



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

5 MARCH 2020

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Members are asked to determine the planning application outlined below:

APPLICATION NO: 19/1223/08 (KL)
APPLICANT: RCT Education & Inclusion Services
DEVELOPMENT: Construction of a single storey classroom linked to existing school (Amended Plans Rec. 17/01/20).
LOCATION: YSGOL TY COCH RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL, LANSDALE DRIVE, TONTEG, PONTYPRIDD, CF38 1PG
DATE REGISTERED: 17/01/2020 08:37:18
ELECTORAL DIVISION: Tonteg

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

REASONS: The proposal relates to the construction of an extension to provide additional classroom space for existing pupils at the school. The extension would be of a limited scale and a sympathetic design which would not impact upon the character and appearance of the existing school or surrounding area or upon the residential amenity and privacy of surrounding residential properties.

Whilst a number of objections have been made in relation to the impact of the proposal on highway safety, the Council's Highways and Transportation Section have not raised any objection to the proposal. The proposal includes the provision of two additional car parking spaces within the site which complies with the requirement set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance: Access, Circulation and Parking. Furthermore, given that no additional members of staff or pupils would be placed at the site, the proposal would not result in any further detriment with regard to highway safety in the vicinity of the site.

As such, the proposal is considered to be comply with the relevant policies of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

REASON APPLICATION REPORTED TO COMMITTEE

- Three or more letters of objection have been received;
- The application has been submitted by, or on behalf of the Council or involving land owned by the Council, where the Council's interest is of more than a minor nature.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Full planning permission is sought for the construction of an extension on the north-eastern elevation of Ysgol Ty Coch Residential Special School, Lansdale Drive, Tonteg.

The proposed extension would measure 7.8 metres in width by 12.6 metres in depth with a hipped roof design that would measure 4.7 metres in height to the ridge and 2.8 metres in height to the eaves. The extension would be externally finished with cream coloured smooth render, grey coloured fibre cement slate roof tiles and grey aluminium windows and doors.

The extension would accommodate a new classroom which would provide additional space for existing pupils and staff. The applicant has confirmed that no additional staff would be employed at the site.

The proposal has been amended during the course of the application; first to include two additional car parking spaces within the existing car park (to address concerns and objections initially raised by the Council's Highways and Transportation Section; and, secondly, to reduce the length of the proposed extension.

SITE APPRAISAL

The application site relates to an existing educational building within the residential village of Tonteg. The site is irregular in shape and measures approximately 8217m². The main school building is located fairly centrally within the site with two further educational buildings (previously caretakers and head teacher's houses) being located to the south-west, off Fairmound Place. A car park is located to the north-west of the main building with access off Lansdale Drive.

The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character with the nearest neighbouring properties being located on the main approach to the site in Lansdale Drive, Fairhill Drive and Fairmound Place to the south-west and in Cheriton Grove to the north-west.

PLANNING HISTORY

17/0427	Change of use of former caretakers dwelling (C3) to provide additional educational facility (D1) for Ysgol Ty Coch	Granted 22/06/17
13/0004	Change of use from residential to education. Erection of single storey coffee shop lounge and installation of commercial kitchen. Remodel garden area	Granted 12/03/13
12/1207	Retention of one canopy and the erection of three others to rear of building	Granted 15/01/13
02/0556	Proposed extensions, alterations and refurbishment	Granted 06/06/02
75/1483	Special School	Granted

PUBLICITY

The application has been advertised by means of direct neighbour notification and through the erection of site notices in the vicinity of the site. A total of 5 letters of objection and 1 petition signed by 46 local residents against the proposal have been received. The objections are summarised as follows:

- There is inadequate car parking provision for staff resulting in cars being parked throughout the surrounding streets;
- Parents block roads, park on double yellow lines and park close to corners at drop off/pick up time, obstructing the vision of other road users;
- Residents were given traffic bollards to stop cars parking across driveways;
- Minibuses drive at breakneck speeds between parked cars and create a real safety issue;
- Residents have been told that the school was at capacity and that there would be no extra traffic;
- A further classroom would bring even more misery for residents;
- An extra classroom is not needed but a new location making it safe for both pupils and residents;
- The number of vehicles resulting in the need to transport additional pupils will make an already problematic situation worse;
- The existing car park near the school could be expanded to help relieve some of the pressure on the surrounding roads;
- Vehicles wait with their engines idling for long periods of time thus increasing pollution in the area;
- Vehicles effectively reduce the access road to this part of the estate to a single gauge road;
- The junction at the top of the hill is increasingly dangerous with cars coming up the hill having to drive on the opposite side of the road to pass waiting vehicles and vehicles turning down the hill frequently meet vehicles coming up on the wrong side;
- Any emergency evacuation of the estate would be severely hampered by parked cars;
- Any emergency vehicles trying to access this part of the estate (for school or residents) may be hampered by parked vehicles;
- Any increase in the size of the school should ensure that provision is made to keep the parking/waiting of vehicles associated with the school off the public highway by creating a school car park or making staff cars park at other designated parking areas in the locality and not on the limited width roads immediately around the school;
- Parking is already a problem along the estate roads caused by actual residents – we do not want any additional vehicles blocking our roads;
- Several residents have had near misses with the large number of taxis and minibuses associated with the school;
- School employees and visitors do not use the car park in the school as they should so adding two extra spaces will make no difference whatsoever.

