

SECTION '4' – Applications submitted by the London Borough of Bromley

Application No : 10/01278/FULL1

Ward:
**Bromley Common And
Keston**

Address : Princes Plain Primary School Church
Lane Bromley BR2 8LD

OS Grid Ref: E: 542315 N: 166633

Applicant : Mrs Pamela King

Objections : NO

Description of Development:

Single storey extension to form group study room access ramp with paved pathway play ground fence enclosure and brick retaining wall. Single storey infill extension to main building to form music room, covered walkway linking kitchen and hall, entrance canopy and increase in hardstanding for playarea and fire appliance access route.

Key designations:

Green Belt

Proposal

Planning permission is sought for extensions to main school building and changes to existing landscape features comprising:

- single storey extension to form group study room and new access ramp and steps
- single storey infill extension to main building to form music room
- covered walkway linking kitchen and main hall
- paved pathway and fencing around reception class play area
- fire appliance and service vehicle access route
- increase in hardstanding play area

Whilst not a part of the formal proposals requiring planning permission it should also be noted that 2 additional classrooms will be provided by converting part of the existing gym.

The applicant has stated that the proposed development is required in order to meet the accommodation requirements of expansion to a two form entry primary school.

Location

The application site is to the west of Bromley Common Road (A21) and falls within the Green Belt. It is made up of a complex of buildings, to the east is the Council's Educational Development Centre (EDC), and to the west Princes Plain Primary School (PPPS) comprising the main building and a series of smaller single storey buildings including main hall, mobile classroom, nursery, and children's centre. In front of the main school building there is a hard surfaced play area and beyond this a large open playing field. The site also provides parking for up to 90 cars which is currently shared by both staff and alike. The main access to the school is via Princes Plain Road, there are residential properties along Church lane and Princes Plain Road.

This case is presented to Committee as it is a Local Authority application and it outside of delegated powers.

Comments from Local Residents

Nearby owners/occupiers were notified of the application and a site notice was displayed but no local representations were received.

Comments from Consultees

London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority – satisfied with the proposals in relation to fire precautionary arrangements.

Highways – Based upon the information provided it appears that parking demand on site for additional staff and parents could increase by around 28 (8 staff, 20 parents). There is no where at present for the additional parent trips to be accommodated within the overall site. There is thus a clear need for a comprehensive study of the use of the site as a whole in order to try to identify improvements in the way the site operates in terms of parking. A further more accurate scale drawing of the site as a whole showing current parking and circulation is also required. The feedback from the highways with respect of the requested information will be reported verbally.

From a trees point of view no significant trees would be affected by the proposal.

Education: Children and Young peoples Services – are in support of the proposal on the basis that there is an urgent need for the extension to PPPS as a part of the current planned expansion of a number of primary schools in the borough. The additional places resulting from these expansions are required to ensure that Bromley Council fulfils its statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places available for all resident children.

In this particular area of the borough there are currently 555 reception class places available. In 2009 all these places were taken and it was necessary for some schools, including Princes Plain, to admit more than their published admission number in order to meet with statutory duty. It is projected that in excess of 570 reception places will be needed in this area for the foreseeable future.

In addition to the increased number of reception pupils resulting from the increased birth-rate, the development on the 'Blue Circle' site consists of approx 788 dwellings which is likely to further increase the demand for primary school places in this area.

Valuation and Estates has no comment to make in respect of the application.

Planning Considerations

The application site lies within the Green Belt. In determining the application the main policies are G1, C1, C7 and BE1 and of the Unitary Development Plan, which relate to Green Belt, community facilities, educational and pre-school facilities and design of new development.

In respect of education issues the Council will usually support applications for new or extensions of existing educational establishments provided that they are located so as to maximise access by means of transport other than by car. Proposals relating to primary schools that are likely to result in an increase in the school roll are required to produce a School Travel Plan. The supporting text of Policy C7 also states that educational facilities are not appropriate uses in the Green Belt and proposals for new building or extensions associated with educational uses will therefore have to show very special circumstances.

This guidance is also repeated in central government guidance PPG2 "Green Belts" which explains that inappropriate development is harmful by definition any very special circumstances must demonstrate that the harm is outweighed by other considerations.

Planning History

The most recent planning history of the site is summarised below as follows:

- 09/01730 - single storey building for use as classrooms, temporary grant of planning permission due to expire on 31.8.2012
- 07/02591 - planning permission granted for a single storey conservatory extension to provide new library area
- 07/02104 - planning permission was granted for the construction of a new single storey building to provide improved and extended accommodation for the existing nursery care
- 04/02019 - permission granted for extension to existing temporary classroom

Conclusions

The main issue in the case is whether the proposal would be harmful to the openness and visual amenities of the Green Belt and also whether very special circumstances have been demonstrated to that outweigh the inappropriate nature of the use. The highways issues relating to this application in particular parking / travel plan issues will be reported verbally following consideration of the requested information.

