

For: PLANNING AND REGULATION COMMITTEE – 5 March 2012

By: DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY (GROWTH & INFRASTRUCTURE)

Development Proposed:

Installation of a 93 square metre modular building extension to existing Children's Centre, (incorporating an enclosed linkway) to provide additional accommodation for 40 children for a temporary period of 5 years.

Division Affected: Eynsham

Contact Officer: Kevin Broughton **Tel:** Oxford 815272

Location: Eynsham Primary School, Beech Road, Eynsham, Witney, OX29 4LJ

Applicant: Oxfordshire County Council

Application No: R3.0018/12

District Council Area: West Oxfordshire

Recommendation: The report recommends that the application be approved subject to conditions.

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Part 1 – Facts and Background

Location (see site plan Annex 1)

1. Eynsham CP School is located on the eastern edge of Eynsham at the end of Beech Road.

Site and Setting (see site plan Annex 1)

2. The school site is bounded by housing to the south, a path with housing beyond to the west, a children's play area and housing to the north and the B4449 to the east.
3. The proposed extension (of modular construction) would be located on grassed play area to the north of, and adjoining the, existing Children's Centre.
4. Vehicular and pedestrian access is from the main school entrance on Beech Road to the west.
5. The nearest dwellings to the proposed building are 45¹ metres to the north beyond the children's play area. Properties in Millmoor Crescent are 50m to the west.
6. There are substantial hedges on the northern and western boundaries of the school site. They are about 1.8 metres in height.

Background and Details of Development

7. Planning permission for the Children's Centre was granted planning permission in November 2009.
8. A company called Earlyworld use the Children's Centre under licence from the County Council to provide a Breakfast and Holiday Club for 40 Children. The proposed modular building would enable up to an additional 40 children to be accommodated.
9. The proposed building would be accessed through the existing Earlyworld / Children's Centre.
10. The proposal would require three more staff if it reached its full capacity.
11. The building would be a timber clad modular building constructed on concrete piers.
12. There would be an enclosed walkway linking the modular building to the existing Earlyworld / Children's Centre.

¹ All distances are approximate

Part 2 – Relevant Planning Documents (see policy annex attached to committee papers)

13. Planning applications should be decided in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
14. The relevant development plan documents, in this instance, are:
 - The South East Plan (SEP) 2026
 - The West Oxfordshire Local Plan (WOLP) 2011.
15. The SEP forms part of the development plan. However, the government has made it clear that it intends to abolish regional strategies. The Localism Act enables the Secretary of State to revoke the whole or any part of a regional strategy by order. Whilst no such order had been made at the date this report was drafted, the published intention to revoke is a material consideration to which substantial weight should be given.

Relevant Policies

16. The relevant policies are:
 - SEP2026 – S3.
 - WOLP 2011 – BE2, NE6, NE9, TLC1.

Part 3 – Other Viewpoints

Representations

17. Four objections have been received raising the following points:
 - Problems of extra traffic on the local roads, particularly for out of hours use.
 - Parking problems during peak times.
 - Noise from the Earlyworld centre.
 - The building and its surroundings are inadequate for the purpose.
 - Concerned about the felling of trees.
 - Concerned about Co2 Emissions
 - Light pollution
 - Lack of toilet facilities in the proposed building

Copies of the letters are available in the Members' Resource Centre.

Consultations

18. West Oxfordshire District Council – (no response received at the time of drafting the report).

Eynsham Parish Council – No objection, but concerned about a temporary unattractive building being placed onto this newly built attractive building.

Environment Agency – Due to the application having a low environmental risk, the Agency have not provided an individual response.

Transport Development Control – A travel plan for the Children’s Centre and Earlyworld combined is required.

Oxfordshire Drainage Team – Details to ensure the proposed drainage will function are required.

