

2023/0510

Applicant: Mr Ben Taylor (BMBC)

Description: Proposed extension works to form 3no. new classrooms, ancillary spaces, and all new weather pitch

Site Address: Birkwood Primary School, Darfield Road, Cudworth, Barnsley, S72 8HG

The scheme is before Members as it is a Council application.

Site Description

This site is located within Cudworth and is to the west of, and fronts onto, Darfield Road. It is occupied by a red/buff brick building with a slate and tiled roof which functions as a school.

The current school sits within a 1.06-hectare site. The school sits centrally on the site and wraps a central playground on 3 sides. There is a large playing field, a MUGA as well as on-site car parking for staff. The boundaries of the site are secured by a palisade fence. Trees occupy various boundaries and aid in screening the school building from the adjoining houses. The site is bound by existing residential properties to the north-east, north-west and south-east with allotments sited to the south-west.



Location Plan



Aerial view of site

The existing primary school provides education for children from ages 4- 11 and also has an internal nursery. There are bus stops outside the school on Darfield Road, which are served by the number 32 bus, which runs from Cudworth into Barnsley Town Centre via Monk Bretton every 20 minutes. Cudworth is located just off the A628 Dearne Valley Parkway, which provides links to Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield.

The site is accessed from Darfield Road via a single carriageway access road which serves the school car park at the rear of the building and the allotments. Pedestrian access is direct from the highway on Darfield Road. There are no plans to alter the access to the school as part of the development works.

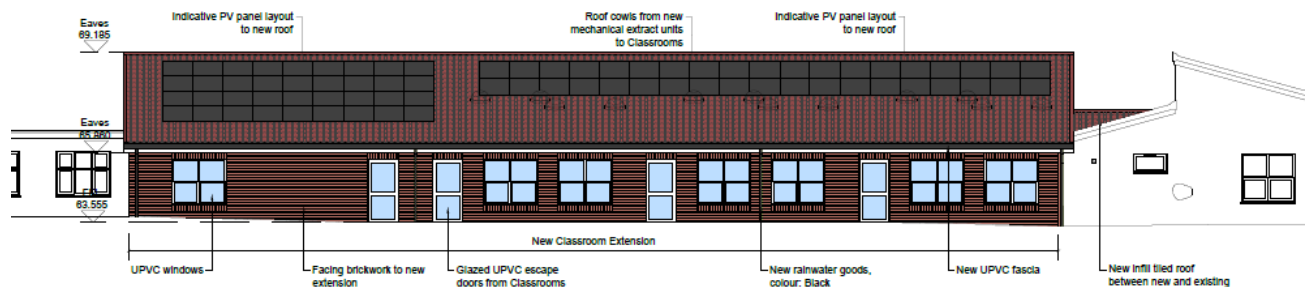
Proposed Development

This application follows on from a recently approved application (2022/1291) for proposed extension works to form a new circulation corridor and catering kitchen as approved under application 2022/1291.

The subject works of this application are 3no. new classrooms, ancillary spaces and an all-new weather pitch. The classroom extension would be single storey with brickwork walls and the use of solar panels on the roof. In order to facilitate the new extension, the existing hard surface Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) will be removed and replaced with a new Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) on the grassed area.



Proposed Site Plan



Proposed classroom elevation

The applicant has stated that the existing school playing field is in poor condition and is unusable through winter months, as such the new AGP will improve sports provision at the school and allow for physical education (P.E) activities to take place all year round.

No floodlighting is proposed to the new AGP and the pitch will be for school activities only. The AGP will have a new paladin fence around the perimeter.

The application has been amended during the course of the application with the AGP being rotated through 90 degrees to be orientated in a north-east to south-west position as shown on the plans above to reduce the impacts on the trees on the southern boundary and also move it away from neighbouring properties on Birkwood Avenue.

History

2022/1291- Proposed extension works to form new circulation corridor and catering kitchen- Approved with conditions.

2012/0371- Erection of 3 no extensions to primary school to provide additional classrooms, toilets and a staffroom (Part Retrospective)- Approved with conditions

2007/2071- Construction of a multi-use games area- Approve with conditions

B/03/2194/CU- Erection of single-storey link extension to school and new nursery/children's centre- Approved with conditions.

B/00/0640/CU- Erection of 2.1m high palisade fencing to front boundary- Approved with conditions.

