

## **PLANNING & REGULATION COMMITTEE – 19 OCTOBER 2009**

### **ERECTION OF A SINGLE STOREY BUILDING TO PROVIDE A CHILDREN'S CENTRE AND ERECTION OF A 2.5M HIGH FREE STANDING CANOPY; ASSOCIATED EXTERNAL WORKS INCLUDING ALTERATIONS TO THE EXISTING MAIN SCHOOL ENTRANCE, CREATION OF 4 PARKING SPACES, AN OUTDOOR PLAY AREA, LANDSCAPING AND FENCING**

#### **Report by Head of Sustainable Development**

**Location:** Bampton Church of England Primary School, Bowling Green Close, Bampton

**Application No:** R3.0179/09      **District Council Area:** West Oxfordshire

#### **Introduction**

1. This is an application to erect a single storey building in the south east corner of Bampton C of E School to provide a children's centre. As part of the proposal, the existing school entrance from Bowling Green Close is to be widened and four additional car parking spaces (one a disabled space) provided. A free standing canopy is to be provided alongside the existing hard play area behind the existing school building.
2. Children's Centres are 'service hubs' where children under 5 years old and their families can access childcare services and information. The provision of these Children's Centres is part of the national government strategy to ensure that all families with children have access to affordable, flexible, high quality childcare places and, as part of this strategy, local authorities have been tasked with the strategic responsibility of delivering these Children's Centres to cater for the needs of local communities.

#### **Location (see plan)**

3. Bampton C of E School is a rural primary school located on the northern edge of the small market town of Bampton in West Oxfordshire. The town sits astride the A4095, approximately half way between Witney (5 miles (8 km) to the north) and Faringdon (5 miles to the south).

#### **Site and setting (see plan)**

4. The school is situated on the northern edge of the built up area of Bampton. Open fields abut the school to the north and the school playing field is located

immediately to the west. Residential properties wrap around the site to the east and south. A public footpath separates the houses to the east from the school site.

5. The main school building on the tarmac parking area to the front sits close to the site entrance off Bowling Green Close. There is a small enclosed open air swimming pool immediately to the west of the front parking area. The east and south east boundary of the school site is marked by a substantial hedgerow and there are a group of willow trees in the south east corner.

### **Details of the Development**

6. This application for a Children's Centre is one of a number of similar current proposals identified on primary school sites across the county. The services to be provided in the centres will vary according to each individual centre but may include, amongst other things:
  - integrated early education and childcare;
  - support for parents (including advice on parenting, local childcare options and access to specialist services for families);
  - child and family health services;
  - helping parents into work.
7. The building proposed for the Children's Centre is to be located in the south east corner of the school site. There are a number of willow trees in this part of the site and this proposal will involve the removal of two of those trees. The existing boundary hedge would be retained.
8. The new building would be single storey with a shallow pitched roof, having a floorspace of 190m<sup>2</sup>. The walls of the building would be built in facing brick with concrete tiles to the roof. A two metre wide canopy would be provided at eaves level along the northern elevation to provide an area of shade.
9. The Children's Centre would share the existing entrance to the school off Bowling Green Close. It is proposed to widen the entrance by about a metre, lower the boundary wall and provide new bow top fencing and palisade fencing to improve the appearance of the entrance and visibility. The existing separate pedestrian access onto Colville Close is to be retained.
10. Other works proposed include the provision of four additional parking spaces (including one disabled space) and the relocation of the existing cycle storage shed to the front of the new Children's Centre.
11. A freestanding canopy measuring 50m<sup>2</sup> and 2.5m high, is proposed to the rear of the existing school buildings. The canopy would have a polycarbonate sheet roof with four metal supports at each corner.

## Consultations

12. West Oxfordshire District Council – No objections.

Bampton Parish Council – No objections but some concern as the land in question is prone to holding water and would like to see evidence of a flood risk report. Also concerned about level of traffic on Bowling Green Close.

Environment Agency – Application has a low environmental risk. Unable to make a fuller response due to workload prioritisation.

County Archaeologist – Proposal does not affect any known archaeological sites. Informal archaeological informative only required.

Transport Development Control – No objections. Visibility at the existing access is acceptable. An updated Travel Plan will be required. There should be no reduction in provision for cycle parking.

County Ecologist – No objections, subject to the following conditions:

- (i) any vegetation removal should not take place during bird breeding season (March-August);
- (ii) the felling of the two willow trees should be soft felled and undertaken under the supervision of OCC's Protected Species Officer;
- (iii) existing trees to be protected during construction works;
- (iv) if any protected species are found on site during construction works, all works must stop and a mitigation strategy submitted and agreed with Natural England.

## Third Party Representations

13. Three letters have been received from local residents objecting to the proposed development. The main objection from the correspondents relates to the traffic implications of the proposal and their concern that the development would:
- (a) increase the level of congestion along Colvile Close during term time with parents already causing problems dropping off or collecting children (which causes difficulties for residents parking and gaining access to their properties);
  - (b) involve alterations to the school entrance immediately opposite their property making parking for residents difficult;
  - (c) increase noise and disturbance as the proposed development is close to existing properties.
14. A fourth letter has been received from a local resident commenting that whilst not fundamentally against the proposal, they have concerns about additional traffic the proposal might generate. The letter also includes a petition from residents of Chandler Close and Colvile Close (17 signatures) supporting this view.

