

SECTION '1' – Applications submitted by the London Borough of Bromley

Application No : 17/01427/FULL1

Ward:
Chelsfield And Pratts
Bottom

Address : Chelsfield Primary School Warren Road
Orpington BR6 6EP

OS Grid Ref: E: 548238 N: 164217

Applicant : Mrs Michaela Foley

Objections : YES

Description of Development:

Single storey extension to annexe building with access ramp and change to site boundary

Key designations:

Conservation Area: Chelsfield
Areas of Archeological Significance
Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area
Green Belt
London City Airport Safeguarding

Proposal

It is proposed to add a single storey rear extension to an annexe building located within the northern corner of the site which would measure 6m in width and 5m in depth, and would be used as an essential learning area.

Access to the extension would be via the existing covered walkway adjacent to the north-western boundary, and a ramped access would be added.

In order to facilitate the extension, a small area of adjacent land at the Rectory measuring 5.66m x 1.7m would be included within the site, thus extending the site boundary.

Location

Chelsfield Primary School lies on the north-eastern side of Warren Road, close to the junction with Church Road. It is situated within Chelsfield Conservation Area, and lies within the Green Belt.

Consultations

Nearby owners/occupiers were notified of the application and representations were received which can be summarised as follows:

- trees have already been lost in spite of the Conservation Area designation which would make the proposed development more visible from Orlestone Gardens
- increased noise disturbance to neighbouring properties from the use of the building
- detrimental impact on Chelsfield Conservation Area
- proposals are larger than the previous extension permitted
- there would be no room for replacement tree screening.

Comments from Consultees

Highways - There would be no increase in pupil or staff numbers as a result of the proposals, and they would not impact on the access or parking arrangements, therefore no highways objections are raised.

Planning Considerations

The application falls to be determined in accordance with the following policies of the Unitary Development Plan

BE1 Design of New Development
 BE10 Locally Listed Buildings
 BE11 Conservation Areas
 G1 The Green Belt

The Council is preparing a Local Plan and commenced a period of consultation on its proposed submission draft of the Local Plan on November 14th 2016 which closed on December 31st 2016 (under The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 as amended). It is anticipated that the draft Local Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State in mid-2017. These documents are a material consideration. The weight attached to the draft policies increases as the Local Plan process advances. The relevant policies are as follows:

Draft Policy 37 - General Design of Development
 Draft Policy 41 - Conservation Areas
 Draft Policy 49 - Green Belt

Planning History

Permission was granted in November 2014 (ref.14/03336) for a single storey side/rear extension to the annexe building which was greater in width, but not as deep as the current proposals. This has not yet been implemented.

Most recently planning permission was granted under ref. 16/05292 for a single storey front extension to create lobby entrance.

Conclusions

The main issues relating to the application are the effect that it would have on the open character and visual amenities of the Green Belt, on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the Locally Listed building on the site, on the amenities of the occupants of surrounding residential properties and on trees within the site.

Green Belt

In accordance with the NPPF, inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt and very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The proposed extension to the annexe would result in around 27.3 sqm of additional floorspace to the building, which in the context of the relatively modest size of the host building would not be considered to represent a proportionate addition as could be allowed as an exception to inappropriate development under NPPF paragraph 89. The proposal is therefore considered to constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Whilst the additional built development proposed at the site would result in some harm to openness, this would result in a limited impact given its siting to the north-east of the annexe and adjacent to neighbouring dwellings in Orlestone Gardens.

The applicant has sought to justify the proposal in the design and access statement submitted with the application, which refers to the modest size of the extension and states that there is an urgent need for space for accommodating small groups for assisted learning including special educational support. UDP Policy C7 supports educational extensions where there is a need for improved facilities, and it is considered that, subject to an overall assessment of the development including any other harm, this would represent a significant material consideration in the overall planning balance and could result in very special circumstances. It is also noted that planning permission has previously been granted for a similar extension in this location, with a greater overall width but a lesser depth. This has not been implemented to date.

Impact on the Conservation Area and Locally Listed Building

UDP Policy BE11 requires development proposals in Conservation Areas to preserve or enhance their character and appearance. The extension would be flat roofed and timber clad to match the existing annexe and sited in a relatively discreet location to the north-east of the existing annexe and away from the main school building which is Locally Listed. It is therefore considered that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would be preserved, and that the setting of the Locally Listed main school building would not be unduly impacted upon as a result of the development proposed.

Neighbouring Amenity

With regard to the impact on neighbouring properties, the extension would be set back 1.7m from the boundary with No.5 Orlestone Gardens, and would lie adjacent to its garage. It would also lie adjacent to the garage at No.6, and given its modest size, the proposals are not, therefore, considered to be harmful to the amenities of adjacent residential properties.

Trees

With regard to trees on the site, there are nearby cypress and ash apples which are protected as a result of the Conservation Area designation. The foundations of the proposed extension would be formed of piers, and would not be invasive to nearby tree roots. It is therefore considered that the proposed works would not be significantly harmful to the screening between the school and the neighbouring properties, but it is suggested that the planting of evergreen trees and shrubs along the boundary would help to improve screening to neighbouring properties, as part of a scheme of landscaping to be secured by condition.

It is noted that clearance works have already taken place at the site including the removal of a tree which was located around 0.75m from the north-east elevation of the proposed building, and which benefited from protection as a result of the Conservation Area designation which affects the land. Were this tree still standing on site it would be necessary to consider whether its removal would be required to facilitate the proposed development, and if so whether the public amenity value of the tree and its contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would have been sufficient to withhold planning permission.

The Council's Tree Officer has visited the site and confirmed that the removal of this tree would have been required to facilitate the construction now proposed, but that based on photographic evidence of the tree prior to its removal, it is unlikely that its retention would have been requested having regard to the Conservation Area and visual amenities. In this case appropriate mitigation is now proposed in the form of additional evergreen trees and shrubs along the boundary, with details to be secured by condition.

Overall conclusion

It is considered that the proposal would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt and result in harm to openness. In respect of any other harm, the development would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of the locally listed building, and would not impact detrimentally on the amenities of neighbouring residents. Any harm caused as a result of tree removal can be mitigated through a scheme of replanting to be secured by condition. The applicant has stated that there is an urgent need for additional space to accommodate small groups for assisted learning, including special educational support. In this instance, it is considered that this consideration would clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, as well as any other harm identified, resulting in very special circumstances.

RECOMMENDATION: PERMISSION

Subject to the following conditions:

- 1 The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of 3 years, beginning with the date of this decision notice.**

Reason: Section 91, Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 2 Details of a scheme of landscaping, which shall include new tree screening near to the north-east boundary of the site and the materials of paved areas and other hard surfaces, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the commencement of the development hereby permitted. The approved scheme shall be implemented in the first planting season following the first occupation of the buildings or the substantial completion of the development, whichever is the sooner. Any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the substantial completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species to those originally planted.**

Reason: In order to comply with Policy BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan, to secure a visually satisfactory setting for the development, and to provide screening to neighbouring residential properties.

- 3 The materials to be used for the external surfaces of the building shall be as set out in the planning application forms and / or drawings unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

Reason: In order to comply with Policy BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan and in the interest of the appearance of the building and the visual amenities of the area.

- 4 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the plans approved under this planning permission unless previously agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

Reason: In order to comply with Policy BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan and in the interest of the visual and residential amenities of the area.