



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEV/SE/16/035

Development Control Committee

4 May 2016

Planning Application DC/15/2540/FUL

Cherry Trees, Flempton Road, Risby

Date: 20 January 2016 **Expiry Date:** 20th April 2016

Registered:

Case: Charlotte **Recommendation:** Approve

Officer: Waugh

Parish: Flempton cum Hengrave **Ward:** Risby

Proposal: Planning Application - Construction of two storey building to provide a new reception, replacement classrooms and boarding accommodation. (Demolition of existing temporary classrooms and outbuildings)

Site: Cherry Trees, Flempton Road, Risby

Applicant: Clear Space Buildings – Mr & Mrs Scott and Clare Horner

Synopsis:

Application under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Associated matters.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Committee determine the attached application and associated matters.

CONTACT CASE OFFICER:

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Background:

This application is presented to the Committee following a request by the Ward Member. As the application is for major development the application has been referred straight to the Committee without consideration by the Delegation Panel.

Proposal:

1. Planning permission is sought for a detached two storey building to provide a new reception area, replacement classrooms and student bedrooms (to serve the preparatory school). The entrance element of the building measures 7.6 x 17 metres and contains offices, meeting room, first aid room and classrooms over two floors. This is linked by a lobby to the student bedrooms. This element of the building measures 25 x 13.5 metres and contains 8 bedrooms each over two floors as well as a kitchen, recreational area.
2. The overall height of the building is 5.4 metres which has been designed with a flat roof and clad in red cedar boarding.

Application Supporting Material:

3. Information submitted with the application as follows:
 - Application Form
 - Site Plan
 - Existing and Proposed Plans
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Tree Survey/ Arboricultural Assessment
 - Landscape Plan and mood board
 - Ecological Survey
 - Transport Assessment
 - Flood Risk/Drainage Assessment

Site Details:

4. Cherry Trees School is situated in open Countryside between Risby and Flempton. The site accommodates a nursery which takes children from 3 months to 5 years old and a preparatory school which takes children up to 14 years old. There are various outbuildings that are used in association with the school, some of which are on a temporary basis. Furthermore the school has a tennis court and a large playing field. The site is bounded by woodlands to the south and the east, and the land to the north and the west rises which results in the site being well screened from the surrounding area.

Planning History:

5. Other applications have been submitted within the wider site but do not

have any specific relevance to this application.

Consultations:

6. Parish Council: Support.
7. Tree, Landscape and Ecology Officer: The site has been completely cleared of trees and vegetation during the consideration of this application, these trees were not protected as the Local Authority had taken the view in the past that the school were managing their trees in a responsible manner. This conflicts with plans showing tree retention. Replacement landscaping and tree planting is required and should be a condition on any approval. Furthermore, the recommendations contained in the ecology report should also form a condition.
8. Anglian Water: No comment.
9. Highway Authority: It is understood that the proposal will not increase the capacity of the school beyond its previously approved and utilised 250 pupil figure and it will result in a number of boarding places which should reduce the daily traffic movements.
The existing parking provision of 59 exceeds the SCC recommended guidance for 250 pupils so is acceptable for this proposal. No changes to the existing access are proposed.
Therefore, the Highway Authority has no further comments to make.
10. Environment Agency: No comment.
11. SCC Flood and Water Engineer: No comment.
12. Fire and Rescue: Provided advice to applicant.

Representations:

13. Neighbours: None received.

Policy: The following policies of the Joint Development Management Policies Document and the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy December 2010 have been taken into account in the consideration of this application:

14. Joint Development Management Policies Document:
 - Policy DM: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 - Policy DM2: Creating Places – Development Principles and Local Distinctiveness
 - Policy DM5: Development in the Countryside
 - Policy DM13: Landscape Features
15. St Edmundsbury Core Strategy December 2010
 - Policy CS3: Design and Local Distinctiveness
 - Policy CS13: Rural Areas

16. Rural Vision 2031

- RV1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- RV8: Safeguarding educational establishments

Other Planning Policy:

17. National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

Core principles and sections:

7. Requiring good design
8. Promoting healthy communities

Officer Comment:

18. The issues to be considered in the determination of the application are:

- Principle of Development
- Visual Amenity
- Impact on Trees/Landscape
- Impact on Highways/Parking

Principle of Development

19. The site has been used as a school since 1984 and during that time has grown from a single building, which was previously a dwelling, to accommodating various temporary and permanent buildings. The school at capacity houses 250 pupils. It has recently been bought by Brookes Cambridge and the company are seeking to renovate the site to meet its requirements.

