

2022/0286

St John the Baptist C of E (Aided)

Formation of car park

St John the Baptist Church of England Primary School, High Street Penistone, Sheffield, S36 6BS

Penistone Town Council have no objections

5 comments have been received from neighbouring residents, which include 2 letters of objection/comment and 3 letters of support/comment

Description

St John the Baptist Church of England Primary School is situated off an access road to the west of the main High Street, near to the centre of Penistone. The site is bounded by residential properties to the south off Clarel Street and High Street to the east. To the north is Buckingham Care Home and to the west is St John the Baptist Infant School. The existing school is a mix of two and single storey elements, constructed of brick with tiled and flat roofs. The school has a small car park to the rear.

The site for the proposed car park is set adjacent to the Youth Centre and is currently overgrown. The site is identified on the Council's Green Space Register as GS 1784, Penistone Youth Centre Local Neighbourhood Green Space.





Proposed Development

The proposal involves the formation of a car park to the front of the school, set adjacent to the Youth Centre. The car park proposed has a total of 29 spaces which includes 2 disability spaces. The applicant has provided the following statement relevant to the site and the reasons for it:

“The development will take place within an existing council owned site. It is proposed that the new car park will abut the existing school positioned on the existing amenity grassland in front of the school, accessed off High Street. The existing car park to the south of the site has be altered to provide additional parking spaces for staff and visitors but this is now inadequate due to the newly increased size of the school population.”

In 2019 a planning application was approved by Members of the Planning regulatory Board under application reference 2018/0727 for a 29 space car park at the Junior School on the same site, however the development did not commence within 3 years, therefore the permission has lapsed. As such the applicant has had to re-apply for the proposal.

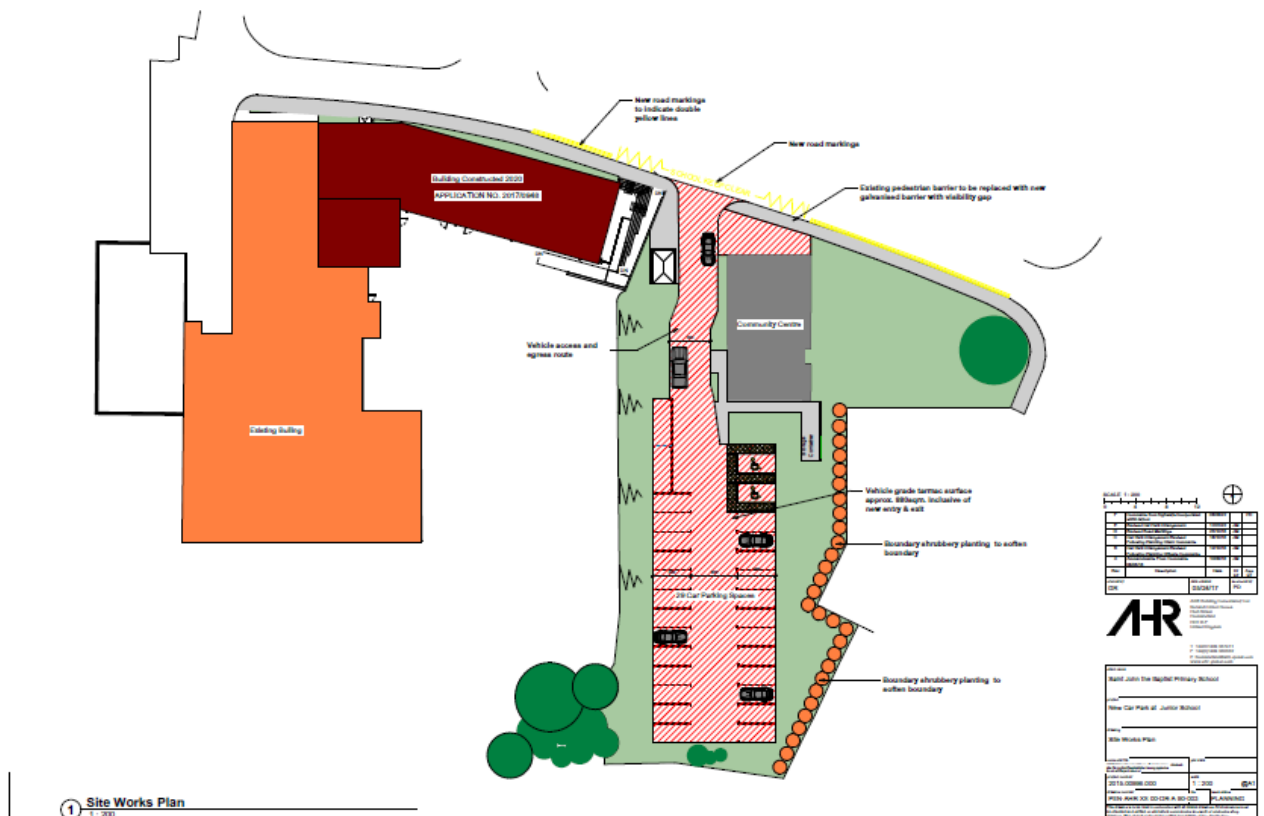
The car park is for sole use by the school staff. The majority of vehicular activity would occur within the day-time hours; namely at the start and end of the school day (08:00 - 09:15, 15:00 - 17:00), on a daily occurrence from Monday – Friday, however it is anticipated that the school caretaker will open up the car park at approximately 07.30 with the latest member of staff leaving at approximately 19.00, with the exception of the occasional parent’s evenings and school governor’s meetings.