## **Relevant Development Plan Policies**

15. The relevant Development Plan policies are:

South East Plan (adopted May 2009)

Policy CC6 - Development decisions should actively promote the creation of sustainable and distinctive communities.

Policy T1 - Development proposals should amongst other things, include measures to minimise negative environmental impacts of transport and improve overall levels of accessibility.

Policy T5 - Major travel generating developments should develop Travel Plans.

West Oxfordshire Local Plan (adopted June 2006)

Policy BE2 - New development should respect, and where possible, improve the character and quality of its surroundings. New buildings should relate to their site and surroundings and incorporate a landscape scheme.

Policy EN3 - Development should make provision for the safe movement of people and vehicles, whilst minimising impact upon the environment. Proposals should include for the safe movement of vehicular traffic both within the site and surrounding area and should allow for parking of vehicles and bicycles.

Policy NE9 - New developments should not involve additional surface water run-off which would result in an increased risk of flooding.

Policy T7 - Developments attracting large numbers of traffic movements will be required to have a Travel Plan.

## **Comments of the Head of Sustainable Development**

16. The main issues to be considered in the determination of this application are:

- the design of the proposed development and its impact on the street scene in general and on neighbouring properties in particular;
- the impact of the proposal on trees within the site;
- the impact of additional vehicle movements to the development on the existing traffic and parking situation in the surrounding residential area.

17. The existing school buildings comprise single storey structures with primarily flat roofs. The school hall, also flat roofed, projects above the rest of the school. It is built principally in reconstituted stone. The new building, set apart from the existing school in the south east corner of the school grounds,

is also single storey but will have brick walls with a pitched tiled roof. In my view, the design and materials proposed would complement very well the existing buildings on site and would be in keeping with the appearance of the dwellings (a mix of houses and bungalows) around the school.

18. The nearest properties to the new building are 20 metres away on the south side of Colville Close with the rear of the properties on Chandler Close, 17 metres away. The east and southern elevations of the new building facing these properties will be seen behind the high boundary hedge. The only windows in these elevations will be narrow high level windows. Given the single storey nature of the development, the distance from neighbouring properties and its location behind the boundary hedge, there should be no adverse impact on privacy or loss of light to these properties.
19. Siting of the Children's Centre in the location proposed will require the removal of two willow trees. However, a number of willow and cypress trees will be retained along the southern frontage of the site, and the existing thick boundary hedge around the south east corner of the site will also be retained. Provided the retained trees and boundary hedge are protected during building works, the new building will be well screened and should not have any adverse impact on the street scene. The County Forester has been involved in pre-application discussions on this proposal, particularly over the loss of two of the willow trees. His view was that whilst the group of willow trees as a whole forms an important visual feature in the street scene, none of the trees is, of itself, a particularly fine specimen. He concluded that the loss of the two trees may be justified if the proposed development is deemed necessary. However, replacement trees for those lost should be provided elsewhere on site and it would be important to ensure that the remaining trees are protected. This can be secured by the imposition of an appropriate condition on any permission given.
20. The main concern of local residents to this proposal is the traffic that visitors to the Children's Centre will generate and how this will add to existing traffic and parking problems in the surrounding streets (a problem that exists at many schools across the county). This proposal will not involve any additional movements to the school itself. The Children's Centre would be open all day so visitors to the centre should be spread throughout the day rather than being concentrated at the beginning and end of the school day. In addition, four extra parking spaces are proposed within the site and the site entrance is to be widened to improve access and parking arrangements. The Transport Development Control team have not raised any objections to the proposal though they have recommended that the existing School Travel Plan should be updated to take account of this new development and that the existing cycle storage facilities should be retained on site. These latter issues can be covered by the attachment of conditions on any permission that might be granted.
21. One other issue that has been raised relates to possible flooding and poor drainage around the site – a point raised by the Parish Council. The site lies in an area known as Flood Zone 1 as identified by the Environment Agency.

This is an area where flooding is least likely to occur. The Agency have confirmed that they have no further comments to make on the application in this regard. Similarly, the District Council were consulted at the pre-application stage regarding flood risk and foul and surface water drainage. As a result of those discussions this proposal incorporates the provision of a new drain running along the northern elevation of the new building, designed to take run off from the hard play area and direct it to existing surface water drains. The District Council have also confirmed that they have no objections to this proposal.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

22. It is **RECOMMENDED** that planning permission for Application No. R3.0179/09 (for the erection of a single storey Children's Centre and free standing canopy along with associated works including alterations to the existing school entrance, four new parking spaces, and outdoor play area, landscaping and fencing) at Bampton CE Primary School be approved subject to conditions to be determined by the Head of Sustainable Development dealing with matters including those set out below:
1. Detailed compliance condition – development to be in accordance with approved plans and particulars.
  2. Detailed duration – development to commence within 3 years.
  3. Schedule of external materials to be used to be agreed.
  4. Landscaping scheme (to include replacement trees) to be submitted and agreed.
  5. Approved landscaping scheme to be implemented.
  6. Measures to protect trees and hedgerow to be retained during construction works to be submitted, agreed and implemented.
  7. Update existing School Travel Plan.
  8. Existing cycle provision to be retained.
  9. No vegetation to be removed during bird breeding season.
  10. Trees to be removed to be soft felled and under supervision of Oxfordshire County Council's Protected Species Officer.
  11. Construction work to cease if any protected species are found on site, and a mitigation strategy submitted and agreed with Natural England.