In summary the applicant has set out the following circumstances to justify the proposal:

- The council has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places available for all children. In line with audit commission recommendations the Local Authority is projected to need 3,840 places
- The current admissions limit capacity for Primary Education in the Borough (i.e. number of reception class places available) is 3500. Between 2003 and 2008, the number of reception places needed to meet demand has been between 3150 and 3300. In 2009 there was a rise to 3400 and the numbers are projected to rise to 3650 by 2013, maintaining this level until at least 2019.
- In this particular area of the Borough (Bromley Common and Keston, Petts Wood and Knoll, Farnborough and Crofton wards) there are currently 555 reception places available. In 2009, all these places were taken and it was necessary for some schools, including Princes Plain, to admit more than their published admission number in order to ensure that the Council met its statutory duty of providing school places for resident pupils. It is projected that in excess of 570 reception place will be needed in this area for the foreseeable future.

In developing the plans to accommodate the increase of 0.5 Form Entry (FE) to the school, particular and careful consideration has been given to how to minimise the required level of expansion to the footprint on the site. In order to provide the necessary accommodation for the school at a full 2FE, 2 additional classrooms are required, alongside a small increase in ancillary space.

The classrooms will be provided through reconfiguration of the current gym space with a small extension to provide a shared group room. This is in line with the current guidance under Building Bulletin 99 and will support the school in effective delivery of the curriculum. The school is currently lacking a sufficient amount of small group work space and the reconfiguration works within the school will enhance this for all Key Stages, which will significantly benefit the students and their education.

There is a small increase to hard play surface proposed to accommodate the additional pupils and ensure the appropriate mix of hard and soft surface for exercise, social interaction and learning. This additional hard surfacing does not change the

open nature of the site and has been kept to a minimal level, adjacent to the school, to minimise its visual impact.

Overall, given the smallest possible extension being proposed and the location of this, there is not considered to be any harm to the openness of the site as a consequence of these developments. Further to which, given that they facilitate only a small expansion to the existing use, the impact on the green belt is not considered to be materially greater than under the current use.

Without the expansion of Princes Plain Primary School, the Authority will not be able to meet its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places for its residents.

From the submitted information there appears to be little doubt about the requirement for additional reception spaces in this part of the borough. However, the recent planning history of the site shows that there has been a previous development on the site. The school has been rated as "Outstanding" by ofsted and incorporates facilities for children with special needs as well as a nursery and children's centre. There are concerns however, that in providing so many facilities this then results in the need for additional built development on the site, the increase in the hard surface play area to nearly double the size is one example of this. The cumulative affect of such development must be assessed in relation to its impact on the Green Belt and its openness.

Members will need to decide whether the very special circumstances set out by the applicant are considered sufficient to outweigh the harm caused by the inappropriateness of the intended development. Members will also be aware of the need to consider alternative locations within the site and it is evident from the layout that the development will be on part of the school previously developed and would not encroach onto the playing field. This therefore appears to be an area where such development would be less prominent and would have a reduced impact on the open nature of this site. On balance, it may be considered that planning permission can be granted in this instance, subject to final comments on the highways aspects.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on files refs. 09/01730, 07/02591 and 0702104, excluding exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: PERMISSION

Subject to the following conditions:

- 1 ACA01 Commencement of development within 3 yrs
 ACA01R A01 Reason 3 years
- 2 ACK01 Compliance with submitted plan

Reason: In the interest of the visual amenities of the area.

Reasons for permission:

In granting permission the Local Planning Authority had regard to the following policies of the Unitary Development Plan:

- G1 Green Belt
- C1 Community Facilities
- C7 Educational and Pre-School Facilities
- BE1 Design of New Development

The development is considered to be satisfactory in relation to the following:

- (a) the relationship of the development to adjacent properties
- (b) the character of the development in the surrounding area
- (c) the impact of the development to the open character and visual amenities of the Green Belt, including trees on the application site
- (d) special circumstances have been demonstrated that outweigh harm to the Green Belt
- (e) the impact on the amenities of the occupiers of adjacent and nearby properties
- (f) the outlook of the occupiers of adjacent and nearby properties
- (g) the provision of additional sporting facilities for the benefit of the local community
- (h) the impact to on-street parking demand in the area and on conditions of road safety
- (i) comments received during the consultation period of the application
- (j) the urban design policies of the Unitary Development Plan
- (k) drainage and flood risk

and having regard to all other matters raised.

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