In terms of the management of the car park, appropriate fencing/gating at the site entrance will be controlled by the school caretaker to manage traffic flow.

A lighting scheme has been submitted for the car park and the lights will be installed to the latest Light Pollution Guidance and on an automated timer to correspond with the main hours of use and daylight hours.

A landscaping scheme has been submitted with the application. A Noise Impact Assessment and a Preliminary Ecological Survey have also been submitted in support of the application.

As the proposal results in a loss of an area of green space, compensation amounting to £20,165.22 is required, to be used to upgrade existing facilities in the locality which would need to be secured by a condition.



Proposed site plan

Planning History

2018/0727 - Proposed Car Park at Junior School – Approved with conditions, however the development was not commenced within 3 years therefore the permission has lapsed.

2017/0948 - Erection of two storey extension to school including some demolition works - 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.

Local Plan

The site is allocated as Green Space within the Local Plan Proposals Maps and is adjacent to the Conservation Area therefore the following policies are relevant:

- Policy GS1 Green Space
- 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 HE1 The Historic Environment
- Policy I2 Educational and Community Facilities
- Policy Poll1 Pollution Control and Protection

Policy BIO1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

SPDs/SPGs

Supplementary Planning Document – Parking

Supplementary Planning Document – Sustainable Travel

Penistone Neighbourhood Development Plan (August 2019)

BE1 Design of the Built Environment

BE2 Protection and enhancement of local heritage assets

BE4 Local Green Spaces

CF1 Schools Provision

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Governments 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. Where the development plan is absent, silent, or relevant policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole; or where specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted or unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Consultations

Penistone Town Council – No comments/objections

Ward Councillors – No comments received

Sport England – No objections

Highways – No objections subject to conditions

Conservation Officer – No comments received however no objections to previous application

Ecology Officer – No objections subject to condition

Pollution Control – No objections to previous application

Drainage – Details to be checked by Building Control

Yorkshire Water – No objection subject to conditions

Representations

5 comments have been received from neighbouring residents:-

2 letters of objection/comment:-

- Loss or privacy
- Noise impact
- Invasive lighting/light pollution

- Shrubbery should not be placed along the boundary wall but along the car park edge to provide screening
- Loss of green space
- Impact on wildlife
- Potential antisocial behaviour

3 letters of support/comment:-

- This is a great plan that is much needed by the school. As I neighbour, I look forward to less congestion and staff cars in front and around my house.
- Support for the scheme however approval should be conditional on the drafting of a travel plan to reduce car trips
- No objection but would like 3 trees removing to the rear of the garden and the gates should be locked at the end of the day to prevent youths and vandalism on site

Assessment

Principle of development

In 2019 a planning application was approved by Members of the Planning Regulatory Board under application reference 2018/0727 for a 29 space car park at the Junior School on the same site, however they weren't able to resource the commencement of the development within the 3 years of the permission therefore the permission has lapsed. The need and justification for the proposal is the same though and as such this new application has been submitted.