Part 4 – Opinion and Conclusion

Comments of the Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Growth & Infrastructure)

19. The key planning issues are related to impacts on local people:
 - (i) Highways and parking;
 - (ii) Affect on amenity due to visual and noise intrusion; and
 - (iii) Other material issues.

- (i) Highways and Parking

20. WOLP Policy TLC1 says that planning permission will not be granted if a development would generate unacceptable levels of traffic on the local highway network. Currently 40 children attend the Earlyworld Centre and this application would provide additional accommodation for up to 40 additional children. These extra numbers already attend the school. Highways Development Control have not objected to the application but suggest that a travel plan should be required by condition.
21. It is my view that the application would not generate unacceptable levels of traffic on the local highway network because:
 - During term time the children attending the centre would do so on their way to and from the school, so there should be no extra traffic.
 - During the school holidays there would be an increase in children coming to the site with up to 80 children being accommodated. There would of course be none of the other traffic associated with school activities as the school would be closed. In addition, the school car park could be used for parking of visitors during holiday periods.
 - During term times, the children using the Earlyworld Centre would be dropped off earlier and picked up later which should ease congestion at peak times (although it could extend the time that the ‘school run’ takes place.)

Overall the impact is not likely to significantly add to congestion during peak times.

(ii) Affect on amenity due to noise and visual intrusion

22. WOLP Policy TLC1 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan says that planning permission will be granted for community facilities to meet local needs. It also states that permission will not be granted if the development has an adverse impact on the character of towns and villages. In this instance I believe that it should not because:

- Although views of the unit would be possible from the path to the rear of Millmoor Crescent and from the children's play area to the north, it would be seen through the existing play group area. From the children's play area, it would be partly screened by the existing hedge. It would also be seen against the backdrop of the recently built Children's Centre.
- The County's tree officer has suggested that the tree nearest the building should be removed. Replacement planting could be a condition on any planning permission given.
- The proposed modular building would be of cedar clad construction, giving it a more attractive appearance than a standard temporary unit and would, in my view, sit well on the site between the rear of the existing Children's Centre and the boundary hedge.
- The visual impact of lighting has been raised as a concern. There would in fact be no floodlighting as part of the proposal.
- With regard to noise, I would comment as follows; the proposal would not be a new use, but it would allow intensification of the existing use. The Breakfast / Holiday Club operates from 7.30am to 6.00pm which would roughly equate to the normal working day. The site is located on a primary school which already generates noise from children when playing outside. This proposal would be no different, apart from the time before and after the normal school day. However, because of the distance of properties from the site, and that they are separated on one side by an existing children's play area; it would not in my opinion lead to a serious loss of amenity.

(iii) Other material issues

23. In response to the concern about CO2 emissions; the building would be covered by modern Building Regulations and would be required to meet modern construction standards.

24. An objection has been received on the grounds that there are no toilet facilities in the proposed modular building. The lease for the building includes the use of facilities, including toilets, in the Children's Centre.