CONSULTATION

Countryside, Ecology and Landscape – No objection

Flood Risk Management – No objection, subject to condition

Highways and Transportation – No objection, subject to condition

Llantwit Fardre Community Council – No comments received

Public Health and Protection – No objection, subject to conditions

Welsh Water – No objection, subject to conditions and advisory notes

Western Power – No objection

POLICY CONTEXT

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan

The application site lies within the defined settlement boundary for Tonteg and is not allocated for any specific purpose.

Policy CS2 - sets out criteria for achieving sustainable growth including, promoting and enhancing transport infrastructure services.

Policy AW2 - advises that development proposals on non-allocated sites will only be supported in sustainable locations.

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 - development proposals must overcome any harm to public health, the environment or local amenity as a result of flooding.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Design and Placemaking

Access Circulation and Parking

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 sets out the Welsh Government's current position on planning policy, which incorporates the objectives of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act in to planning.

It is considered that the current proposals meet the seven wellbeing of future generation's goals inasmuch as they relate to the proposed development and the site is being brought forward in a manner consistent with the five ways of working.

It is considered that the proposed development is consistent with the key principles and requirements for placemaking as defined by chapter 2 people and places: Achieving Wellbeing through Placemaking of the policy document and that the proposal is also consistent with the following insofar as they relate to the development proposed –

Chapter 2 achieving wellbeing through placemaking
Chapter 3 strategic and spatial choices.
Chapter 4 active and social places
Chapter 6 distinctive and natural places.

Other relevant policy guidance consulted:

PPW Technical Advice Note 11: Noise;
PPW Technical Advice Note 12: Design;
PPW Technical Advice Note 18: Transport;
Manual for Streets

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 proposal relates to the extension of an existing school that is located within the defined settlement boundary and within a predominantly residential area of Tonteg. The extension would be of a limited scale and would provide much-needed additional classroom space for children that already attend the school.

As such, the principle of the proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable, subject to an assessment of the criteria set out below:

Access and highway safety

It is noted that a number of objections have been received from local residents which raise concern with regard to the impact of the proposal on highway safety in the vicinity of the site. One of the key concerns is that existing car parking provision for the school

is insufficient with vehicles associated with the school being parked on the surrounding residential streets.

Whilst these concerns are acknowledged, the Council's Highways and Transportation Section have not raised any objection to the proposal (subject to condition – condition 3 refers). The consultation response received indicates that the proposal includes the provision of 2 additional car parking spaces within the existing car park which would comply with the requirements set out in the Council's adopted SPG Access, Circulation and Parking. Furthermore, there would be no alterations to the existing means of access off the public highway or to the internal circulation arrangement as a result of the proposal.

It is noted that the provision of 2 additional car parking spaces is unlikely to resolve the existing highway issues in the locality of the site however, the provision of 2 additional spaces is to address the requirement of the additional classroom and not intended to address any pre-existing parking problems associated with the school. The applicant has confirmed that the additional classroom is required to provide improved facilities for existing pupils and that no additional staff members would be employed at the site as a result of the proposal. As such, it is not considered that the proposal would result in any further detriment to highway safety in the vicinity of the site.

As such, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of the impact it would have on highway safety in the vicinity of the site and the application would therefore comply with Policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

Impact on residential amenity and privacy

It is not considered that the proposed extension would have a detrimental impact on the amenity and privacy of the nearest neighbouring residential properties, which are located in Cheriton Grove to the north of the site. Residential properties in Lansdale Drive, Fairmound Place and Fairhill Drive are located on the opposite side of the school (south-west) and would not be affected by the proposed extension in this regard.

Whilst it is noted that the application site is located at a higher ground level to properties in Cheriton Grove, the extension would be sited well within the site with a distance of approximately 55 metres being maintained between the extension and the rear elevations of the nearest properties. Furthermore, the extension would be of a limited, single-storey scale and would not give rise to any overbearing or overshadowing impact, nor would it result in any loss of outlook. The extension would include a new door and window within the side elevation facing toward Cheriton Grove however, the level of overlooking would not be increased over that which already occurs.

