

Application No: 09/3865M
Location: ST EDWARDS RC PRIMARY SCHOOL, FIR GROVE, MACCLESFIELD, CHESHIRE, SK11 7SF
Proposal: DEMOLITION OF THE EXISTING TWO STOREY PRIMARY SCHOOL AND CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW SINGLE STOREY PRIMARY SCHOOL

For MRS CLARE BATES, CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC & COFE PRIMARY

Registered 23-Dec-2009
Policy Item No
Grid Reference 391401 372335

Date Report Prepared: 05 March 2010

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to conditions

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact of the development on neighbouring amenity
- Highway safety
- Design considerations
- Loss of trees within the site

REASON FOR REPORT

The application has been referred to the Northern Planning Committee in line with the Cheshire East Borough Council Scheme of Delegation as the proposal is for small scale major development over 1000 square metres in floorspace.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site is located within the settlement boundary of Macclesfield, situated to the south of the town centre. Public footpath 55 (Macclesfield) adjoins the length of the eastern boundary of the site with residential properties beyond. The school playing field is located to the south / west with further residential properties beyond, and to the north the site shares its boundary with South Park.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Cheshire East Borough Council seek planning permission to build a new primary school at the former St Edwards Catholic Primary School site, Fir Grove, Macclesfield. 'Christ the King Catholic and Church of England Primary School' would be formed from the recent amalgamation of St Edwards Catholic Primary School and St Barnabas Church of England Primary School.

The school is currently operating from the latter site on a temporary basis. The proposal would entail the demolition of the existing two storey building and its replacement with a single storey, seven classroom purpose built facility. The building would occupy the same position to the north east of the site, but would provide a greater floor area of 1425m² to account for the single storey design. The proposal also includes an increase in the level of car parking provision at the site and the introduction of additional pedestrian accesses around the site. The main vehicular entrance from Fir Grove would be maintained.

POLICIES

The North West Regional Spatial Strategy

DP2 Promote Sustainable Communities

L1 Health, Sport, Recreation, Cultural and Educational Services Provision

RT2 Managing Travel Demand

Macclesfield Borough Local Plan Policy

BE1 Design Guidance

RT1 Open Space

RT12 Indoor Recreation

DC1 Design - New Build

DC3 Amenity

DC6 Circulation and Access

NE11 Nature Conservation

Other Material Considerations

PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

PPG13 Transport

PPG17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Highways:

No objection subject to conditions relating to the provision of car parking, cycle parking, submission of a construction method statement and protection of the highway from mud and debris.

Environmental Health (Contaminated Land):

No objection

Environmental Health:

No objection subject to a condition requiring details and timing of any pile driving activities.

Landscape:

No objection subject to a condition requiring the submission of a landscaping scheme.

Forestry:

No objection subject to conditions requiring tree protection and an Arboricultural method statement.

Public Rights of Way:

No objection

Sport England:

No objection

Environment Agency:

No objection

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

None

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The following documents were submitted in support of the application and are available on the application file: -

Design and Access Statement

Climate Change and Sustainability Statement

Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Bat Survey

Arboricultural Implications Assessment

School Travel plan for St Edwards Catholic Primary School (application site)

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The proposal is to redevelop the existing school site to provide a new primary school building. The principle of the use of the site as a school is already accepted, subject to other considerations such as design and the impact of the development on neighbouring amenity and highway safety.

Policy

The application site is allocated in the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan as an area of protected open space and therefore, policy RT1 is relevant. Policy RT1 aims to protect recreational land and open space from other forms of development, however in relation to schools the policy recognises the provision of additional or replacement educational buildings provided that the integrity of the open space is not harmed.

The proposed building would be constructed over the footprint of the original building to the north east of the site. This area currently comprises the bulk of the built development, hard standing and an element of landscaping in the form of ornamental planting. Due to the level changes across the site the school playing field and playground are positioned at a lower level than the existing building. These would not be affected by the redevelopment and therefore there would be no loss of open space provision afforded to the site. As such it is considered that the proposal is acceptable under policy RT1.

Highways

The application proposes to provide 20 no. car parking spaces which is more than double the level of provision previously offered at this site for the former St Edwards Catholic Primary School. Parking standards for this type of development are taken from the Council's 'Cheshire Design Aid' (1990) which relates to maximum standards. The level of parking provision proposed is below the maximum standards and guidance contained within PPG13 provides there should be no set minimum level of parking for development, subject to there being no significant impact on highway safety. Although the proposed development would result in an increase in the number of vehicles arriving at the site, due to increased staff and pupil numbers compared to the previous operations at the site, the Strategic Highways Manager does not consider the level of intensification to be significant and has therefore raised no objection to the scheme.