Conclusions

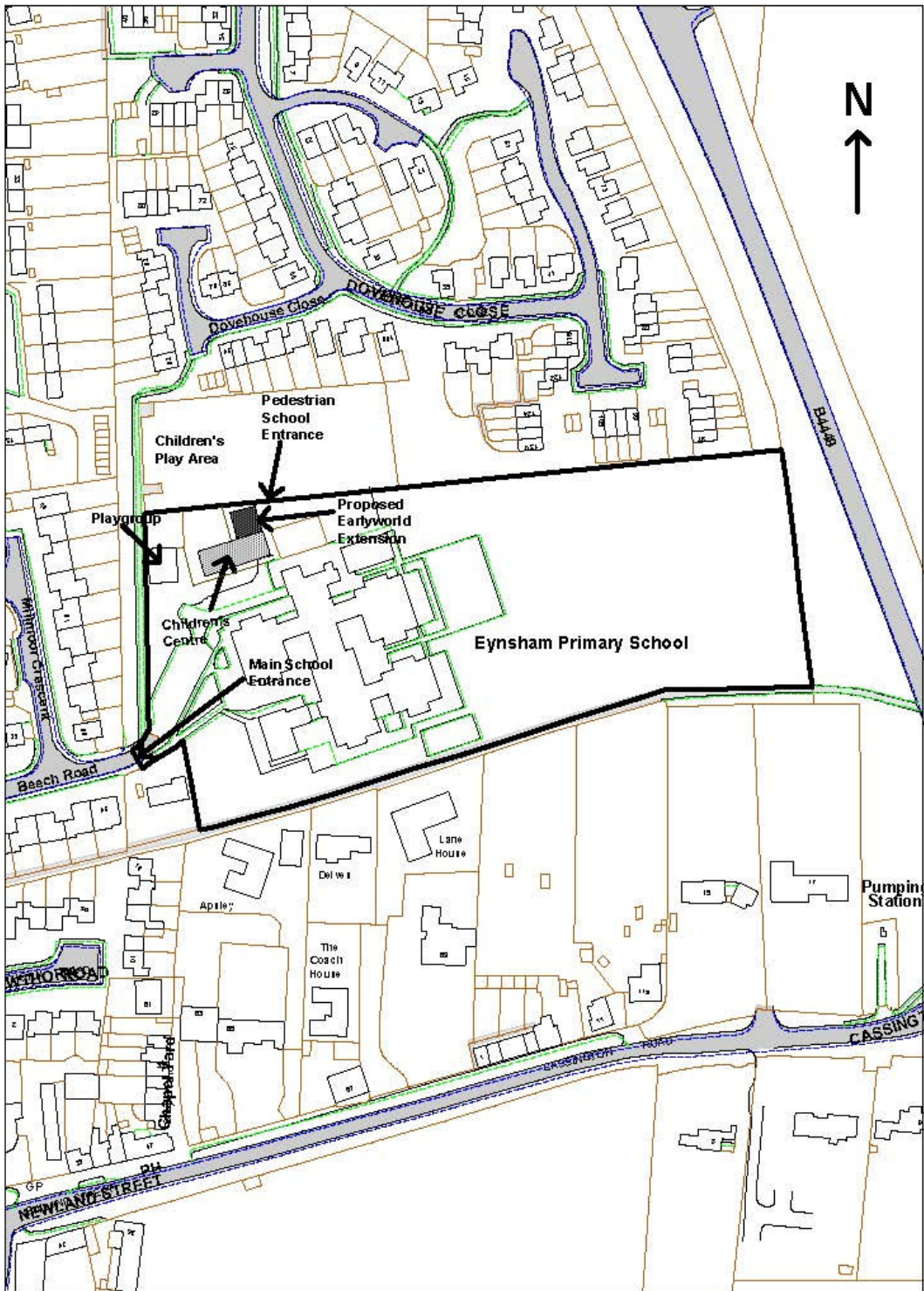
25. The proposed modular building would provide valuable additional accommodation to this community facility to meet an important local need. With the addition of conditions to deal with issues relating to external materials, landscaping / replacement planting, an updated travel plan and site drainage, the impact on local amenity is considered to be negligible and the effect on the highway network acceptable. As such the development is considered to be acceptable on its planning merits.

Recommendation

26. **It is RECOMMENDED that Application No. R3.0018/12 be approved subject to conditions to be determined by the Deputy Director (Growth & Infrastructure) to include the following matters:**
 1. **The development be carried out strictly in accordance with the plans and drawings submitted with the application.**
 2. **Temporary permission – building to be removed in 5 years.**
 3. **External materials to be agreed.**
 4. **Travel plan to be updated**
 5. **Drainage to be approved prior to occupation of the building.**
 6. **Landscaping to be approved prior to development taking place.**

MARTIN TUGWELL
DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY(GROWTH &
INFRASTRUCTURE)

February 2012



This plan shows only an indication of the proposed development and should not be scaled from