

**For: PLANNING & REGULATION COMMITTEE – 2 DECEMBER 2013**

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

<b>Development Proposed:</b> Two separate classroom extensions to provide two additional classrooms
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**Division Affected:** North Hinksey

**Contact Officer:** Kevin Broughton **Tel:** 01865 815272

**Location:** Botley County Primary School, Elms Road, Botley, Oxford, Oxon, OX2 9JZ

**Applicant:** Oxfordshire County Council

**Application No:** R3.0061/13  
District Ref No: P13/V1137/CC

**Application Received Date:** 8 May 2013

**Consultation Period:** 17 May 2013 to 10 June 2013 and  
24 July 2013 to 15 August 2013

**Last Consultation Response Date:** 15 June 2013

**District Council Area:** Vale of White Horse

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**Recommendation:** Approve with conditions.

### **Part 1 Facts and background**

#### **Site and Setting (see site plan)**

1. The School site is on the north eastern edge of Botley which itself is just west of Oxford City.
2. The eastern boundary of the site runs alongside the southern bypass. Housing to the west of the school site on Elms Road is on the far side of the main school building to the extensions. The nearest residential properties would be to the south on Nursery Close at a distance of approximately 22 metres from the southern extension. There is a doctor's surgery to the north on Elms Road and a Children's Centre shares the school site to the south.

## **Details of the Development**

3. The proposed scheme is the result of an amendment to the layout that was necessitated by the discovery of a service pipe on the eastern boundary, and the need to stay outside the protected area of that pipe.
4. The application seeks to provide two new teaching spaces in two separate extensions providing a total of 170.3 m<sup>2</sup> of new floor space. This would provide the school with adequate facilities for a 14 classroom school, allowing it to convert to two form entry. There would also be minor external works as part of the scheme. Two additional full-time and two part-time members of staff would result from the proposed development.
5. The proposed extensions are on the east side of the school. Extension Area 2 is on the eastern edge of southernmost part of the school building, but it does not take the building any closer to the southern boundary.
6. The two parts of the building to which the extensions would attach are of different architectural styles. The two extensions would be built in the same style as the one to which they attach. The northernmost extension would be of facing brickwork with a "flat" felt roof coloured slate grey and a maximum roof height of 3.448 metres with a ventilation stack measuring an additional 1.005 metres. Windows and doors would be of white powder coated aluminium. The southernmost extension would be of horizontal shiplap cedar cladding with red render to the gable and a duo-pitched roof with Redland Cambrian slate coverings coloured slate grey and a maximum roof height of 6.002 metres with a ventilation stack measuring an additional 1.00 metre. Windows would be of white and doors of red powder coated aluminium. The school takes access onto Elms Road. No changes are proposed to the existing access or parking arrangements. Planning permission was granted in 2012 for 30 car parking spaces (one additional disabled bay) and 40 cycle spaces. In support of this application it was advised that it was intended to address existing issues at the school including for future extensions. That permission has now been implemented.

## **Part 2 - Other Viewpoints**

### **Representations**

7. Three third party representations were received. All of them objected to the development on the grounds of extra traffic that would be generated and would have to use Elms Road. Specific comments were:
  - Unacceptable traffic on Elms Road - this will increase if the extensions are built.
  - Would like to work with the Headteacher and the developers to look at an alternative option including safe dropping off and picking up, and more use of public transport, cycling and walking.

- Elms Road residents are subject to: parking outside properties, parking on double yellow lines, queuing and inhibiting turning on Elms Road, and obstruction of the exit from Elms Road.
- Elms road is very busy, it serves housing, the school, the children's centre and a medical centre. It is constantly in use by lorries delivering to the school and medical centre.
- Elms Road is dangerous for families and young children.
- The School Travel Plan should be updated.
- The road should be made good after construction has finished.
- The school generates significant traffic particularly at peak times.
- No provision is made for increased traffic, particularly at peak times.
- A new road should be created elsewhere to the back of the school.

## **Consultations**

8. The consultation responses received were:
- Vale of White Horse DC - no objection.
  - Protected Species Officer - no objection.
  - Drainage Team - Development should drain to the adjacent green area.
  - Transport Development Control - no objection Subject to:
    - i. An updated Travel Plan prior to occupation of the proposed classrooms. The travel plan to include:
      - Investigating the use of West Way precinct as a park and stride.
      - Services and deliveries to the school to take place outside peak traffic periods.
      - Coordination with the Medical Centre to reduce congestion problems.
    - ii. A construction management plan to be approved prior to the development taking place.

