

For: PLANNING & REGULATION COMMITTEE – 4 MARCH 2013

By: DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY (STRATEGY & INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING)

Development Proposed:

Erect single storey extension to Vicarage Road frontage

Division Affected: Isis

Contact Officer: Nick Fagan **Tel:** 01865-815584

Location: New Hinksey CE Primary School, Vicarage Road,
Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX1 4RQ

Applicant: Oxfordshire County Council

Application No: R3.0192/12

Application received date: 21 November 2012

Consultation Period: 3-24 December 2012

District Council Area: Oxford City

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Recommendation

The report recommends that the application be approved.

Part 1 – Facts & Background

Proposed Development & Site Location (see Plan 1 attached)

1. New Hinksey Primary School occupies the block of land between Vicarage Lane and School Place fronting onto Vicarage Road at its western end, off the Abingdon Road about a mile south of the city centre. It lies opposite two-storey semi-detached and terraced housing, predominantly Victorian but also some twentieth century post-war dwellings on Vicarage Road opposite. The streets are narrow and characterised by their tight urban form. The school building itself is set back from the Vicarage Road frontage by about 6 metres. The proposal is to erect a 3.8 metres deep 9.5 metres wide single-storey flat roofed extension 3.4 metres high with a parapet in matching facing brickwork. The existing School consists of a series of mainly single storey buildings which are, in the main, traditional masonry structures with many areas having double storey height rooms (extending into roof spaces) with high pitched roofs.
2. After many years as a first school, New Hinksey became a full primary school (foundation stage to year 6) in the reorganisation of Oxford city schools in 2003. Extensive renovations and expansion undertaken in 2002-4 provided a purpose-built Foundation Stage building, including dedicated outdoor spaces, a fully equipped computer and information technology suite, new reception and administrative areas and two hard-surfaced playgrounds, one with climbing equipment. The extension site is next to the playground located on the corner of Vicarage Road and Vicarage Lane.
3. The Council has established the need for an additional class base from September 2013. It has also been established that toilets will need to be made appropriate for the age group they now serve: key stage 2 (KS2) toilets need to be gender specific. Space within the foundation stage (FS) and key stage (KS) classrooms needs to be remodelled to enable the most effective use of facilities to allow for 25 x FS1 and 13 x FS2 pupils and the appropriate number of toilets to be provided to meet statutory requirements.
4. It is proposed to construct a single storey extension to the existing foundation classroom, providing 20m² of additional teaching/activity space, a combined accessible WC/changing facility and a standard pupil toilet.
External Finishes – All external finishes will match existing and will incorporate the existing traditional architectural features of the adjacent buildings.
Roof Design – It is proposed to construct the extension with a flat roof. The roof finish will be a single ply membrane with parapet walls on both sides capped with a pre-cast concrete coping stone.

Relevant Planning History

5. A new single storey (twin gabled) nursery extension was added in 2004 following permission in December 2002 (planning application ref: 02/02054/CC3).

Part 2 – Other Viewpoints

Representations

6. There have been no third party representations.

Consultations

7. Oxford City Council: Objection: *“As a result of its inappropriate roof form in combination with its overtly bulky and blocky appearance, the proposed extension is considered to be materially out of character with the more traditionally designed existing school buildings resulting in significant harm to the street scene, an impact exacerbated by its highly prominent location adjacent to the road frontage. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to Policies CPI, CP8, CP9 and CP10 of the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2006 as well as Policy CS18 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026.”*
8. Transport DC Team: No objection: *“The School is located in a residential area where the narrow and tight nature of residential streets and on-street parking restricts the through-flow of traffic and pedestrian and cyclist movements to and from the school. There are parking restrictions in the vicinity of the school. The school is well-located for walking, cycling and regular bus services. The proposal as submitted includes a minor increase in the gross floor area of the school. This does not create a highway concern.”*
9. Tree Officer: No objection subject to protection of Root Protection Area of adjacent tree (as per Conditions below).

Part 3 – Relevant Planning Documents and legislation (see Policy Annex attached to this Agenda)

Relevant Planning Policies

10. Planning applications should be decided in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
11. The following policies are relevant:
‘Saved’ Oxford Local Plan Policies:
 - CP1 (key criteria for new development proposals).
 - CP6 (requires development to make maximum & appropriate use of land).
 - CP8 (sets out criteria required from development in order to respect its local context).
 - CP9 (sets out criteria required from development to create a successful public realm).
 - CP10 (criteria required from development to ensure functional need is met).

Oxford Core Strategy (adopted March 2011):

- CS16 (access to education facilities).
- CS18 (sets out urban design principles & requires development to respect Oxford's unique townscape & historic environment).

12. There are no particular policies in the SE Plan. The NPPF stresses the value of good design in its core principles and in Section 7, particularly Paragraphs 56 & 57.

