

Application No: 13/1064C

Location: HOLMES CHAPEL COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL, MIDDLEWICH ROAD,
HOLMES CHAPEL, CHESHIRE, CW4 7EB

Proposal: Construction of pre-fabricated pre-school and associated external works.

Applicant: Mr Michael Hall, Happy Days Club & Nursery School

Expiry Date: 14-May-2013

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to conditions

MAIN ISSUES

Principle

Design

Amenity

Traffic and Parking

REASON FOR REFERRAL

The application is being referred to Southern Planning Committee due to considerable public interest and call in by Councillor Gilbert *"to consider the impact on local residents of additional traffic"*.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application relates to Holmes Chapel Primary School that is situated on Middlewich Road, the main route leading out of Holmes Chapel to junction 18 of the M6 Motorway. The school site is situated within the Settlement Zone and the site is a protected by area of open space/recreational facility by way of policy RC2 of the Congleton Borough Local Plan. Residential properties bound the application site to the north, south and east. The school grounds are immediately abutted by public footpaths that run to the rear of the residential properties.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The application relates to the provision of a single storey prefabricated building to accommodate the relocation of Happy Days Club & Nursery School. Happy Days is a private nursery providing nursery care for children from 2 years of age on both a full time and part time basis with extended day care available from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm Monday to Friday. Happy Days also provide out of school and holiday clubs. The business is presently located at Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School but the lease on that site is not being renewed. A temporary permission is sought for three years.

The proposed building would be positioned to the northern boundary of the school site on what is, presently, school playing fields immediately adjacent to a footpath that runs along the northern boundary and immediately to the rear of houses on Bessancourt. The building would consist of 7 conjoined portacabins and would be 21 metres long, 12 metres deep and 3.5 metres high with a flat roof. This would provide 245 square metres of floorspace to accommodate provision for approximately 50 children. Two external play areas are proposed of 176 square metres.

There is an existing pre-school facility on site provided by a community organisation and the new facility would be immediately to the east along the footpath boundary

PLANNING HISTORY

Numerous applications on site but most recent and relevant are:-

13/0133C – Extension of time (to 02/01/16) to previous approval (07/1102/FUL) for temporary planning permission for existing pre-school building (Holmes Chapel Community Pre-School) – Approved 29th April 2013

07/1102/FUL – Temporary permission for existing pre-school building – Approved 8th January 2008.

POLICIES

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

Congleton Borough Local Plan First Review 2005

GR1 (New Development)

GR2 (Design)

GR6 (Amenity and Health)

RC2 (Protected Areas of open Space)

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Strategic Highways Manager: No objection.

Jodrell Bank: No comment on the application

Sport England: Originally lodged a statutory objection to the application but has now withdrawn the objection due to the temporary nature of the consent sought and on the basis that any permission attaches conditions related to reinstatement and maintenance of the playing field (football pitch).

Environmental Health: No objection subject to conditions suggested in relation to hours of construction and advisory note in respect of contamination.

VIEWS OF HOLMES CHAPEL PARISH COUNCIL

Object because it does not appear that the applicants have given sufficient attention to car parking and facilities for dropping off and collecting children. Consideration needs to be given to effect on residents in neighbouring roads.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

Over 70 representations and a petition objecting to the proposal and raise the following;

- Noise and disturbance caused by activity, congregation of people on footpath and loss of tranquillity to rear of Bessancourt. Houses.
- Visual intrusion of an ugly prefabricated building combined with a loss of open outlook.
- Building would be imposing and highly visible
- Loss of privacy for Bessancourt residents
- Loss of open space and outdoor play space
- Reduction in size of football pitch
- Already a facility on site and the proposal is a commercial activity
- Other viable sites and alternative locations in the vicinity
- Alarm system would cause disturbance
- Would result in a unacceptable increase in traffic and parking problems that already exist that are a result of school traffic near to the site
- Car parking related to school drop off and pick up already a problem
- No safe place to cross Middlewich Road
- Poor access for emergency vehicles

Over 70 representations of support for the proposal have been received and raise the following:-

- Excellent local facility essential for working parents who rely on this provision.
- Would support school enrolment
- The claims over traffic problems are exaggerated and they are short-lived at school start and end times.
- Maintain local employment
- Would aid traffic as movement on one site with fewer journeys to school at one time as proposal would spread vehicular movements.
- More people will walk to facility
- Has support of Holmes Chapel Primary School
- Strong links with school

This is a brief summary and the full contents of these extensive representations are available to view on the Councils website.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Design and Access Statement

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The school site falls within the Holmes Chapel Settlement Zone Line and the proposed development would be situated within the Settlement Zone Line. The site is also designated as an area of protected open space under Local Plan policy RC2 (Protected Areas of Open Space). This policy allows for the development or extension of existing buildings associated with the use of the site, provided that there would be no significant loss of a recreational facility involved or where it would allow for improved facilities on site which would offset any loss.

