



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

17 DECEMBER 2020

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Members are asked to determine the planning application outlined below:

APPLICATION NO: 19/0790/08 (GH)
APPLICANT: Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
DEVELOPMENT: Classroom extension (Revised site layout plan and Coal Mining Risk Assessment received 28th October 2020).
LOCATION: YSGOL GYNRADD GYMUNEDOL GYMRAEG
LLANTRISANT, Ffordd Cefn-Yr-Hendy, Miskin,
PONTYCLUN, CF72 8TL
DATE REGISTERED: 28/10/2020
ELECTORAL DIVISION: Pontyclun

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS BELOW:

REASONS:

The application would provide additional classroom teaching facilities for children attending Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol Gymraeg Llantrisant. Both the new and existing demountable classroom blocks would be clad to look contemporary and integrate with the setting of the school. The classroom would be well screened and being set away from neighbouring dwellings and adjacent to open space, would have no impact on residential amenity.

REASON APPLICATION REPORTED TO COMMITTEE

The application has been submitted by the Council, on land within its ownership, and where the Council's interest is of more than a minor nature.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Full planning consent is sought to construct a demountable classroom within the grounds of Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol Gymraeg Llantrisant.

With a width of 12.2m and a depth of 6.8m, the new demountable would be of an identical size and internal layout to the existing, comprising a 60m² classroom, two toilets, a store and a lobby. The applicant has advised that the additional classroom is required to enable flexibility of teaching and to meet increased pupil demand; and is being funded by a grant from the Welsh Government.

The combined new and old classrooms would be clad with brickwork slips, which would lend the structure a more conventional appearance and help it to relate better to the more traditional elevations of the main school building. Furthermore, it is expected that the classrooms would be able to be set a little lower into the ground to avoid the need for ramps and steps.

Originally it was proposed that the existing demountable classroom would be repositioned around 5m to the north-west of its current location, so that the new unit could be placed behind and in tandem with it.

However, during the consultation process the Coal Authority raised an objection in respect of the proximity of the new unit to an old mine shaft on the other side of the school boundary.

Consequently, a Coal Mining Risk Assessment and ground investigation was sought and commissioned, resulting the existing demountable being located 12m to the north, rather than 5m, so that the new classroom would not fall within the shaft's zone of influence.

In addition, a further plan was submitted demonstrating revisions to the School's car park layout to enable the creation of a further 3 off-street spaces, in order to satisfy concerns highlighted by the Council's Highways and Transportation Section.

SITE APPRAISAL

The application property is a Welsh medium primary school, with associated nursery provision, located to the north of the settlement of Miskin.

Opened in 2005, the development of the school was contemporary to the surrounding residential development, the boundaries of which intersect to the north, east and west. The main pupil access to the site is from Ffordd Cefn-Yr-Hendy, although the school car park has a separate entrance from Bryn Dewi Sant.

The school site consists of the main two storey building, the attached nursery, and demountable classroom, whilst land within the curtilage is laid out for play and learning and incorporates hard and soft landscaped areas.

The new demountable unit would be positioned adjacent to the southern boundary of the site, where the adjoining land is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and through which Public Right of Way ANT/316/5 passes.

PLANNING HISTORY

The most recent or relevant applications on record associated with this site are:

- 12/0873/01:** Erection of 3 flag poles (Welsh flag, eco-schools flag and Fairtrade schools flag). Decision: 24/09/2012, Granted
- 10/0523/08:** Installation of a single pre fabricated building to provide 1no. classroom and a toilet facility. Decision: 23/07/2010, Granted
- 02/1479/08:** Erection of a 360 no. pupil capacity Junior School (amended description & amended plans received 28.11.02). Decision: 24/01/2003, Granted

PUBLICITY

The application has been advertised by direct notification to twenty-four neighbouring properties and notices were erected on site.

One letter of objection was received from a resident objecting to the proposal since the project had already been started before neighbours had had the opportunity to view plans and comment.

A re-consultation was undertaken on receipt of the aforementioned revised plans, to which no further representations were received at the time of writing.

CONSULTATION

Highways and Transportation

Initially an objection was raised in respect of off-street parking provision; however revised plans have since been received to add the requested additional spaces.

Public Health and Protection

Conditions are suggested in respect of noise, dust, waste and hours of operation. However, given the size of the development and context of the site, it is considered that these matters can be best dealt with by an informative note to any consent.

Countryside – Ecologist

The existing structure looks to have pretty minimal bat roost potential, and as such it would be unreasonable to require a bat survey.

The Coal Authority

The Coal Authority previously advised that the applicant should revise the scheme to position the development outside of the worst-case zone of influence for mine 304181-017. This recommendation was included in the Coal Mining Risk Assessment Report (Earth Science Partnership, March 2020) submitted by the applicant.

The applicant has now submitted a revised proposed site plan (drawing no. PTK00GFDRA04P01) which plots the mine entry and its zone of influence alongside the revised positioning of the classroom extension. The proposed new single classroom extension now falls just beyond the zone of influence for the mine entry. The Coal Authority expects that the relevant competent person who has calculated this zone of influence has taken into account all relevant information pertaining to ground information.