Part 4 – Analysis & Conclusions

Planning Analysis – Comments of the Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Strategy & Infrastructure Planning)

Design

13. Pre-application advice was sought and given in regard to this proposal [PRE. 0013/12 dated 09/10/12]. In terms of the design of the extension it was suggested that a flat-roofed extension may be acceptable in this location because of the design of the 2002 gabled classrooms to which it would be attached and the narrowness of the streets in the sense that a flat-roofed extension would have less impact on the sunlight and daylight reaching surrounding houses than a pitched roof similar in height to the existing extension. However, it was pointed out that the City Council would be a statutory consultee and may disagree with a flat-roofed design, notwithstanding the site is not in a conservation area and is not a listed building.
14. The City Council consider the design of the extension to be inappropriate and contrary to policy because of its flat roof in this location. Policies CP1 & CP8 of the Oxford Local Plan and Policy CS18 of the Core Strategy are the most relevant policies in this regard in that they essentially state that new development must be appropriate in design to its context and setting and enhance, strengthen and protect local character.
15. The school building is not listed nor are any other adjoining buildings and the site does not lie within a conservation area. Nevertheless, adopted policy essentially requires preservation and enhancement of local character. This extension would be a forward extension of the double gabled extension built in 2004, in materials to match that extension. It would be within 2 metres of the Vicarage Road boundary, but still no further forward than the adjacent original school house building adjacent just to the east. The gables of the 2004 extension front east and west and it is the steeply pitched roof that faces south onto Vicarage Road. The extension's flat roof including its concrete coping to the parapet wall would sit just below the overhanging eaves of this pitched roof with its expressed rafters and as such is considered to complement its design. Although it would clearly be possible to design this extension with a pitched roof this would compete with the design of the steep pitch of the southern gable of the 2004 extension.

16. Vicarage Road is a narrow Victorian street and the presence of another pitched roof nearer to the houses on the other side of the road would to some extent reduce the daylight to these dwellings and certainly give the extension more bulk including in its appearance. It is considered that a flat roofed extension is therefore also beneficial in keeping the additional bulk of this necessary extension to a minimum.
17. Although most of the adjacent development exhibits pitched roofs the original part of the school set back from the playground to the north also has a flat roof and parts of the 2004 extension also has flat-roofed elements, so flat roofs are not completely alien in the site's context. For all the above reasons it is not considered that the development is contrary to the above policies, nor Policies CP9 or CP10 also mentioned in the City Council's objection.

Flood Risk

18. The site lies within Flood Zone 3. The floor heights of the 2004 extension were raised 280mm above adjacent ground levels to prevent flooding and this extension will also be at that level. A major flood alleviation scheme was completed in this area in autumn 2009 – the installation of large culverts in the Hinksey Drain, near the Abingdon Road – and demountable flood barriers have also been made available. Additionally, the construction specification complies with EA Guidance: 'Improving the flood performance of new building' CLG (2007), such as the use of impermeable render and sockets above possible flood levels etc. With these measures it is not considered that this development (and the 2004 extension) would be at significant risk from flooding. The Drainage Team have no objection to this proposal.

Conclusion

19. There is a need for additional teaching space for this school. Although the extension has been designed with a flat roof it is considered that, because of its context adjacent to the pitched roof of the 2004 gabled extension and opposite houses in Vicarage Road, such a design is appropriate and would not detract from the character of this area and therefore it complies with Policies CP1, CP8, CP9 & CP10 of the Oxford Local Plan and Policy CS18 of the Oxford Core Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

20. **It is RECOMMENDED that planning permission be approved for Application R3.0158/12 subject to conditions to be determined by the Deputy Director (Strategy & Infrastructure Planning) but to include the following:**
 1. **The development shall be carried out solely in accordance with details submitted with the application.**
 2. **Matching materials as specified.**
 3. **Construction in accordance with specification set out in the FRA.**
 4. **Protection of adjacent tree Root Protection Area.**

Informative:

Contractor traffic movements, parking and deliveries will need to take account of the narrow and tight nature of residential streets and on-street parking restrictions in the vicinity of the School. This is in the interest of safety for all highway users including the School.

Reasons for Approval

The design of this flat-roofed extension would complement the design of the 2004 extension to which it would be attached and would not detract from the character of the area, and would therefore comply with Policies CP1, CP8, CP9 & CP10 of the Oxford Local Plan and Policy CS18 of the Oxford Core Strategy.

Compliance with National Planning Policy Framework

In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF Oxfordshire County Council take a positive and proactive approach to decision making focused on solutions and fostering the delivery of sustainable development. We work with applicants in a positive and proactive manner by;

- offering a pre-application advice service, as was the case with this application, and
- updating applicants and agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions

MARTIN TUGWELL

Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Strategy & Infrastructure Planning)

February 2013