## **Part 3 - Relevant Planning Policies**

### **Relevant Planning Policies (see Policy Annex to the Committee Papers)**

9. Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 (VWHLP) Policies:
- GS1 (Concentrate development on main settlements, including Botley)
  - DC1 (Design must be high quality and take into account local distinctiveness)
  - DC5 (Safe and convenient access must be available, including for those with impaired mobility)
  - DC9 (Development will not be permitted if it would unacceptably harm the amenity of neighbouring properties)
  - CF2 (Development for Local Community facilities will be permitted where they meet the other criteria in the plan)
10. Draft Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2029 (VLP) :
- CP1 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development)

- CP37 (New building is expected to be of high quality design)
11. The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012. Paragraph 72 states that LPAs should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to ensure a sufficient choice of school places is available; they should give great weight to the need to expand or alter schools and work with school promoters to identify and resolve key planning issues prior to submission of applications. This is a material consideration in taking planning decisions. The CLG letter to the Chief Planning Officers dated 15 August 2011 is also relevant.

## **Part 4 - Analysis and Conclusions**

### **Comments of the Deputy Director (Strategy and Infrastructure Planning)**

12. The main issues for this application are: the presumption in favour of development, effect on local amenity, and traffic.

#### Presumption in Favour of the Development

13. Policy CP1 of the VLP says that there should be a general presumption in favour of sustainable development. Botley, in accordance with policy GS1 of the VWHL, is an area where new development would be concentrated. An adequate number of school places are part of the infrastructure required to support the development in Botley. The development is therefore sustainable and there is a general presumption in favour of it.
14. Policy CF2 of the VWHL says that proposals for local community facilities including extensions will be permitted provided there is no overriding amenity or environmental harm.
15. The CLG letter to the Chief Planning Officers dated 15th August 2011 set out the Government's commitment to support the development of state funded schools and their delivery through the planning system. The policy statement states:

*"It is the Government's view that the creation and development of state funded schools is strongly in the national interest and that planning decision-makers can and should support that objective, in a manner consistent with their statutory obligations."* State funded schools include Academies and free schools as well as local authority maintained schools.

It further states that the following principles should apply with immediate effect:

- There should be a presumption in favour of the development of state-funded schools;

- Local Authorities should give full and thorough consideration to the importance of enabling the development of state funded schools in their planning decisions;
- Local Authorities should make full use of their planning powers to support state-funded schools applications;
- Local Authorities should only impose conditions that clearly and demonstrably meet the tests as set out in Circular 11/95;
- Local Authorities should ensure that the process for submitting and determining state-funded schools' applications is as streamlined as possible;
- A refusal of any application for a state-funded school or the imposition of conditions, will have to be clearly justified by the Local Planning Authority.

This has been endorsed as part of the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### Effect on Local Amenity

16. The design of the extensions matches the style of the buildings against which they would be attached. From the housing to the west the development would be unseen as it would lie behind the existing building. From the south it would sit against the existing school building and would be of the same styles. The development therefore accords with policies DC1 and DC9 of the VWHLP, and policy CP37 of the VLP.
17. The drainage team has raised the issue that the sewer system is at capacity and that the development should drain to the adjacent green area. A condition should be attached requiring a soakage system to be agreed prior to development taking place.

#### Traffic

18. Policy DC5 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan says that safe and convenient access must be available, and policy DC9 says that development will not be permitted if it would cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbouring properties.
19. Objection has been raised by some local residents on traffic grounds as set out above. There would be some increase in pupil numbers if the new extensions were built because it would provide 60 extra places. Some of those pupils will have siblings and so the extra travel might not be as high as sixty. Nevertheless there would be some impact and a condition could be attached to any permission given requiring the School Travel plan to be updated. This was as suggested by one of the neighbours in their representation.
20. The Highway Authority has not objected to the application on the grounds of highway safety, or indeed any other grounds. Updating the travel plan will in any case address safer access to the school by pupils.

21. The current problems of Elms road are understood, and the effect of the extra traffic generated by the school has been considered. The problems of parking on the road, lorry movements and the activity on the road generated by other sources cannot be solved by this application, however, the permission granted in 2012 for additional car and cycle parking was intended to help to address the issues arising from the school site and it is understood that this has now been implemented. The construction traffic would add to the concerns and a condition requiring a Construction Management Plan should be attached to any permission given. The plan should include the need to make good any damage to Elms Road.
22. I would encourage the residents and the school to work together in order to mitigate some of the traffic concerns on Elms Road, but as planning authority we have to determine the application before us. That application does not include a new road to the back of the school.
23. If the current parking restrictions on the highway are not being adhered to, that would be a matter for the police and other regulatory authorities, and not a matter to be taken into account in the determination of this application.