The Strategic Highways Manager has requested a number of standard conditions requiring the submission of a construction method statement and provisions to protect the highway from mud and debris during the construction period. Details of the proposed cycle parking facilities will also be required by condition. The revised floor plan (drawing number 09-28 RevP7) provides changing and shower facilities following on from the Strategic Highways Manager recommendation in order to encourage staff to make more sustainable travel choices.

The application was accompanied by a School Travel Plan which was relevant to the former St Edwards Catholic Primary School. In the interests of promoting smarter travel choices and safer routes to school, a Travel Plan for the new school should be produced in liaison with the Council's School Travel

Team. If planning permission was granted, an advisory note could be attached to the decision notice as an informative in relation to the above.

In terms of highway issues the Strategic Highways Manager has raised no objection to the application, therefore it is considered that the development is acceptable having regard to policy DC6 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan.

Forestry

The application identifies 11 trees for removal in order to facilitate the proposed development and the removal of a further 4 trees due to their poor condition. The Council's Forestry Officer considers that the majority of these trees have exhausted their present locations and have a poor social proximity to the adjacent building, and that any loss could be mitigated by strategic replacement planting through out the site. The proposed freestanding access ramp to the playground would encroach within the root protection area of trees T18 and T19 which are identified for retention. As such, the Council's Forestry Officer has requested further information through the submission of a detailed method statement.

The proposed development would result in the loss of 14 trees in total across the site. These trees are of mainly low to moderate value ornamental specimens and although they offer some amenity value to the existing site their contribution to the wider locality is limited. On balance it is considered that the requirements of the development outweigh the loss of trees and that any loss could be mitigated through replacement planting as part of the wider landscaping of the site. This would be secured by condition through the submission of a landscaping scheme.

Design

The development would be concentrated to the north eastern extent of the site with the existing playing fields and playground areas being retained and enhanced where appropriate. The building would be constructed over the footprint of the existing building with the car park located to the front of the school in proximity to the main access off Fir Grove. The site layout responds to the site features such as the playing fields, and the change in level as the site drops down to the playground and playing field.

The proposal would entail the demolition of the existing school building and its replacement with a new modern, purpose built facility. The existing building is a 2 storey flat roof construct with some single storey elements with the addition of a single mobile unit. The existing building is considered to be of relatively low architectural merit and is no longer fit for purpose to accommodate the recently merged schools.

The proposed building would be single storey with a double height element to accommodate the sports hall which would form the central point of the building. The design ethos behind the new proposed school is to provide an

inclusive and accessible environment. The building would provide 7 classrooms which front onto outdoor areas with level access and which benefit from natural ventilation and light. Optimum use of natural light would be achieved from the roof lights and the solar panels would provide hot water heating. The building would be a predominantly brick structure with elements of render and timber cladding, and the roof would have an aluminium finish. Details / samples of the materials would be required by condition in order to ensure an acceptable appearance of the finished development.

Initially, the Council's Landscape Officer, although finding the scheme to be generally acceptable, had some concerns with discrete elements of the proposal. These mainly related to the development within the north eastern corner of the site, such as the service area and car park, and the proximity of the built development to the northern and eastern boundaries to the site. The Landscape officer considered that the density of the development along the boundaries did not provide effective screening and was unsympathetic to the local environment, street scene, adjoining buildings and the site itself, in light of policies DC1 and DC8 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan. The Landscape Officer however, did not raise any objections to the proposal subject to a full landscaping condition.

In the context of the application site the developable area is limited to the north east of the site due to level changes and the presence of the playing field which acts as a constraint. Development elsewhere on the site would have implications on the open space provision afforded to the site and unnecessary development of the playing field would be inappropriate having regard to PPG17 'Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation' and policy RT1. The new school would occupy a greater floor area than the existing building due to the single storey design for inclusive access and the requirements of the National Standard Building Bulletin '99. The larger floor area results in the building occupying a closer position to the northern boundary of the site by approximately 6 metres, maintaining a distance of 2 metres to the boundary. The boundary treatment to the northern boundary with South Park comprises of 1.8 metre high palisade fencing coloured green, and a 1.8 metre high hedgerow directly in front of the fencing to the South Park side. Several trees also occupy the boundary with the main grouping to the north eastern corner of the site. The existing boundary treatment would provide an element of screening to the development; however given that the height of the building reaches approximately 7 metres at its highest central point, the building would be a prominent feature from this end of South Park. The building elevation which fronts South Park has been amended to add more visual interest and detail and it is considered that the design and appearance of the development from this aspect is acceptable and would have a satisfactory relationship with South Park and neighbouring uses.

