primary 0218

2.2 Policies:

CYGP1
Design

CYGP4A
Sustainability

CYNE1
Trees, woodlands, hedgerows

CYED1
Primary and Secondary Education

CYED11
Protection of Playing Fields

3.0 CONSULTATIONS

3.1 PUBLICITY:

3.2 INTERNAL

Highway Network Management

No objections in principle, however, it is recommended that condition about vehicle areas being surfaced be applied.

Design, Conservation and Sustainable Development (Arboricultural and Landscape)
The plans are improved. Requests conditions regarding tree protection and mitigation.

3.3 EXTERNAL

Strensall Parish Council - Does not object but makes following comments:

- Existing access should be used in emergency only;
- Highway Department should be consulted;
- Existing fence should be realigned as necessary;
- Green area should be fenced off from access road to prevent illegal parking.

Letter from one local resident raising following points:

- Pleased to see improved tree retention and mitigation;
- Retro step to replace grassed area with car park;
- Green areas in schools should be preserved.

4.0 APPRAISAL

4.1 KEY ISSUES:

- principle of development;
- visual impact;
- trees;
- residential amenity;
- highway safety;
- flood risk.

4.2 POLICY CONTEXT

Relevant Central Government guidance is contained in Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1) and Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk (PPS25). PPS1 states that development should seek to take the opportunity of improving the character and appearance of an area and the way in which it functions. PPS25 seeks to guide development away from areas with a high probability of flooding and to ensure that development addressing the impact it may have on flood risk.

The City of York Draft Local Plan policies are summarised in section 2.2.

4.3 PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPEMNT

The proposal involves the provision of a car park within the school grounds and to serve the school. The site falls within the defined settlement limit for the village and the land would fall within the definition of previously developed land. It would not result in the loss of any of the playing fields or sports facilities that serve the school

and wider community. The supporting statement confirms that the school does not actively use the grassed area at present.

4.4 VISUAL AMENITY

The car parking area would be visible from the public highway and neighbouring properties, given its location at the front of the site and forward of the school building. This would be particularly in winter when the vehicles would be more likely to have their headlights on. The presence of the car park would be largely screened by the boundary hedging and trees that follow the boundary along this part of the school's boundary. There are two points at which views into this area would be more open and the car park be more obvious from outside the site. These are: firstly, along the double width entrance on Haxby Moor Road, where the boundary hedging and a golden sycamore are to be removed; and secondly, through the gap in the trees on West End created by the removal of the dead cherry tree and where four parking spaces would extend to within 0.5m of the site boundary.

Whilst the proposal would change the appearance of this part of the site and along Haxby Moor Road, it is considered that this would not result in significant harm to the overall character and appearance of the area. This is largely because of the grassed area outside the site that is adjacent to the junction of West End and Haxby Moor Road and the retention of the majority of boundary hedging and trees. It is also not uncommon for vehicle parking areas to serve schools to be at the front of school sites. In addition, then impact would be balanced by the removal of the existing car park further to the west, which would be re-soiled and seeded.

4.5 TREES

The site contains some medium and large mature trees, which make a positive contribution to the appearance of this part of the village. The majority of these trees, particularly adjacent to the site boundary, are to be retained and the Council's Arboriculturist has confirmed that he is satisfied with the scheme providing there is adequate tree protection during construction. Five of the trees are to be removed, one because it has been identified as being dead and four to allow for the scheme to go ahead. Compensatory tree planting is proposed.

4.6 RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

The main affect on surrounding residents would be from the provision of the new vehicular access road. This would exit the site opposite the rear gardens of 1 and 5 Leyfield Close. These properties do already back onto a public highway and close to the existing vehicle entrance to the school. As a result, they have high boundary enclosures with Haxby Moor Road that would help minimise any impact from vehicles entering or leaving the site. In addition, due to the nature of the site user, traffic movements would be predominantly during daytime hours and not late into the evening, thereby reducing disturbance.

The car parking area itself would be at a distance of more than 23m to surrounding residential properties and separated by a public highway, hedging and trees. As

such, it would not cause harm to the amenity that the occupants of these properties can reasonably expect to enjoy.