The proposal does undoubtedly result in the loss of usable open space and was initially subject to an objection from Sport England. However, the applicants submitted a drawing to indicate that a (reduced in size) football pitch can be repositioned in the remaining playing field space and the amended plan has now satisfied Sport England on the basis that only a temporary permission for three years is granted and a condition attached to restore the land back to a condition back to a playing field. As a result, it is considered that, on balance, it would not result in a local deficiency in the quantity and range of open space and the proposal would comply with policy RC2 (Protected Areas of Open Space).

There is some synergy and sustainability in locating such a use; a use that is school related; within the ground as many children who use the facility will attend the primary school now and in the future.

The key considerations in the determination of the application is therefore whether or not the proposal complies with Local Plan policies GR1 (New Development), GR2 (Design) and GR6 (Amenity and Health).

Design

The existing school complex includes a range of permanent and temporary buildings of no specific character. The proposed development is bland but temporary and functional by nature. A planning condition should ensure that sympathetic and unobtrusive colouring is used. The building would be of a similar height to the two nearby school adjacent buildings, that are also temporary in visual style, and the scale of the development would sit acceptably on the application site in that respect although it is accepted there would be some loss of open outlook to adjacent houses. However, it is considered that the temporary nature of the permission sought is exactly that, for 3 years, and the applicants should prepare a future solution that is more attractive in design and site planning terms and returns the site to usable playing field as specified by Sport England in their consultation response.

In design terms therefore, it is the view that the proposal would be acceptable having regard to Local Plan policies GR1 (New Development) and GR2 (Design).

Amenity

The main impact would clearly be from the proposed building being sited to the north of the site and immediately adjacent to the footpath that abuts the rear boundary of houses on Bessancourt. There would be a separation distance of approximately 18 metres from the nearest point of the proposed building and the nearest houses on Bessancourt. Therefore, the proposed building would be clearly visible from the rear upstairs windows and would change

the outlook for a number of houses on Bessancourt. However, the proposal is effectively single storey, and for a school type use within school grounds and in that context it is not considered that the proposal could be refused on the grounds of visual amenity.

The nature of the proposed use and the location, the scale of the development and the hours of operation has been assessed. It is not considered that there would be such a detrimental impact to neighbouring residential amenity to justify refusal on the basis of a temporary permission of three years that would enable activity on the site to be monitored prior to any further submission on the site in the future. The hours of operation would be subject to a planning condition limiting it to 8.00 pm to 6.00pm Monday to Friday.

The concerns raised about construction disturbance have been noted and a condition will be attached at the request of the Environmental Health Officer to control the time of construction works.

As such, the elements of the scheme are small-scale and should not have a significant impact on neighbouring residential amenity over and above the existing site arrangements. The proposal would comply therefore with Local Plan policy GR6 (Amenity and Health).

Highways

The Highways Manager raises no objection to the scheme as the applicant has provided information regarding the drop off and collection of pupils in association with the proposal and is satisfied that it would not directly correspond with standard drop-off/collection periods. The school state they are willing to allow drop off and collection to take place within the car park outside of the standard school day. There is also an arrangement in place to utilise the car park of the George and Dragon Public House.

It is likely that the activity would be spread so not to significantly exacerbate any inconvenience for local residents who live near the site. It remains school related activity. New pedestrian access entrance and exit gates are proposed onto the footpath to serve the development.

Other issues

Details of lighting and any alarm systems will be controlled by condition.

CONCLUSIONS

It is considered that the application proposes an acceptable form of development but only on a temporary basis for 3 years. In this context it is unlikely to permanently and overly impact upon the open space and significantly impact on neighbouring residential and visual amenity. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with the relevant policies of the Development Plan and is therefore recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Temporary 3 years
2. Approved Plans
3. Colour of materials to be agreed
4. Hours of Operation limited to 08.00 until 18.00 Mondays to Fridays

5 External lighting and alarm details to be submitted and agreed with the LPA

6. The hours of noise generative / construction works taking place during the development (and associated deliveries to the site) shall be restricted to:

Monday – Friday	08:00 to 18:00 hrs
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Saturday	09:00 to 14:00 hrs
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Sundays and Public Holidays	Nil
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Application for Full Planning

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