Policy Context

Planning decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. The Local Plan was adopted in January 2019 and is also now accompanied by seven masterplan frameworks which apply to the largest site allocations (housing, employment and mixed-use sites). In addition, the Council has adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans which provide supporting guidance and specific local policies and are a material consideration in the decision-making process.

The Local Plan review was approved at the full Council meeting held 24th November 2022.

The review determined that the Local Plan remains fit for purpose and is adequately delivering its objectives. This means no updates to the Local Plan, in whole or in part, are to be carried out ahead of a further review. The next review is due to take place in 2027 or earlier if circumstances, require it.

Local Plan

Policy GD1 General Development
Policy D1 High Quality Design and Place Making
Policy T3 New Development and Sustainable Travel
Policy T4 New development and Transport Safety
Policy I2 Educational and Community Facilities
Policy Poll1 Pollution Control and Protection
Policy BIO1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
Policy GI1 Green Infrastructure

SPDs

Supplementary Planning Document – Parking
Supplementary Planning Document – Sustainable Travel
Supplementary Planning Document- Trees and Hedgerows
Supplementary Planning Document- Residential Amenity and the Siting of Buildings
Supplementary Planning Document- Biodiversity and Geodiversity

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Consultation Responses

Pollution Control – No objections subject to condition

Drainage – No objections raised

Highways – No objections subject to condition

Tree Officer – No objections subject to condition.

Biodiversity – No objections

Sport England – have objected due to the loss of the MUGA. This issue is discussed further in the report below.

Ward Councillors – have all expressed they have no objections to the scheme

Representations

The application was advertised by 32 neighbour notification letters and site notice.

Three letters of objection were received from local residents to the initial plans which are summarised as follows:

- Pitch should be rotated 90 degrees and scaled down in size to follow the route of the existing pitch and keep the play area.
- Trees 34 and 35 have TPOs on both and shouldn't be removed.
- Shrubs and edges provide shelter for 20+ different species of birds and wildlife
- Noise pollution from pitch close to residential boundary
- Dorothy Hyman Sports Centre is in walking distance which has a large-scale all-weather pitch facility.

Since these comments were received the application has been amended with the AGP being rotated 90 degrees and moved further away from the trees

Assessment

Principle of Development

The proposed site is an existing community facility and is within an area of Urban Fabric and therefore has no specific allocation within the Local Plan.

Local Plan Policy I2, Educational and Community Facilities supports the provision of schools, educational facilities and other community facilities. One of the borough's

ambitions is to invest in education and skills to support the development of the economy and increase educational attainment and the importance of access to a good education is emphasised. As such, the proposed extensions are in line with policy I2 of the Local Plan.

This application seeks the removal of the existing MUGA with the classroom extensions. Sport England (SE) are of the opinion that there is no suitable replacement for the loss of the MUGA, there is no evidence to show the MUGA and playing field are surplus to requirement and there is no strategic need for the AGP that is proposed.

In taking the above into consideration, thought must be given as to whether this is in fact 'playing field' development and therefore within Sport England's remit to object. SE consider that the MUGA forms part of the overall playing field site and therefore consider that 'playing field' is lost.

'Playing field', as defined within The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, means 'the whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch' whilst a 'Playing pitch' means a delineated area which, together with any run-off area, is of 0.2 hectares or more' and used for 'association football, american football, rugby, cricket, hockey, lacrosse, rounders, baseball, softball, Australian football, gaelic football, shinty, hurling, polo, or cycle polo'. . Notwithstanding the above definitions, the playing field is considered an informal area and not a 'playing pitch' as it is not marked out definitely and is used for a variety of activities and play, not a specific sport that is mentioned in the definition. This would be the same for the MUGA. Therefore, as the area does not class as having a playing pitch it is not considered to be a playing field and Sport England's objection would not be considered to be substantiated as the proposal would not be classed a playing field development. As such, the proposals are acceptable in principle, subject to an assessment of other policies within the Local Plan.

Design

The classroom extension and ancillary areas infill the area where the MUGA used to be and have been designed to complement the existing building. They will measure 21.2m in depth and 31m in width. The ridge line and the pitch of the new mono-pitch roof are designed to mirror the existing mono-pitch roof to the adjacent classroom.

Solider course detail has been added to the heads and cills of the windows to mirror that of the existing. The mono pitch roof is extended out to provide visual interest to the elevations and to provide solar shading to the classroom windows below. Further the roof pitch is oriented to the south to enable maximum power generation from the proposed solar panels.