### **Conclusion**

24. The proposed development would provide a facility enabling the school, a valuable community facility, to meet local need. The development would not cause any significant harm to the local amenity, and the transport concerns can be addressed as far as is reasonable within the context of this specific planning application by the attachment of conditions to update the travel plan and to implement a construction management plan. The development should therefore be granted permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

### **Recommendation**

25. **It is RECOMMENDED that planning permission be approved for Application R3.0061/13 subject to the following conditions:**
  - **Detailed Compliance with approved plans and details**
  - **Development to be carried out within three years**
  - **School Travel Plan to be updated prior to occupation.**
  - **Construction Management Plan to be approved prior to the development taking place, and then implemented.**
  - **Drainage scheme to be agreed.**

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,
- updating applicants and agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions

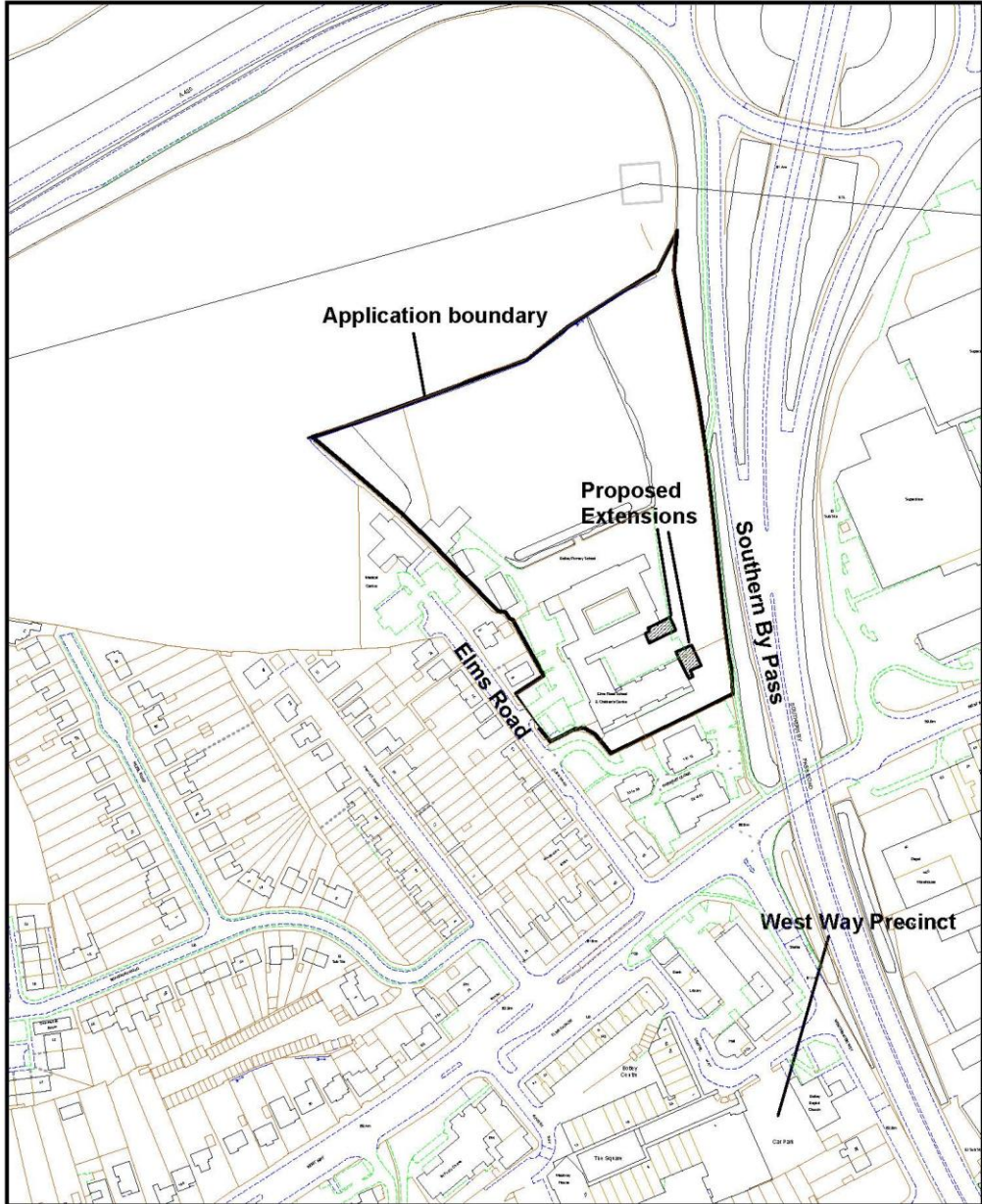
No issues arose with this application requiring updating of the applicant or their agent.

MARTIN TUGWELL

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

November 2013

**Botley CP School - Application no R.0061/13**



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