The application provides additional car parking at the existing Junior School. Local Plan Policy I2 Educational and Community Facilities supports the provision of schools, educational facilities and other community facilities. This is also supported by Penistone Neighbourhood Development Plan Policy CF1: Schools provision which states that 'The expansion of the local schools, their buildings and grounds, will be supported especially where these provide for the ongoing sustainability of the facility and contribute to the improvement of the learning environment of the school.' Therefore, the proposal is supported in principle subject to the following material considerations.

Green Space

The site is allocated as a Green Space with the Local Plan and the Green Space Register. Policy GS1 Green Space of the Local Plan states that: 'proposals that result in the loss of Green Space, or land which was last used as green space will not normally allowed unless an assessment shows that there is too much of that particular type of green space in the area and its loss would not affect the existing and potential green space needs of the borough. In order to improve the quantity, quality and value of green space provision will require new residential developments to provide or contribute towards green space in line with the standards set out in the Green Space Strategy.'

The principle of the loss of the Green Space has already been accepted with the granting of planning application 2018/0727. The site of the proposed car park is identified on the Council's Green Space Register as GS1784, Penistone Youth Centre Local Neighbourhood Green Space, however the site is not included within the Penistone Neighbourhood Development Plan list of Local Green Spaces to be protected from development.

The site is now overgrown and it is clear that it is not currently well used as an area of Green Space. The site previously contained a small football pitch although has since been used and is overgrown nevertheless Sport England have been consulted as part of the planning

application process. In terms of the loss of the playing field, Sport England were consulted for the previous planning application and stated: 'The proposal is for a car park at a junior school and is located on an area of grass playing field which forms part of the overall playing field unit. The area has a small football pitch marked on it. However, due to the size of the area it is incapable of accommodating the smallest pitch to FA recommended sizes, it is fenced off and divorced from the main playing fields and is therefore unlikely to provide significant benefit to formal sport. Having assessed the application, Sport England is satisfied that the proposed development meets the following exception:-

The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not:

- reduce the size of any playing pitch
- result in the inability to use any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins and run-off areas);
- reduce the sporting capacity of the playing field to accommodate playing pitches or the capability to rotate or reposition playing pitches to maintain their quality;
- result in the loss of other sporting provision or ancillary facilities on the site; or
- prejudice the use of any remaining areas of playing field on the site.

This being the case, Sport England does not wish to raise an objection to this application'

Sport England have been reconsulted with this current application and have raised no objections. They state: 'On this occasion and given the proposed mitigation and the previous comments made by Sport England, we are satisfied that there would be no harm to sport and recreation provision on site, particularly as the site of the proposed car park is incapable of accommodating the smallest pitch to Football Association recommended sizes, and is fenced off and divorced from the main playing fields and is therefore unlikely to provide significant benefit to formal sport.'

Whilst the loss of this small area of green space is regrettable, it is considered that the justification exists to allow the proposed development given the above comments by Sport England and the need and associated benefits of providing additional car parking provision at the school. However, this position is dependent upon compensation being secured in the form of a commuted sum amounting to £20,165.22 that would be used to upgrade existing facilities in the locality at a location such as Penistone Recreation Ground (GS351) or an alternative location within the local area, as per the requirements of Policy GS1 and the SPD. This shall require a planning condition to secure the funding.

Highway Safety

The proposal would provide 29 additional car parking spaces at the school, accessed off High Street. Highways have been consulted and have no objections to the scheme subject to conditions, including a condition which requires the submission of a Travel Plan prior to the development being brought into use.

The proposal would provide much needed parking at the school and would improve the parking issues currently experienced during school drop off and pick up times. There are no suitable alternative sites within the site boundary which would allow for sufficient parking provision, therefore the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of highway safety in accordance with policy T4 of the Local Plan.

