

SECTION '2' – Applications meriting special consideration

Application No : 10/01722/FULL1

Ward:
Clock House

Address : Stewart Fleming School Witham Road
Penge London SE20 7YB

OS Grid Ref: E: 535124 N: 168969

Applicant : Head Teacher Of Stewart Fleming School **Objections :** YES

Description of Development:

Bicycle store, 2 timber storage sheds, 2 play area enclosures with artificial grass surface, new pedestrian ramp with handrail and balustrade and gate access and free standing canopy to pre-school classroom.

Members may recall that this case was presented to the Plans Sub Committee held on the 7th October 2010.

It was resolved that this case should be deferred without prejudice to any decision taken in order that the applicant investigates through Environmental Health whether there are any possible mitigation measures that can be taken to reduce the potential noise and disturbance. It was also resolved that the applicant should be given the opportunity to clarify why the works were carried out without planning permission.

The applicants have met with the Council's Environmental Health Officer on site and discussed the proposals in detail. Following this site meeting, further comments on the proposals have now been received from Environmental Health in relation to noise and disturbance issues and these comments are summarised in the comments from consultees section later in the report.

With regards to the clarification as to why the development was undertaken without planning permission, the applicants have provided a letter dated 25th October clarifying this matter. The letter states that the school were unfortunately not aware that planning permission was required for such works but will now in the future consult with the planning department before any work is undertaken.

The previous report is repeated below subject to suitable updates.

Proposal

The application seeks retrospective planning permission for various works which have been completed at the school.

Retrospective permission is sought for a bicycle store constructed at the front of the school towards the boundary with Felmingham Road. This is a blue painted steel framed structure supporting a clear acrylic curved roof.

Retrospective permission is also sought for two new enclosed play areas with artificial grass surfaces; one of the play areas indicated on the submitted drawings is the infant play area. This enclosed area is located towards the rear of the school building adjacent to the rear boundary wall and properties located in Suffield Road and Felmingham Road. This area is enclosed by a 1.8 metre high timber fence and the existing rear boundary wall.

The other play area enclosure which has also been completed and forms part of this application is located towards the front of the school building and is enclosed by powder coated metal balustrades and a timber paling fence and handrails with gate access.

The application also includes a pedestrian ramp with a metal handrail and balustrade to the front of the school building. This ramp is located adjacent to the play area.

A free standing open canopy supported by steel posts has also been constructed at the front of the school partially covering the play area. This canopy is also part of the retrospective application.

Location

The application site is a detached building used as a primary school known as the Stewart Fleming Primary School. The school is located between the junctions of Felmingham Road towards the north and Sheringham Road towards the south. Pedestrian public access to the school is located off Felmingham Road. A rear vehicle entrance with existing gates and security fencing is located off Suffield Road towards the rear boundary of the site.

The area is predominantly residential in character towards the north and east with Beckenham Crematorium located further towards the south. The school has an existing large hard surfaced playground area to the front of the building

Comments from Local Residents

These can be summarised as follows:

- the development has been progressing over the past 2 – 3 years and is causing unacceptable noise and disturbance to surrounding residents.
- the properties in Suffield Road are suffering with noise all day long
- whilst the structures themselves may not be significant, the use of the play areas result in increased noise and disturbance

- The West Beckenham Resident's Association supports local objections to the development. The use of the rear area of the school for a play ground results in unacceptable noise and disturbance to residents.
- the rear of the school was previously a quiet service yard / storage area and to change this use to a playground so close to residential properties is unacceptable.

Comments from Consultees

From a highway planning perspective, no technical objections are raised.

With regards to environmental health concerns, the application proposes a number of elements, the majority of which would not have any adverse impact on neighbouring residents in terms of increased noise and disturbance. The use of the additional play area would bring children closer to the nearest house (No. 27 Suffield Road) however there would be no measurable impact on the noise levels received in any of the gardens or houses. Noise levels may in fact be reduced due to the use of Astroturf and the erection of the wooden fencing. No technical objections are therefore raised in terms of noise and disturbance.

Planning Considerations

The principal policies against which to assess this application are, BE1 Design of New Development and C7 Education and Pre School Facilities.

The main issues to consider in this application are, the impact of the building on the character and appearance of the area, and the possible effect on the prospect and amenity enjoyed by residents of surrounding properties.

Policy BE1 highlights the need for new buildings to be of a high standard of design and layout complementing the scale, form and materials of adjacent buildings. The proposed building maintains acceptable spatial standards and respect the character and appearance of the locality.

Policy C7 requires extensions to existing educational establishments to be located so as to maximise access by means of transport other than the car.

Planning History

Under planning application ref. 99/00138, permission was granted for a single storey extension to provide 4 classrooms and office and toilet accommodation and formation of pedestrian access.

Under planning application ref. 02/01830, permission was granted for single storey extensions to form store room and cloak room.

Conclusions

The main issues relating to the application are the effect that it would have on the character of the area and the impact that it would have on the amenities of the occupants of surrounding residential properties.

The alterations are of an acceptable design and scale and do not result in an increase in numbers of visitors to the site.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the area located towards the rear of the school has not previously been used as a play area, this area can potentially be used for a school amenity area (such as a playground) without the need for planning permission. In this instance planning consent is only required for the storage sheds and any associated boundary enclosures. The timber fence which encloses part of the play area is lower in height than the existing rear boundary wall and provides an acceptable means of screening and enclosure for the artificial grassed play area. The enclosures due to their height siting and design do not result in any significant harm to existing residential amenities. The timber storage sheds are small in size and scale and due to their location and size are not likely to result in any significant harm to existing residential amenities.