20. The site is located outside of any Housing settlement boundary where policies DM5 and CS13 state that development will be strictly controlled. However, the Local Authority has supported the growth of the site as an education facility for over 30 years and as such, it would be difficult to claim now that the site was not suitable for further development. In any event, DM5 offers support for the expansion of all types of business within the rural area subject to a number of criteria.

21. Policy RV8 seeks to safeguard educational establishments and contains various aspirations for the creation of high standard educational facilities and for growth at these establishments to be managed for the future. As such, the proposal gains support from this policy. Furthermore, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. It states at paragraph 72 that Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. It advises Local Authorities to give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools. On this basis, the principle of development is considered acceptable.

Visual Amenity

22. The location of the building is largely determined by a number of non

planning related constraints within the site such as restrictive covenants and freehold/leasehold land. This creates a cluster of buildings in the centre of the site and thereby allows car parking to be retained to the front and playing fields to the rear. In terms of landscape impact this also focuses the built form in a central enclaved position thereby limiting sprawl into the surrounding open space.

23. At present the site is filled with various buildings, some of which are of a temporary nature and many of those have outlasted their useful lifespan. Renovation of the site allows the removal of these buildings and their replacement with a custom built facility. This will not only improve the quality of the teaching spaces but will greatly enhance the overall appearance of the site.
24. The NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment as well as buildings which promote high levels of sustainability. In this case, the building itself has a contemporary appearance incorporating western red cedar cladding on the elevations and a flat roof. The simple form of the building allows a low overall height of 5.4 metres to be achieved which ensures that the building, whilst of a significant footprint, still appears subservient to the main building and original house and does not dominate the site. The materials chosen are considered appropriate given the rural location and appearance of the site and will complement the mixture of materials already in use, as well as offering benefits in terms of sustainability. It is considered that the proposed landscaping will further soften views of the building, which, whilst visible from the entrance of the site will be attractive and modest.
25. Overall, the scale, form, position and appearance of the proposed building is considered acceptable and in accordance with the principle of the NPPF and local policy.

Impact on Trees/Landscape

26. The application is accompanied by a tree survey and arboricultural report which identifies trees within the site to be retained throughout development. Unfortunately, during the course of the application the site has been cleared of trees and vegetation. Whilst the trees were not protected they contributed to the overall character of the site and their loss is regrettable. Nonetheless, a proposed outline landscape scheme has been submitted which is considered broadly acceptable in mitigating any otherwise adverse impact and a detailed scheme will be conditioned as part of any approval.
27. An ecology report has also been submitted which makes recommendations in terms of times of year that work takes place, lighting, drainage of ponds etc. This report also identifies enhancements within the site such as the use of bat and bird boxes on the new building. It is considered appropriate to condition these details.

Impact on Highways/Parking

28. The Highway Authority is satisfied with the existing parking provision within the site, and the vehicular access from Flempton Road will remain. The new building should not result in an increase in vehicle movements and as such, the proposal is considered acceptable in this regard.

Conclusion:

29. In conclusion, the principle and detail of the development is considered to be acceptable and in compliance with relevant development plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Recommendation:

It is **RECOMMENDED** that planning permission be **Approved** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than 3 years from the date of this permission.
2. The development hereby permitted shall be clad entirely of Western Red Cedar cladding.
3. No development above ground level shall commence until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of soft landscaping for the site drawn to a scale of not less than 1:200. The soft landscaping details shall include planting plans; written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment); schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/ densities. The approved scheme of soft landscaping works shall be implemented not later than the first planting season following commencement of the development (or within such extended period as may first be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority). Any planting removed, dying or becoming seriously damaged or diseased within five years of planting shall be replaced within the first available planting season thereafter with planting of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent for any variation.
4. The recommendations and precautionary measures contained in section 5 of the Phase 1 habitat survey produced by Skilled Ecology and dated December 2015 shall be adhered to in their entirety throughout the construction process.
5. Bat and bird boxes as suggested within the submitted phase 1 habitat survey should be installed on the new building prior to its occupation. Details of the position and type of boxes proposed should be submitted to the Local Authority and agreed in writing prior to their installation.
6. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the approved plans and documents

Documents:

All background documents including application forms, drawings and other supporting documentation relating to this application can be viewed online.

<https://planning.westsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/simpleSearchResults.do?action=firstPage>