As such, the proposal would comply with Policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

Impact on the character and appearance of the area

The proposed extension would be sited on the north-east facing elevation of the main school building which is not particularly visible from the surrounding area. Whilst there would be some limited views from the rear elevations of existing properties in Cheriton Grove, the extension is considered to be acceptable in terms of its scale and design. It would be single storey in height with a ridge line that would be set below the ridge line of the part of the school from which it would project. It would therefore be sympathetic and subservient to the scale of the existing building and would not appear to be overly prominent within the wider area. Whilst it would have a more contemporary appearance in comparison to the existing building, it is not considered that this would have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the existing building or upon the wider area.

As such, the application would comply with Policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

Other Issues:

The following other material considerations have been taken into account in considering the application, though were not the key determining factors in reaching the recommendation.

Drainage

The proposal indicates that the sites surface water would be disposed of via the main sewer system, as per the existing situation for the rest of the school. However, no details have been included to demonstrate discharge rates or controls as part of the sites design to ensure that the risk of flooding from surface water is adequately controlled. As such, the Council's Flood Risk Management Team recommend the imposition of a standard drainage condition on any grant of planning permission in order to secure the submission of full drainage details prior to the commencement of development (condition 4 refers).

Ecology

The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Roost Assessment Report which includes an assessment of 11 schools within RCT. The report concludes that bat potential is negligible in the part of Ysgol Ty Coch where the proposed extension would be constructed and the Council's Ecologist has therefore confirmed that a bat survey would not be required in this instance.

Public Health

The Council's Public Health & Protection Section have raised no objections to the proposal, however, a number of conditions have been suggested in relation to hours of operation, noise, waste and dust. Whilst these comments are appreciated, it is considered that issues relating to hours of operation, noise, dust and waste can be more efficiently controlled by other legislation and the suggested conditions are not considered necessary. An appropriate informative note is considered to be sufficient in this instance.

It has also been identified that the application site is located within 250m of the former Tonteg Ash Tip and Power Station Hill Landfill and the Public Health and Protection Section therefore consider that there is potential for hazards associated with land contamination to exist on site. However, due to the size and nature of the proposed development, no conditions have been recommended and the issue will be highlighted to the applicant in an advisory note.

Other issues raised by objectors

Whilst comments received in relation to the provision of a dedicated car parking area for staff and visitors of the school are appreciated, this issue is outside the parameters of this application and cannot be taken into consideration. Similarly, comments suggesting that a new location for the entire school be sought rather than extending the existing building is not a reason to refuse this application.

Furthermore, any illegal or obstructive parking/driving is a police matter and not a material planning consideration that could be used in the determination of the application. The Council cannot make staff or visitors utilise the parking provision available or prevent them from parking illegally elsewhere.

The applicant has confirmed that the extension would not result in any additional children or members of staff being placed at the school however, it is noted that this cannot be guaranteed. The applicant has confirmed that, as with all special schools, there is not a specific maximum capacity and that children in the wider RCT area are placed in the best possible education setting to support their needs. This could potentially mean that additional pupils are placed at the school in the future however, the extension is not specifically for additional pupils to be placed at the school. In any case, the proposed extension is considered to be of a limited scale and would not be physically large enough to accommodate a significant number of extra pupils, particularly given that many children that attend this school have large, bespoke medical equipment that needs to be moved around with the children.

In relation to comments received regarding increasing pollution in the area as a result of the number of cars associated with the school, as mentioned above, it is not considered that the number of cars would be significantly increased as a result of the proposal.

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

The application is considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Local Development Plan in respect of the impact it would have on the character and

appearance of the area, the amenity and privacy currently enjoyed by surrounding residential properties and upon highway safety in the vicinity of the site.

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 carried out in accordance with the approved drawing numbers and documents received by the Local Planning Authority on 20th November 2019 & 17th January 2020, unless otherwise to be approved and superseded by details required by any other condition attached to this consent:

- Drawing No. 5491_3497_B05: Site Location Plan;
- Drawing No. 5491_3497_B06 (Rev A): Proposed Site Layout Plan;
- Drawing No. 5491_3497_B04 (Rev A): Proposed Elevations;
- Drawing No. 5491_3497_B02 (Rev A): Proposed Floor Plan.
- Drawing No. 5491_3497_B09: Proposed Car Park Layout.

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

3. The parking spaces indicated on submitted drawing no. 5491_3497_B09 shall be provided on site in permanent materials prior to beneficial occupation of the extension hereby approved. The parking spaces shall be retained for the purpose of vehicular parking only.

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

4. No development shall commence until all relevant matters outlined on the attached Planning Requirements Relating to Flood Risk Management including full drainage details have been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall indicate how the development is to comply with the requirements of Section 8.3 of Technical Advice Note 15.

Reason: To ensure that drainage from the proposed development does not cause or exacerbate any adverse condition on the development site, adjoining properties, environment and existing infrastructure arising from inadequate drainage.