Residential Amenity

The proposed car park is identical to the scheme approved in 2018. The proposal has been designed with the provision/retention of a green edge around the car park and the provision of new tree planting to act as a screen along the boundaries with Clarel Street and High Street.

Concerns have been raised with regard to potential noise and disturbance. The submitted noise assessment concluded that there are no significant noise considerations, which is evidenced in the form of a noise survey. The noise survey advises that an adverse noise impact at the neighbouring residential properties is unlikely and that no specific mitigation measures should be required to control noise from vehicle activities. The majority of vehicular activity would occur within the day-time hours; namely at the start and end of the school day (08:00 - 09:15, 15:00 - 17:00), on a daily occurrence from Monday – Friday, however it is anticipated that the school caretaker will open up the car park at approximately 07.30 with the latest member of staff leaving at approximately 19.00, with the exception of the occasional parent's evenings and school governor's meetings. In terms of the management of the car park, appropriate fencing/gating at the site entrance will be controlled by the school caretaker to manage traffic flow accordingly.

Concerns have been raised with regard to light pollution. Details have been supplied with the means of lighting of the car park and the lights will be installed to the latest Light Pollution Guidance and on an automated timer to correspond with the main hours of use and daylight hours. Taking those considerations into account the Pollution Control Officer had no objections to the previous application and did not raise any concerns with regard to light or air pollution.

Objections have been raised from neighbouring residents with regard to a loss of privacy to homes and gardens. The land is accessible at all times, given its use as an area of green space. The nature of the car park would mean that there would be increased activity, however this would be mainly at drop off and pick up times only and would be quiet during the evenings and weekends. Due to this it is not felt that the car park would impact upon the privacy of adjacent residents to a significant degree. Screen planting is proposed along the boundaries and should be secured by condition.

The proposals are acceptable from a residential amenity perspective in accordance with Policy POLL1 of the Local Plan.

Visual Amenity

The site is set close to the Penistone Conservation Area however, it would be screened by properties along High Street and would not have any significant impact upon its setting in accordance with Local Plan Policy HE1.

Whilst the proposal would result in a loss of a grassed area, the proposal includes landscaped areas which would help to soften its appearance. The car park would be screened from the main High Street and would not have a significant impact upon visual amenity, subject to the submitted landscaping scheme being implemented. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in terms of Local Plan Policies D1 and GD1.

Biodiversity

Concerns have also been raised with regard to the impact upon wildlife. The applicant has submitted a Preliminary Ecological Survey, dated August 2022 and the Council's Ecology Officer has considered the report and has no objections to the proposal. The assessment details a walkover survey and assesses the habitats on site in regards to their value and potential to support protected species which is deemed adequate. The survey area is undergoing stages of ecological succession and the development will remove habitat in the centre of the site but will retain the boundary vegetation as well as plant introduced shrubs

along the eastern boundary which is acceptable. A number of recommendations are made within section 5.0 of the Preliminary Ecological Survey including:

- Incorporation of native landscaping;
- Sympathetic lighting to allow continued use by foraging and commuting bats;
- Precautionary measures to be adopted during works for breeding birds
- Measures to prevent the spread of cotoneaster during works, a non-native shrub identified within the site; and,
- A check of trees assessed as having potential for roosting bats if proposals change and these are to be impacted by proposed works.

The above recommendations should be secured by a planning condition and detailed within a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP: Biodiversity) and Biodiversity Enhancement Management Plan (BEMP). The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in accordance with policy BIO1 of the Local Plan.

Conclusion

The proposed car parking facility is considered acceptable in planning policy terms having regards to the relevant planning policies and material considerations including policies GS1 and GD1. Primarily this is due to the need and benefits associated with the provision of additional parking facilities of the site and would be subject to a figure of £20,165.22 being secured as compensation for the loss of the green space, which would be used to upgrade existing facilities in the locality. The effect of the development on other material considerations including visual and residential amenity and highway safety has been considered, however no adverse impacts have been identified which would outweigh the benefits associated with the development.

Recommendation

Grant subject to conditions