In terms of materials, the extension will be constructed from facing brick work to match, matching roof tiles, a liquid applied membrane roof, UPVC white windows and white powder coated aluminium doors. Paladin facing will be to the rear whilst there will be tarmac and a concrete flag to the internal courtyard.

It is considered that the classroom extensions and ancillary areas have been designed, taking the existing school into consideration. The development will be high quality, will not affect the Darfield Road Street scene due to their position well within the boundaries of the site and will enhance the overall appearance of main school building.

In terms of the AGP, it is typical of a sports facility and is considered to be appropriate in design.

Given the above the proposal is considered to be of a high-quality design, in accordance with Local Plan Policies D1 and GD1.

Residential Amenity

There will be no detrimental impact on residential amenity from the classrooms/ancillary areas as the proposed extensions are infill additions located a considerable distances from residential properties that surround the site. The siting of the proposal therefore meets the guidelines of the SPD on Residential Amenity and the Siting of New Buildings.

Three objections were received from residents to the initial plans who raised concerns about noise pollution and the need for the AGP to be rotated and scale down due to impacts on residential amenity. The AGP has now been rotated so it follows a similar line to the orientation of the existing playing field allowing the retention of the trees on the boundary and reducing the impacts on the near neighbours. It should also be noted that where the AGP will be located already serves as an informal play area for the school where P.E activities take place. Therefore, the addition of the AGP will not create any noise or disturbance over and above what is already experienced at the school, it is rather just an enhanced facility and dedicated space. There will be no floodlights associated with the AGP and therefore no light pollution.

A condition is recommended to restrict the hours of construction work. This is in line with the advice from Pollution Control who have raised no objections to the scheme subject to this condition. The proposals are therefore acceptable from a residential amenity perspective in accordance with Policy POLL1 of the Local Plan.

Trees

The applicant has submitted a tree survey and assessment and has responded to the concerns over the potential impacts on the trees on the southern boundary of the site by rotating the AGP ninety degrees. This now ensures that all the surveyed trees can be retained. The Council's Tree Officer considers the proposal acceptable subject to a suitable condition to protect the trees during construction works.

Ecology

The application was supported by a bat survey report, detailing the findings of a building inspection and a single emergence survey undertaken in August 2022. The survey indicated a likely absence of roosting bats within the buildings to be affected by the proposals. The evaluation and conclusion section for the report suggests that integral bat roost features are incorporated within the proposals, which will be secured by way of planning condition. The Council's Ecology Officer has looked over the report and is satisfied with the conclusions.

In taking all of the above into consideration, the application will be in accordance with Local Plan Policy BIO1, Green Infrastructure policy GI1, and the SPDs Biodiversity/ Geodiversity and Trees/ Hedgerows.

Highways

The school benefits from a 32-space car park that will not be affected by the scheme. Barnsley MBC's Parking SPD recommends that schools should provide off-street parking at a rate of one space per three members of teaching staff and an additional space per three members of non-teaching staff. The number of proposed employees will increase from 15 to 18, whilst part time employees will increase from 49 to 55, notwithstanding this the 32-space car park is more than adequate to accommodate the suggested number of staff when assessed using this guidance.

There are bus stops outside the school on Darfield Road, which are served by the number 32 bus, which runs from Cudworth into Barnsley Town Centre via Monk Bretton every 20 minutes. Cudworth is located just off the A628 Dearne Valley Parkway, which also provides links to Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield.

Given this, the scheme is acceptable from the perspective of highways, subject to a condition requiring the submission of a construction method statement. In taking all of the above into consideration, the proposal will be in accordance with Local Plan Policy T4 New Development and Transport Safety.

Drainage

No objections have been raised from drainage consultees to the scheme. Under previously approved application 2022/1291, Yorkshire Water were satisfied that a 2-inch private supply pipe within the redline boundary to the Northeast of the site will not be affected by extension works. Subject to a condition to provide appropriate drainage details the scheme is considered acceptable.

Conclusion

The proposed development is for infill classroom extensions, ancillary spaces and an AGP to the existing Primary School. The works to the school itself assimilate well with the existing school and are of a high-quality design. The AGP is an appropriate recreational facility. Suitably worded conditions will be used to ensure the development will not have a detrimental impact to trees, biodiversity, residential amenity or drainage and there will be no impact to the highway network.

Therefore, it is the view of officers that the proposed is acceptable and approval should be granted.

Recommendation

Grant subject to conditions