On the basis of revised proposed site plan being that for determination as part of this planning application, the Coal Authority withdraws its objection to this planning application.

Drainage

The applicant has proposed to discharge the surface water for the site via an existing soakaway.

As the detail associated to the construction of a suitable soakaway is covered by the building regulations there is no objection to the method of disposal proposed and the layout indicated within the application.

No other consultation responses have been received within the statutory period.

POLICY CONTEXT

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan

The application site lies within the settlement boundary for Miskin

Policy AW5 - sets out criteria for new development in relation to amenity and accessibility.

Policy AW6 - requires development to involve a high quality design and to make a positive contribution to place making, including landscaping.

Policy AW10 - supports development proposals which are not detrimental to public health or the environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Design and Placemaking
- Access, Circulation and Parking Requirements

National Guidance

In the determination of planning applications regard should also be given to the requirements of national planning policy which are not duplicated in the Local Development Plan, particularly where national planning policy provides a more up to date and comprehensive policy on certain topics.

Planning Policy Wales Edition 10 (PPW) sets out the Welsh Government's (WG) current position on planning policy. The document incorporates the objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act into town and country planning and sets out the WG's policy on planning issues relevant to the determination of planning applications.

It is considered that the proposed development is consistent with the key principles and requirements for placemaking set out in PPW; and is also consistent with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act's sustainable development principles through its contribution towards the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives of driving sustainable development and building healthier communities and better environments.

Other relevant national policy guidance considered:

PPW Technical Advice Note 12 - Design

REASONS FOR REACHING THE RECOMMENDATION

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that, if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Furthermore, applications that are not in accordance with relevant policies in the plan should not be allowed, unless material considerations justify the grant of planning permission.

Main Issues:

Principle of the proposed development

The application site lies within settlement limits and within the curtilage of the school site, where the land use is well-established. Consequently, it is considered that in principle the proposal is acceptable, subject to consideration of the material matters below.

Impact on the character and appearance of the area

Noting the scale of the proposal, compared to the size of the premises and the layout of the existing school buildings and grounds, the development is considered to be acceptable.

The single storey demountable classroom extension would be located well into the site. Given the distance from the street scene and residential properties, together with the intervening screening by vegetation and other elevations, it would be unlikely to be very visible from the public realm.

The development would also result in the external refurbishment of the existing demountable structure so that the two units, once joined, would have more traditional appearance that would not detract from the character of the site.

The application is therefore considered acceptable in this regard.

Impact on neighbouring occupiers

Whilst the application site is located in an area which is generally residential in character, the extension would be sited around 30m metres from the nearest residential property at Bryn Dewi Sant and in excess of 90m from other dwellings to the east.

Many of the views towards where the classroom would be sited are also screened from the properties to the north by the extant school elevations.

Nonetheless, it is considered that even where the new classroom could be seen from outside of the site its small scale and single storey structure would be incapable of causing harm to the amenity or privacy of the neighbouring occupiers.

Therefore, and in the absence of any neighbour representations or objections to the material planning matters, the application is considered to be acceptable in this regard.

Highways and accessibility

As a result of the proposal there would be no alterations either to the existing means of access from the public highway or the existing internal circulation arrangement.

However, the Highways and Transportation Section noted aerial imagery of the existing car park leading from Bryn Dewi Sant, which indicated that at least 5no. vehicles were parked in a manner that restricted satisfactory access/egress of the marked spaces, with 1 no. space and a further 2no. disabled spaces left unoccupied. This suggested that at present there is insufficient off-street parking provision to cater for demand.

The Council's adopted SPG gives an operational requirement of 1 commercial vehicle space and non-operational requirement of 2 spaces per classroom and 3 visitor

spaces. Given that the proposal is for an additional classroom to an existing school, it has an SPG requirement of an additional 2 spaces.

The Section originally objected to the proposal since no additional parking spaces were proposed. Subsequently, as noted above, the Applicant provided a revised car park layout plan to enable the creation of three more spaces. Therefore, subject to a condition to require their implementation, the development is considered acceptable.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Liability

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced in Rhondda Cynon Taf from 31 December 2014.

The application is for development of a kind that is not CIL liable under the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended).

Conclusion

It is considered that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the site and would not be harmful to the amenity of the closest neighbouring properties. The application is therefore considered to comply with Policies AW5, AW6 and AW10 of the Local Development Plan.

RECOMMENDATION: Grant

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Sections 91 and 93 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby approved shall be completed in accordance with the approved drawings:

- Proposed Site Plan - PTK00GFDRA04P01
- Revised Car Parking Layout - 5038_3502_B05.
- Proposed Elevations - PTK00GFDRA06P01
- Proposed Floor Plan - PTK00GFDRA05P01

and details and documents received on 18th July 2019, 8th June 2020, 29th October 2020 and 18th November 2020

Reason: To ensure compliance with the approved plans and documents and to clearly define the scope of the permission.

3. Prior to the beneficial use of the new classroom the additional parking spaces shall be provided on site in accordance with drawing number 5038_3502_B05. These spaces not thereafter be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles.

Reason: To ensure that vehicles are parked off the highway, in the interests of road safety and in accordance with Policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.