The canopy located towards the front of the school building is small in scale and size and is of an acceptable design. The canopy would not result in any significant harm to existing residential amenities due to the orientation of the site and the location of the canopy.

The pedestrian ramp with handrail and balustrade and gate access is of an acceptable design and scale and provides appropriately designed wheelchair access to the school entrance. The railings and gates are of a sympathetic appearance and provide necessary enclosure to the artificial grass play area.

The bicycle store is appropriately located close to the existing school entrance and is small in scale and of an acceptable design. The bicycle store also encourages the use of alternative transport other than the car in accordance with Policy C7.

The development is therefore considered to be of an acceptable design and scale and is in keeping with the surrounding area, and the privacy and amenities of adjoining occupiers is adequately safeguarded compliant to Policy BE1.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on file ref. 10/01722, excluding exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: PERMISSION

Subject to the following conditions:

Reasons for granting permission:

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

BE1 General Design

C7 Educational and Pre School Facilities

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

- (a) the appearance of the development in the street scene
- (b) the relationship of the development to adjacent property
- (c) the character of the development in the surrounding area
- (d) the impact on the amenities of the occupiers of adjacent and nearby properties
- (e) the light and outlook of occupiers of adjacent and nearby properties
- (f) the privacy of occupiers of adjacent and nearby properties
- (g) the safety of pedestrians and motorists on the adjacent highway

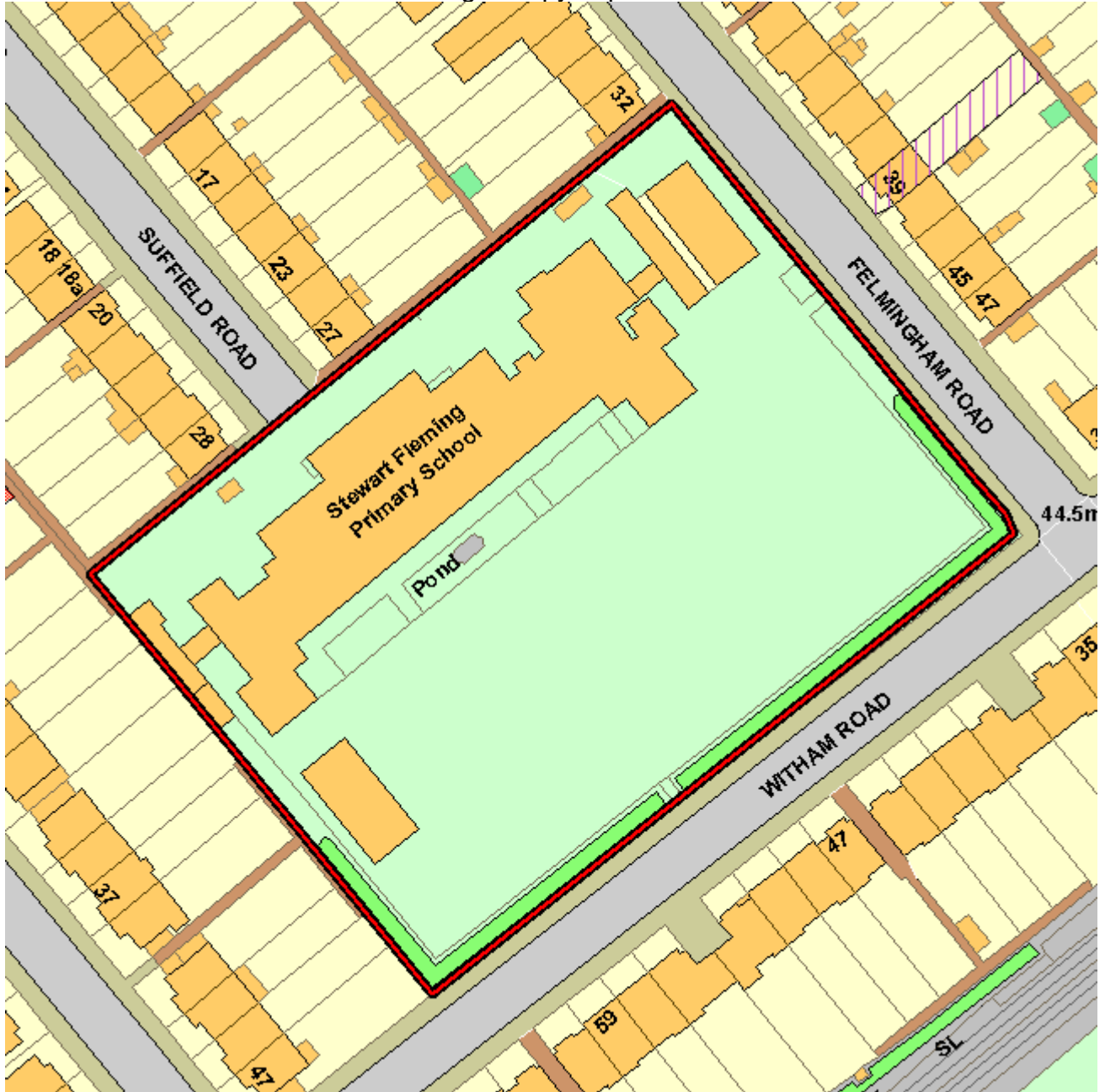
- (h) the urban design policies of the development plan

and having regard to all other matters raised.

Reference: 10/01722/FULL1

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Proposal: Bicycle store, 2 timber storage sheds, 2 play area enclosures with artificial grass surface, new pedestrian ramp with handrail and balustrade and gate access and free standing canopy to pre-school classroom.



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