A local resident has written concerned about the impact the development will have on the school pupils and the view from the nearest classrooms that face the proposed parking area. Two trees and a hedge are indicated on the proposed plan to soften views from within the school building of the car parking area. In addition, any loss of amenity should be balanced against the benefits to the health and safety of pupils from separating vehicles from play areas and the additional play space created by the removal of the existing parking area at the side of the MUGA.

4.7 HIGHWAY SAFETY

The proposal creates a new vehicular access on Haxby Moor Road, further towards the junction of this road with West End. The existing entrance and gates are to be retained for emergency access only. The new access is double width and would allow simultaneous access and egress. It would be sited away from the junction with Leyfield Close and there would still be a distance of approximately 36m to the junction of with West End. Information submitted previously by the school has demonstrated that the number of parking spaces proposed is below the maximum figure that the school, due to its size and number of staff, could look to provide. The school also refer to problems with on street parking that has caused concern for local residents. As a result, the Council's Highway Engineer raises no objections in principle subject to vehicle areas being surfaced.

4.8 FLOOD RISK

The proposal would involve the change of a currently grassed area to hard standing, although only the access road and disabled parking bays would be hard surfaced. The main parking bays would be of porous material. The Council's Drainage Engineer has been consulted and his response is awaited.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 The proposal is considered to be acceptable in planning terms, providing there is appropriate tree protection and replacement planting. This is subject to the drainage of the area being acceptable.

COMMITTEE TO VISIT

6.0 RECOMMENDATION: Approve

1 TIME2 Development start within three years

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

Drawing no.: RWCP/101 'Plan as proposed', dated 5 May 2010 and received 2 June

2010;

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority.

3 Prior to the development coming into use, all areas used by vehicles shall be surfaced, sealed and positively drained within the site, in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: To prevent the egress of water and loose material onto the public highway.

4 Protective fencing to BS5837: 2005 shall be erected around all existing trees shown to be retained (and neighbouring trees where they may also be affected). Before the commencement of development including site clearance or other operations, including the importing of materials and any excavations, a method statement regarding protection measures for the existing trees shown to be retained shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This statement shall include details and locations of protective fencing to be shown on a plan; phasing of works; type of construction machinery/vehicles to be used; arrangements for loading/off-loading; parking arrangements for site vehicles; locations for storage of materials; and any site cabins. The protective fencing line shall be adhered to at all times during development to create exclusion zones. None of the following activities shall take place within the exclusion zones: excavation, raising of levels, storage of any materials or top soil, lighting of fires, parking or manoeuvring of vehicles; there shall be no site huts, no mixing of cement, no disposing of washings, no stored fuel, no new trenches, pipe runs for services or drains. The fencing shall remain secured in position throughout the construction process including the implementation of landscaping works. A notice stating 'tree protection zone - do not remove' shall be attached to each section of fencing.

Reason: To ensure protection of existing trees before, during and after development which make a significant contribution to the amenity of the area.

5 No works shall take place until full details of all proposed tree planting, and the proposed times of planting, have been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and all tree planting shall be carried out in accordance with those details and at those times.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area and to replace those trees removed as part of the development.

6 Within two months of the car park hereby approved being brought into use, the surface of the existing car park at the school shall be removed, re-soiled and seeded to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority. Protective fencing shall be provided around the seeded area until it becomes properly established.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity

7.0 INFORMATIVES: Notes to Applicant

1. REASON FOR APPROVAL

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority the proposal, subject to the conditions listed above, would not cause undue harm to interests of acknowledged importance, with particular reference to:

- principle of the development;
- visual impact;
- trees;
- residential amenity;
- highway safety;
- flood risk.

As such the proposal complies with national planning guidance contained within Planning Policy Statement 1 ("Delivering Sustainable Development"), Planning Policy Statement 25 ("Development and Flood Risk"), and Policies GP1, GP4a, NE1, ED1 and ED11 of the City of York Development Control Local Plan.

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