**Archaeological Informative – If archaeological finds do occur during development, the County Archaeologist shall be notified in order that he may visit the site and advise as necessary.**

CHRIS COUSINS

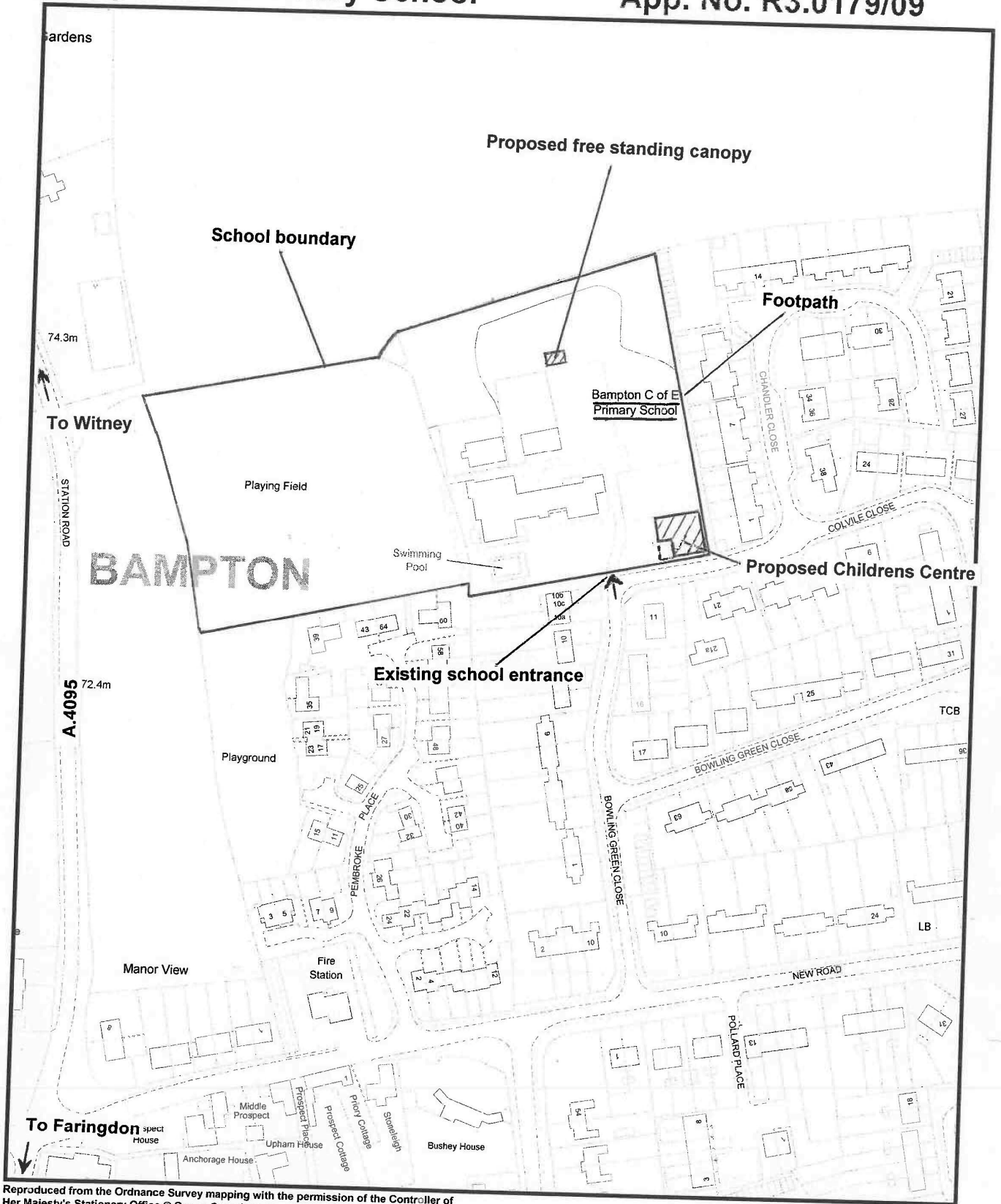
Head of Sustainable Development  
Environment & Economy

Background papers: File No. R3.0179/09 held electronically in Speedwell House, Oxford. For access please contact John Hamilton – 01865 815584.

October 2009

# Bampton CE Primary School

App. No. R3.0179/09



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright, and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Oxfordshire County Council Licence No 100023343