The service area and car park to the north east of the site would be located immediately adjacent to the school boundary adjoining the public footpath. The service area would also accommodate the pumping station building and the water tank system, which is necessary for the school. The pumping station would be housed in a brick building whilst the water tank would be a relatively

large structure. In the initial proposals, users of the footpath and the neighbouring property would have experienced direct views of the water tank and service area due to the boundary treatment comprising mainly 1.8 metre high palisade fencing and the tank being of a greater height. It was considered that would have a detrimental impact on neighbouring receptors and therefore a better design solution for this area was required. The amended plans have reduced the ground level within the service yard to reduce the visual impact of the water tank and proposed to replace the existing palisade fencing in this area with a solid timber fence to provide appropriate screening to neighbouring uses. The amendments are now considered to be acceptable.

The Council's Landscape Officer has been re-consulted on the changes to the scheme in view of the initial consultation response, and is now satisfied with the proposal, subject to a condition requiring the submission of a full landscaping scheme.

In view of changes that have been made to the discrete elements of the proposal, it is considered that the development overall is of a good quality design which would make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the locality, having regard to policies BE1 and DC1 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan.

Amenity

The development is located to the north eastern extent of the site with the nearest properties being located along Fir Grove and Hulme Square. Number 25 Fir Grove is in closest proximity to the development with the proposed building being approximately 30 metres from the side elevation of this property. The property is however well screened from the site due to the presence of well established vegetation along the approximately 1.8 metre high fencing which adjoins the public footpath. Given the siting of the building and the single storey elevation which fronts the eastern boundary, it is not considered that the proposal would cause any overbearing impact or loss of amenity to the adjacent properties.

Property number 24 Hulme Square is situated at the north east corner of the site with the rear garden sharing a boundary with the footpath. The boundary treatment to this property is 1.8 metre high palisade fencing which means that there are direct views of this property from the footpath and from the existing school site. The proposed development increases the built form in this area with the service yard, which also includes the provision of a water tank and pump house. As the proposal includes lowering the ground level to accommodate the water tank and the provision of a solid fence to the boundary, it is not considered that the development would have a detrimental impact on the visual amenity of this property. Furthermore, Environmental Health and Environmental Protection have raised no objection to the application.

The proposal includes a lighting scheme to the school building and the car park. The lighting scheme has been revised from the original submission due to concerns of light trespass from the lighting columns into neighbouring properties along the eastern boundary. Changes to the scheme have been carried out in consultation with the Environmental Protection Officer who now finds this element of the scheme to be acceptable. The car park lighting would include 4 no. 5 metres high lighting columns which are considered to be acceptable and it is not considered that these would pose a detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring residencies.

It is considered that that the development proposed in this application is acceptable and would not give rise to any additional harm to the amenity of neighbouring properties, having regard to policy DC3 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan.

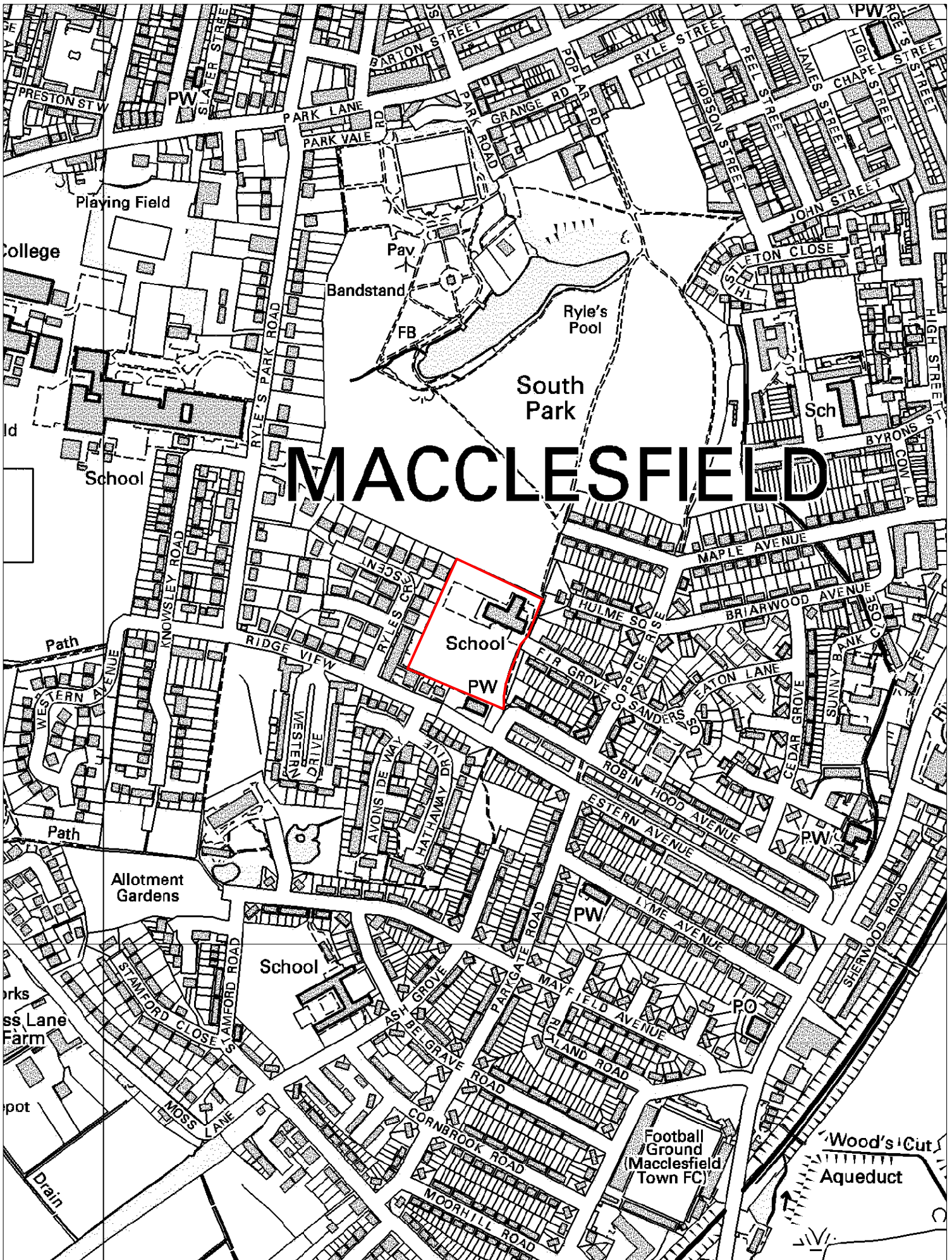
Ecology

The application was accompanied by a Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Great Crested Newt Assessment. The Phase 1 Habitat Survey recommended the need to carry out a bat survey prior to the works commencing, and the Council's Nature Conservation Officer advised that the application could not be determined without the additional information as this was necessary to assess the potential impacts of the development on bats. A bat survey was subsequently undertaken and submitted during the planning application process. The bat survey indicated that the existing building to be demolished and surrounding trees have a low potential to support roosting bats and no evidence of bats was recorded during the survey. The Council's Nature Conservation Officer has assessed the application in respect of the survey information and has advised that protected species do not present a constraint on the proposed development.

As such, it is not considered that there would be any significant ecological issues associated with the proposed development, having regard to policy NE11 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan and PPS9.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION

The proposal is to provide a new primary school at the former St Edwards Catholic Primary School site off Fir Grove, Macclesfield. The requirement for a new primary school has arisen from the recent amalgamation of St Edwards Catholic Primary School and St Barnabas Church of England Primary School to form Christ the King Catholic and Church of England Primary School, and the need for a suitable purpose built facility. The design of the building is considered to be appropriate and would have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the locality. The development would have an acceptable impact on neighbouring amenity and highway safety and is considered to be in compliance with the relevant policies of the Development Plan. Accordingly, the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.



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NGR - 391,390 : 372,340

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Application for **Full Planning**

RECOMMENDATION : Approve subject to following conditions

1. A03FP - Commencement of development (3 years)
2. A04AP - Development in accord with revised plans (numbered)
3. A02EX - Submission of samples of building materials
4. A30HA - Protection of highway from mud and debris
5. A32HA - Submission of construction method statement
6. A01HP - Provision of car parking
7. A04HP - Provision of cycle parking
8. A02LS - Submission of landscaping scheme
9. A05LS - Landscaping - implementation
10. A05TR - Arboricultural method statement
11. A23GR - Pile Driving -details and method
12. Provision of Solar Panels
13. Details of free-standing ramp